

Woodrush High School

An Academy for Students Aged 11-18

Safeguarding Children Policy 2023 (including Child Protection)



School Details

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mr D Monk

Safeguarding Governor: Mr Paul Harrison

Deputy Safeguarding Lead(s):

Mrs J Francis

Mrs Cassidy

Mrs M Holtom-Brown

Mr J Barber

Prevent Lead: Mr D Monk

Child Exploitation GET SAFE Lead: Mr D Monk

Ratified by Governing Body: October 2023

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This Policy is adapted from The Worcestershire Children's First Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Template 2023

CONTENTS

	Page
Safeguarding Statement	3
Key Personnel	4
1. Introduction	6
2. Management of safeguarding	7
3. Whole School Approach to Safeguarding	10
4. Specific Safeguarding Issues	18
5. Supporting Children and Children with Additional Vulnerabilities	25
6. Other Safeguarding Protocols	28

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Safeguarding Incident Report Sheet	33
Appendix 2 – Forms of Child Abuse	37
Appendix 3 – Child Sexual Exploitation	43
Appendix 4 – Child on Child Sexual Violence and Harassment	45
Appendix 5 – Criminal Exploitation and County Lines	50
Appendix 6 – Domestic Abuse and Operation Encompass	52
Appendix 7 – Extremism and Radicalisation	55
Appendix 8 – Honour Based Abuse/Violence	58
Appendix 9 – Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	60
Appendix 10 – Sexting	63



Safeguarding young people is at the heart of everything we do. At Woodrush High School we believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them

We recognise that:

- the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people, a deputy and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training, and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
- recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- recording and storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via our newsletter and website, group work and one-to-one discussions
- making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns



Key Personnel

Internal	
Headteacher: Mr Jay Barber	Tel: 01564 823777 Ext: 7500 Email: jbarber@woodrush.org
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Mr David Monk	Tel: 01564 823777 Ext: 7520 Email: dmonk@woodrush.org
Deputy DSL: Mrs Jaine Francis	Tel: 01564 823777 Ext: 7301 Email: jfrancis@woodrush.org
Deputy DSL: Mrs D Cassidy	Tel: 01564 823777 Ext: 7309 Email: dcassidy@woodrush.org
Deputy DSL: Mrs Mel Holtom-Brown	Tel: 01564 823777 Ext: 7515 Email: mholtom-brown@woodrush.org
Deputy DSL: Mr J Barber	Tel: 01564 823777 Ext: 7535 Email: jbarber@woodrush.org
Chair of Governors: Prof. S Brand	Tel: Email: sbrand@woodrush.org
Safeguarding Governor: Mr Paul Harrison	Tel: Email: pharrison@woodrush.org
Designated Senior Mental Health Lead: Mr D Monk	Tel: 01564 823777 Ext: 7520 Email: dmonk@woodrush.org
Designated Teacher for Student Wellbeing: Mr D Monk	Tel: 01564 823777 Ext: 7311 Email: dmonk@woodrush.org
Designated Senior Leader for Children in Care: Mr D Monk	Tel: 01564 823777 Ext: 7520 Email: dmonk@woodrush.org
Designated Teacher for Children in Care: Mrs Jaine Francis	Tel: 01564 823777 Ext: 7301 Email: jfrancis@woodrush.org
External	
Children's Services Family Front Door (FFD)	Tel: 01905 822666 /Out of Hours – 01905 768 020 Email: childrensteam@worcestershires.gov.uk
Emergency Duty Team (EDT) – out of office hours	Tel: 01905 768020
Community Social Work Team	Tel: 01905 846057
Local Authority Designated Officer:	Tel: 01905 846221 Email: lado@worcestershires.gov.uk
Education Adviser – Safeguarding: Denise Hannibal	Tel: 01905 844436 Email: dhannibal@worcestershires.gov.uk
Chanel Panel Chair: Paul Kinsella	Tel: Email:
Police – Prevent team: DS Stuart Clark	Tel: 01386 591835 Email: stuart.clark@westmercia.pnn.police.uk
Ofsted	Tel: 0300 123 1231

Childline	Tel: 0800 1111
Women's Aid (24hr. Helpline)	Tel: 0800 980 3331
West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WMRSASC)	Tel: 01905 724514
Training and External Support	
Chris and Eve Johnston Create Safer Organisations (CSO)	Tel: 07970 340846 Email: createsaferorgs@btinternet.com
Alison Newman Babcock Prime	Tel: 01905 678176 Email: Alison.Newman2@babcockinternational.com



1. Introduction

- 1.1. Woodrush High School's Safeguarding /Child Protection Policy draws upon duties conferred by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, The Children and Families Act 2014, S175 of the 2020 Education Act, The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (for independent schools), the Non-maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015 (for non-maintained special schools) and the guidance contained in [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#), the DfE's statutory Guidance - [Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2023](#)
- 1.2. This policy is also based on the following legislation:
 - 1.2.1. Keeping Children Safe in Education has been extended from early years, schools and colleges to cover 16-19 academies (and apprenticeships). There is reference to the Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021 which amends the Education Act 2002 and the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and places safeguarding duties on 16 to 19 academies and further education to ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are understood and prohibiting funding being given if safeguarding requirements not complied with.
 - 1.2.2. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, which places a duty on schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
 - 1.2.3. The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009, which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least one person on a school interview/appointment panel to be trained in safer recruitment techniques
 - 1.2.4. The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
 - 1.2.5. Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18
 - 1.2.6. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
 - 1.2.7. Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
 - 1.2.8. Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains schools' duties under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
 - 1.2.9. Where a school or college has charitable status, Charity Commission guidance on charity and trustee duties to safeguard children is available at [Charity Commission Guidance](#)
 - 1.2.10. [NSPCC's whistleblowing advice line](#) dedicated helpline is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by our school. The NSPCC whistle blowing helpline number is also available (0800 028 0285).
 - 1.2.11. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk [NSPCC – When to call the Police](#)
 - 1.2.12. The Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to and contains the Articles and protocols of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) (the Convention) that are deemed to apply in the UK. It compels public organisations to respect and protect an individual's human rights when they make individual decisions about them. Being subjected to harassment, violence and or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of these rights, depending on the nature of the conduct and the circumstances. Further information (including on absolute and qualified rights) can be found at Human Rights | Equality and Human Rights Commission ([Home Page | Equality and Human Rights Commission \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](#)). Guidance to help schools understand how the Equality Act affects them and how to fulfil their duties under the act can be found at Equality Act 2010: advice for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk), it may also be useful for colleges. For further information Equality Act guidance | Equality and Human Rights Commission (equalityhumanrights.com).



2. Management of Safeguarding

- 2.1. **Woodrush High School** fully recognises its moral and statutory responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and follows [West Midlands Procedures](#) and [Worcestershire Children's First levels of need](#).
- 2.2. Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. Child protection is the responsibility of all our staff.
 - 2.2.1. We will ensure that we will comply with our duties under all relevant legislation. We will ensure this policy and our procedures are effective and always comply with the law, this includes training for all staff.
 - 2.2.2. The Governing body will ensure we facilitate a whole school or college approach to safeguarding. Ultimately, all our systems, processes and policies will operate with the best interests of the child/children at their heart. Where there is a safeguarding concern, our governing bodies/proprietors and school/college leaders should ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place for children to express their views and give feedback.
- 2.3. There are five main elements to our policy:
 - 2.3.1. Ensuring we practice safer recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children;
 - 2.3.2. Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe;
 - 2.3.3. Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse;
 - 2.3.4. Supporting pupils who have been identified as in need of early help or at risk of harm in accordance with his/her agreed Child Protection, Child in Need or Early Help plan;
 - 2.3.5. Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.
- 2.1 We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to identify concerns early and to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:
 - 2.1.1 Establish and maintain an environment where children feel safe, secure, valued and respected and are encouraged to talk, believing they will be listened to;
 - 2.1.2 Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried;
 - 2.1.3 Have regard to the DfE statutory guidance 'Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education' (June 2019) by including opportunities in the curriculum, specifically through PSHE (Aspire Program) and ICT, for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse and to know who they should turn to for help.
- 2.2 We seek to ensure that the child's wishes and feelings are considered when determining what action to take and what services to provide to protect children from harm. To this end we will:
 - 2.2.1 Ensure there are systems in place for children to express their views and give feedback e.g. through school/class councils, safety questionnaires, participation in anti-bullying and e-safety events;
 - 2.2.2 Ensure that the child's thoughts/wishes, and feelings are sought and recorded on all referrals.
- 2.3 Within our local area statistics show in 2022 that violent / sexual offenses, Anti Social Behaviour, Vehicle Crime and Criminal Damage and Arson are the highest crimes committed and therefore, are particular focus for our school. Data taken from [UK Crime Statistics](#)
- 2.4 **Safeguarding in the Curriculum**
 - 2.4.1 At Woodrush High School children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, and recognise that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate for all children, and a more personalised or contextualised approach for more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some SEND children might be needed.

- 2.4.2 As part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum the school covers relevant issues through our Personal Development Programme and through Relationships Education (Relationships and Sex Education (for all secondary pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state-funded schools). The statutory guidance can be found here: [Statutory guidance: relationships education relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education.](#)
- 2.4.3 The following areas are among those addressed in our ASPIRE program and Tutorial Program and in the wider curriculum.
- 2.4.3.1 Bullying/Cyber Bullying (PSHE / Tutorial Program / Assemblies)
 - 2.4.3.2 Drugs, Alcohol and Substance Abuse (PSHE / Tutorial Program / Assemblies)
 - 2.4.3.3 Online Safety / Mobile technologies (Computing Lessons / PSHE / Tutorial Program / Assemblies)
 - 2.4.3.4 Peer to Peer Abuse (PSHE / Tutorial Program / Assemblies)
 - 2.4.3.5 Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment (PSHE / Tutorial Program / Assemblies)
 - 2.4.3.6 Domestic Abuse (SRE / PSHE / Tutorial Program / Assemblies)
 - 2.4.3.7 Healthy Relationships / Consent (SRE / PSHE / Tutorial Program / Assemblies)
 - 2.4.3.8 So called Honour Based Violence issues (HBV) e.g. Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) (PSHE)
 - 2.4.3.9 Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSE) (PSHE)
 - 2.4.3.10 Extremism and Radicalisation (in line with the DfE advice Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools (2014)¹. (PSHE / Tutorial Program / Assemblies)

2.5 Records, Monitoring and Transfer

- 2.5.1 Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse from a child or young person, or noticing signs or symptoms of possible abuse, will make notes as soon as possible (within the hour, if possible) writing down exactly what was said, using the child's own words as far as possible. All notes should be timed, dated and signed, with name printed alongside the signature. Concerns will be recorded using the school's safeguarding children recording system.
- 2.5.2 All records of a child protection nature will be passed to the DSL including case conference or core group minutes, child protection plans and written records of any concerns. Child protection records are kept securely under lock and key or password protected, with only appropriate persons having access to them.
- 2.5.3 Any referrals made to other agencies, including referrals to Children's Social Care, will be copied prior to sending and stored in the child's child protection file.
- 2.5.4 The DSL will maintain and regularly audit the school's child protection records, ensuring that each stand-alone file includes a chronology of significant events and that information and contact details are accurate and up-to-date.
- 2.5.5 The DSL may copy child protection records generated by the school prior to transfer and retain for as long as is necessary (normally d.o.b. + 25 years), where there is justification for believing that the records may be required as evidence of the school's involvement with the child for statutory purposes (e.g., court cases or serious case reviews). When the records are no longer required, they will be securely disposed of.
- 2.5.6 Where children leave our school the designated safeguarding lead will ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and **within 5 days** for an in-year transfer or within the **first 5 days** of the start of a new term to allow the new school or college to have support in place for when the child arrives. The designated safeguarding lead will ensure secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained, this will be transferred separately from the main pupil file.
- 2.5.7 The receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCO's) or the named persons with

oversight for special educational needs and disability (SEND) in a college, are aware as required.

- 2.5.8 Records relating to actual or alleged abuse or neglect are stored apart from normal pupil or staff records. Normal records sometimes have markers to show that there is sensitive material stored elsewhere. This is to protect individuals from accidental access to sensitive material by those who do not need to know.
- 2.5.9 Child protection records are stored securely, with access confined to specific staff, e.g., Designated Safeguarding Leads and the Head Teacher.
- 2.5.10 Child protection records are reviewed regularly to check whether any action or updating is needed. This includes monitoring patterns of complaints or concerns about any individuals (e.g., child who repeatedly goes missing) and ensuring these are acted upon. Each stand-alone file should have a chronology of significant events.
- 2.5.11 A record of any allegations (proven) made against staff is kept in a confidential file by the Headteacher
- 2.5.12 All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, are recorded in detail on Safeguard. Information is kept confidential and stored securely. Some files are still kept in locked storage filing cabinets (new paper transfers)
- 2.5.13 Records should include:
 - 2.5.13.1 a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern;
 - 2.5.13.2 details of how the concern was followed up and resolved;
 - 2.5.13.3 a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.
 - 2.5.13.4 If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

2.6 Filtering and Monitoring

- 2.6.1 The appropriateness of any filtering and monitoring systems are a matter for individual schools and colleges and will be informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty. At Woodrush High School, this will be discussed at least annually with Governors, DSL and IT support team.
- 2.6.2 The Department for Education has published [filtering and monitoring standards](#) which Woodrush High School will follow. We will therefore:
 - 2.6.2.1 Identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
 - 2.6.2.2 Review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
 - 2.6.2.3 Block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
 - 2.6.2.4 Have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs
- 2.6.3 We review the standards and discuss with IT staff and service providers what more needs to be done to support schools and colleges in meeting this standard, as needed.
- 2.6.4 [The Prevent duty Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers](#) and Home Office Additional guidance on filtering and monitoring can be found at: UK Safer Internet Centre: "appropriate" filtering and monitoring. [Appropriate Filtering - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)
- 2.6.5 Woodrush High School will use the South West Grid for Learning (swgfl.org.uk) tool to check whether our filtering provider is signed up to relevant lists (CSA content, Sexual Content, Terrorist content, Your Internet Connection Blocks Child Abuse & Terrorist Content). The DSL and IT Support Team AT Woodrush High School will use this tool to monitor its filtering and monitoring capabilities.



3 Whole School Approach to Safeguarding

- 3.1 Woodrush High School adheres to child protection procedures that have been agreed locally through [Safeguarding Worcestershire](#). Where we identify children and families in need of support, we will carry out our responsibilities in accordance with the [West Midlands Safeguarding Children Procedures](#) and the [WSCP Levels of Need Guidance](#).
- 3.2 Every member of staff, including volunteers working with children at our school, is advised to maintain an attitude of *'it could happen here'* where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child and have a responsibility to take action as outlined in this policy. They should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.
- 3.3 All staff are encouraged to report any concerns that they have and not see these as insignificant. On occasions, a referral is justified by a single incident such as an injury or disclosure of abuse. More often however, concerns accumulate over a period of time and are evidenced by building up a picture of harm over time; this is particularly true in cases of emotional abuse and neglect. In these circumstances, it is crucial that staff record and pass on concerns in accordance with this policy to allow the DSL to build up a picture and access support for the child at the earliest opportunity. A reliance on memory without accurate and contemporaneous records of concern could lead to a failure to protect.
- 3.4 It is *not* the responsibility of school staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All staff, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and pass the information on in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.
- 3.5 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be used as a first point of contact for concerns and queries regarding any safeguarding concern in our school. Any member of staff or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that a child is at risk of harm must report it immediately to the DSL or, if unavailable, to the deputy designated lead. In the absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff or Children's Social Care.
- 3.6 All concerns about a child or young person should be reported without delay and recorded on our online Safeguarding monitoring system 'Safeguard'. All new staff will be issued with a login for the system in the induction process.
- 3.7 In the case where a member of staff does not have access to 'Safeguard' then the concern needs to be reported in writing using Form 1 Logging a Concern about a Child's Safety and Welfare – all staff and visitors (See Appendix 1) Following receipt of any information raising concern, the DSL will consider what action to take and seek advice from Children's Services as required. All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented.
- 3.8 All referrals will be made in line with [local procedures](#) as detailed on the [Worcestershire website](#).
- 3.9 If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to Children's Services immediately. Anybody can make a referral. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration by raising concerns again with the DSL and/or the Headteacher. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.
- 3.10 Staff should always follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy in the first instance. However, they may also share information directly with Children's Services, or the police if:
- 3.10.1 the situation is an emergency and the designated senior person, their deputy and the Headteacher are all unavailable;
 - 3.10.2 they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety.
- 3.11 Any member of staff who does not feel that concerns about a child have been responded to appropriately and in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy should raise their concerns with the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors. If any member of staff does not feel the situation has been addressed appropriately at this point they should contact Children's Services directly with their concerns.
- 3.12 NSPCC's <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/> dedicated helpline is available as an alternative route for staff

who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their school or college. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk

3.13 **The school will:**

- 3.13.1 Ensure it has a senior leader nominated as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who has received appropriate training and support for this role;
- 3.13.2 Ensure it has at least one member of staff who will act in the absence of the DSL (deputy DSL);
- 3.13.3 Ensure it has a nominated governor/trustee who will take leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements;
- 3.13.4 Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and the governing body knows the name of the DSL and any deputies and understands their role;
- 3.13.5 Ensure that the DSL and/or a deputy DSL is always available to speak to during school hours and has made adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term time activities;
- 3.13.6 Ensure all staff and volunteers are alert to the potential need for early help and aware of those children whose vulnerabilities may indicate a greater need and are aware of the role they may play in supporting other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment;
- 3.13.7 Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and neglect, including the specific issues of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Children Missing Education (CME), Radicalisation and Extremism (Prevent), Serious Crime and Sexual Violence & Sexual Harassment, and maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here';
- 3.13.8 Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibility for referring any concerns to the DSL, deputy DSLs or other members of the senior leadership team in a timely manner and are aware that they may raise concerns directly with Children's Social Care Services if they believe their concerns have not been listened to or acted upon;
- 3.13.9 Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the school prospectus and publishing its policy on the school website;
- 3.13.10 Operate a lettings policy which ensures the suitability of adults working with children on school sites at any time;
- 3.13.11 Ensure that community users organising activities for children are aware of, and understand the need for compliance with the school's child protection guidelines and procedures;
- 3.13.12 Ensure that the duty of care towards its pupils and staff is promoted by raising awareness of illegal, unsafe and unwise behaviour and assist staff to monitor their own standards and practice;
- 3.13.13 Ensure that all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and are aware of whistleblowing procedures and helplines;
- 3.13.14 Be aware of and follow procedures set out by the DfE and the WSCP where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff or volunteer, including making a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- 3.13.15 Ensure that a referral is made to the DBS and/or the Teaching Regulation Agency if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or suspended or removed from regulated activity where the harm criteria is met, or would have been had they not resigned;
- 3.13.16 Operate safer recruitment practice, ensuring that at least one member on every recruitment panel has completed safer recruitment training.
- 3.13.17 Operate safer recruitment procedures and make sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on new staff and volunteers who will work with children including identity, right to work, enhanced DBS criminal record and barred list (and overseas where needed), references, and prohibition from teaching or managing in schools "s128" For senior

leaders in Academies/Independent schools and for Governors in maintained schools (Since September 2018)

- 3.13.18 As Education Safeguarding Practitioners we will liaise with the three safeguarding partners in line with Working Together 2018.
 - 3.13.19 Criminal history and suitability to work with children information should only be requested from applicants who have been shortlisted.
 - 3.13.20 As part of the shortlisting process schools and colleges should consider conducting an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school or college might want to explore with the applicant at interview.
- 3.14 Our procedures will be regularly reviewed and updated at least annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance requires the need for an interim review. We recognise the expertise our staff builds by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis. We therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated safeguarding arrangements.

3.15 **Training**

- 3.15.1 When staff join Woodrush High School, they will be informed of the safeguarding children arrangements in place during induction. They will have access to this policy including its Appendices and the school's safeguarding response to children who go missing from education, the pupil behaviour policy, part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (and **Annex A** for all school staff), the school's code of conduct and told who the DSL is, who acts in their absence and what this role includes
- 3.15.2 All staff will receive induction in safeguarding children. The induction programme will include basic child protection information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, when and how to record a concern about the welfare of a child and advice on safe working practice. All new staff will complete NSPCC – Introduction to safeguarding and Child Protection Online Training and [Prevent Training](#)
- 3.15.3 All staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety & **Filtering and Monitoring Processes**) at induction. The training is regularly updated. In addition, all our staff will receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates (for example, whole school CPD and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.
- 3.15.4 All volunteers, supply staff and regular visitors to our school will be told where our policy is kept, given the name of the DSL and deputy/ies and informed of the school's procedures in reporting concerns.
- 3.15.5 All staff will receive training in child protection and safe working practice **each year**, at the start of the year. Training will include signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, as well as training on specific safeguarding issues through the year, such as CSE, GET SAFE, FGM, Prevent, serious crime, on-line safety (**including Filtering and Monitoring**) and child on child abuse, including sexting and sexual violence and sexual harassment. Training will also include how to record and report abuse both within school and to Children's Social Care.
- 3.15.6 In addition, staff will receive safeguarding and child protection updates from the DSL as required, but at least annually.
- 3.15.7 Staff with specific responsibility for safeguarding children will undertake both single and inter-agency training at a level suitable to their role and responsibilities, updated every two years. In addition to formal training the DSL and deputy/ies will update their knowledge and skills via WSCP newsletters, briefings, network meetings and seminars, at regular intervals, at least annually.

- 3.15.8 Staff with leadership responsibilities will undertake further relevant training in safeguarding related issues such as CSE, GET SAFE, FGM, Prevent, Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment, Management of Allegations of Abuse and cascade the learning from this training to the rest of the staff.

3.16 Responsibilities

- 3.16.1 **The Governing Body** will nominate a member to take leadership responsibility for safeguarding children who will liaise with the DSL and or Headteacher in matters relating to safeguarding. It will ensure that:
- 3.16.1.1 Child protection/safeguarding policy, procedures and training are in place which are always effective and comply with the law. The policy is made available publicly.
 - 3.16.1.2 We will ensure that **all** governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training will equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in our school are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole
 - 3.16.1.3 The policy will be reviewed at least annually or more often, for example in the event of new guidance or a significant incident.
 - 3.16.1.4 Governors have an enhanced criminal records certificate from the DBS.
 - 3.16.1.5 We carry out a section 128 check for school governors, because a person subject to one is disqualified from being a governor.
 - 3.16.1.6 We check if a person we recruit as a governor is barred because of being subject to a section 128 direction.
 - 3.16.1.7 We operate safer recruitment practices, including appropriate use of references and checks on new staff and volunteers. Furthermore, the Head Teacher, a nominated Governor and other staff involved in the recruitment process have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training
 - 3.16.1.8 Procedures are in place for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers/ people in a position of trust.
 - 3.16.1.9 There is a senior member of Woodrush High School leadership team who is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with child protection (the “Designated Safeguarding Lead”) and there is always cover for this role (at least one deputy) with appropriate arrangements for before/after school and out of term activities.
 - 3.16.1.10 The Designated Safeguarding Lead undertakes effective Local authority training (in addition to basic child protection training) and this is refreshed every two years. In addition to this formal training, their knowledge and skills are updated at regular intervals (at least annually) via safeguarding e-briefings etc.
 - 3.16.1.11 The Head Teacher, and all other staff and volunteers who work with children, undertake appropriate training which is regularly updated (at least every year); and that new staff and volunteers who work with children are made aware of the school’s arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities (including this policy and Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022). Training should include FGM/Prevent/Child Exploitation.
 - 3.16.1.12 Any deficiencies or weaknesses in these arrangements brought to the attention of the Governing Body and will be rectified without delay.
 - 3.16.1.13 The Chair of Governors (**Prof S Brand**) or, in the absence of a Chair, the Vice Chair (**Mr P Emeili**) deals with any allegations of abuse made against the Head Teacher, with advice and guidance from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
 - 3.16.1.14 Effective policies and procedures are in place and updated annually including a behaviour “code of conduct” for staff and volunteers - [“Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those who work with children in education settings October 2015”](#).

- 3.16.1.15 Information is provided to the Local Authority (on behalf of the WSCP) when requested, for example through the Annual Safeguarding Return (e.g., section 175 audit)
 - 3.16.1.16 Our school Governing body and proprietors ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety. This as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.
 - 3.16.1.17 There is an individual member of the Governing Body (**Prof S Brand**) who will champion issues to do with safeguarding children and child protection within the school, liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and provide information and reports to the Governing Body.
 - 3.16.1.18 Woodrush High School contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance “Working Together to Safeguard Children” 2018 including providing a co-ordinated offer of Early Help for children who require this. Early Help may be offered directly through our [school early help provision](#) or via referral to an external support agency. Safeguarding arrangements consider the procedures and practice of the local authority and the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (WCSP).
 - 3.16.1.19 GDPR- Our governing body and proprietors are aware that among other obligations, the [Data Protection Act 2018](#) and the GDPR place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information we hold safe and secure in . [Data protection: toolkit for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
 - 3.16.1.20 Woodrush High School complies with all legislative safeguarding duties, including the duty to report suspected or known cases of FGM and the duty to prevent young people from being drawn into terrorism. In conjunction with the Head and DSL they should assess the level of risk within the school and put actions in place to reduce that risk
- 3.16.2 **The Headteacher** will ensure that:
- 3.16.2.1 The Safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body are effectively implemented and followed by all staff;
 - 3.16.2.2 Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other staff to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussions and other inter-agency meetings, and contributing to the assessment of children;
 - 3.16.2.3 Allegations of abuse or concerns that a member of staff or adult working at school may pose a risk of harm to a child or young person are notified to the Local Authority Designated Officer in a timely manner;
 - 3.16.2.4 All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice regarding children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner. The NSPCC whistle blowing helpline number is also available (0800 028 0285);
 - 3.16.2.5 All staff are made aware that they have an individual responsibility to pass on safeguarding concerns and that if all else fails to report these directly to Children’s Social Care (Children’s Services) or the Police.
 - 3.16.2.6 All allegations of abuse against staff are reported to the LADO in a timely manner.
- 3.16.3 **The DSL** will co-ordinate action on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within the school setting. The DSL is responsible for:
- 3.16.3.1 Organising child protection induction training for all newly appointed staff, whole staff training, refreshed at least every 3 years with annual updates as required;
 - 3.16.3.2 Providing a mechanism to ensure that all staff understand and are able to discharge their role and responsibilities as set out in Part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education;
 - 3.16.3.3 Undertaking, in conjunction with the Headteacher and Safeguarding Governor, an annual audit of safeguarding procedures, using the County s175 audit or similar;

- 3.16.3.4 Making use of the [Levels of Need guidance](#) when making a decision about whether or not the threshold for Early Help or Children's Social Care intervention is met;
- 3.16.3.5 Referring a child to the Family Front Door, when there are concerns about possible abuse and neglect;
- 3.16.3.6 Referring a child to the Channel Panel when there are concerns about possible radicalisation or involvement in extremist groups;
- 3.16.3.7 Liaising with the headteacher to ensure he/she is informed of all child protection issues, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations;
- 3.16.3.8 Liaising with other staff (for example pastoral support staff, school nurses or counsellors, IT technicians or e-safety co-ordinators, SENCOs and Looked After Children Co-ordinators) on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies;
- 3.16.3.9 Liaise with the three safeguarding partners and work with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children. NPCC- When to call the police should help designated safeguarding leads understand when they should consider calling the police and what to expect when they do. [NPCC - When to call the police](#)
- 3.16.3.10 Keeping written records of concerns about children, including the use of body maps, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately – completed using 'Safeguard';
- 3.16.3.11 Ensuring all child protection records are kept securely (Safeguard), separate from the main pupil file, and in locked/password protected locations;
- 3.16.3.12 Ensuring that all child protection files are transferred in a safe and timely manner when a child moves settings, both between and across phases, within and out of county and that a receipt of transfer is obtained;
- 3.16.3.13 Notifying the key worker if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is subject to a child protection plan;
- 3.16.3.14 Monitoring unauthorised absence, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions, reporting concerns in line with 'missing children' procedures;
- 3.16.3.15 Developing effective links with relevant agencies and other professionals and co-operating as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters including co-operation with serious case reviews, attendance at strategy meetings, initial and review child protection conferences, core group and child in need review meetings;
- 3.16.3.16 Contributing to assessments and providing a report to initial and review conferences, if requested, which has been shared with parents first, whenever possible;
- 3.16.3.17 Co-ordinating a programme of safety, health and well-being through the curriculum, including issues of protective behaviours, healthy relationships, staying safe on-line, and the promotion of fundamental British values.
- 3.16.3.18 Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff.

3.17 **What School and College Staff Need to Know**

- 3.17.1 **All** staff are aware of systems within our Woodrush High School which support safeguarding, and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This should include the:
 - 3.17.1.1 child protection policy.
 - 3.17.1.2 behaviour policy (which should include measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying), [Behaviour guidance updated](#)
 - 3.17.1.3 staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct).
 - 3.17.1.4 safeguarding response to children who go missing from education; and
 - 3.17.1.5 role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

3.17.1.6 Copies of policies and a copy of Part one (or Annex A in Keeping Children Safe if appropriate) of this document is provided to staff at induction.

3.17.1.7 **All our** staff will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring – at induction. The training should be regularly updated. In addition, **all** staff will receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

3.17.1.8 **All our** staff will be aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it.

3.17.1.9 **All our** staff are aware of the process for making referrals to children’s social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17(children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

3.17.1.10 **All our staff** should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.

3.17.1.11 **All our** staff know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused, exploited, or neglected. Staff know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and children’s social care. Staff never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.

3.17.1.12 **All our** staff are able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

3.17.1.13 **Our staff are aware of:** [West Midlands procedures:](#)

Within the West Midlands, there are twelve local areas that collaborate with regards to child safeguarding procedures. With the introduction of *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*, each local area’s multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are led by the statutory safeguarding partners/organisations: local authorities, clinical commissioning groups and the police.

These child protection and safeguarding procedures are for nine participating areas and are effective from 31st March 2017.

Background

A project proposal was successfully submitted to DfE on behalf of the West Midlands Safeguarding Children Partnerships to develop regional safeguarding procedures. It was felt that it would be sensible to move to a more regional approach to multi-agency working around safeguarding, especially in light of the fact that so many partner organisations (including Police, Probation, Health and many others) span an area that crosses local authority boundaries.

Introduction [WCF Levels of Need threshold](#)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) requires the safeguarding partners to publish a threshold document which sets out the local criteria for action when an early help response and the criteria for making a referral to local authority children’s social care. Effective Early Help relies upon local organisations and agencies working together to identify children and families who would benefit from Early Help. A setting can undertake an assessment of the need for early help and provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on

activity to improve the outcomes for the child Local authorities, under section 10 of the Children Act 2004.

We, have a responsibility to promote inter-agency cooperation to improve the welfare of all children The terms 'Early Help' and 'Early Intervention' are often used interchangeably, and this can cause confusion.

The Department for Education and Ofsted both use the term 'Early Help' and this has also been adopted by Worcestershire. The term refers to the support which is needed for children and families at the first sign of additional unmet needs, at any point in the child's life from pre-birth through to 18 years. Providing the right help at the earliest opportunity can help to solve problems before they become more pressing and complex and avert the need for statutory intervention later on in their life. This document is intended to assist professionals to make decisions about how to respond to the needs of the children, young people and families they are in contact or working with. It is not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive or is a definitive way to open or close a gateway to a particular service or range of services. Every child and family are unique, and their needs should be considered on a case-by-case basis and decisions made using professional judgement, supported by this guidance.



4 Specific Safeguarding Issues

4.1 Online Safety

- 4.1.1 It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. An effective whole school and college approach to online safety empowers a school or college to protect and educate pupils, students, and staff in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate. All staff are aware that abuse can take place solely online.
- 4.1.2 The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable and ever evolving, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:
- 4.1.2.1 **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, and extremism.
 - 4.1.2.2 **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
 - 4.1.2.3 **conduct:** online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending, and receiving explicit images (e.g., consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying, and
 - 4.1.2.4 **commerce:** - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group [APWG | Unifying The Global Response To Cybercrime](#)
- 4.1.3 Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure online safety is a running and interrelated theme whilst devising and implementing their whole school or college approach to safeguarding and related policies and procedures. This will include considering how online safety is reflected as required in all relevant policies and considering online safety whilst planning the curriculum, any teacher training, the role and responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) and any parental engagement.
- 4.1.4 Considering the 4Cs (above) will provide the basis of an effective online policy. Our school have a clear policy on the use of mobile and smart technology, which will also reflect the fact many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e. 3G, 4G and 5G). This access means some children, whilst at school or college, have the ability to sexually harass, bully, and control others via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images consensually and non-consensually (often via large chat groups) and view and share pornography and other harmful content.
- 4.1.5 As an education setting, we are directly responsible for ensuring they have the appropriate level of security protection procedures in place in order to safeguard their systems, staff and learners and review the effectiveness of these procedures periodically to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies. Guidance on e-security is available from the [National Education Network](#). In addition, we identify need by meeting the [Cyber security standards for schools and colleges.GOV.UK](#). Broader guidance on cyber security including considerations for governors and trustees can be found at [Cyber security training for school staff - NCSC.GOV.UK](#).
- 4.1.6 **Remote Education**
- 4.1.6.1 We are in regular contact with parents and carers. These communications are be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online and parents and carers are likely to find it helpful to understand what systems schools and colleges use to filter and monitor online use. It will be especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will asked to access and be

clear who from the school or college (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

4.1.7 **Filters and Monitoring**

4.1.7.1 Woodrush High School's governing body need to ensure the limit of children's exposure to the above risks from the school's or college's IT system. Our governing body ensure our school or college has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness. We ensure that the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified. We also consider the age range of their children, the number of children, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs verses safeguarding risks.

4.1.7.2 The school run termly filtering reports using [Test Your Internet Filter | SWGfL Test Filtering](#). These reports are designed to see if the filtering and monitoring of the school's system are compliant. This is reported to the governing body and are led in conjunction with the Governing Body's Safeguarding Link – Mr Paul Harrison

4.2 **Children Missing Education (CME) (See CME Policy)**

4.2.1 We recognise that a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

4.2.2 Our procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education are based on the [Local Authority](#) and [West Midlands Safeguarding Children procedures](#). Staff are made aware of these procedures at induction and through our Attendance Policy and our Children Missing in Education Policy. We will make every attempt to obtain more than one emergency contact number for each child registered at the school to ensure we are able to make contact with a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

4.2.3 We will ensure that we inform the local authority when removing a child from the school role at standard and non-standard transition points in line with the [DfE guidance on Children Missing Education](#)

4.2.4 We will ensure that we follow these procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

4.2.5 We will ensure that we report children missing education to the LA CME officer, in line with statutory requirements.

4.2.6 Guidance on school attendance [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) including information on how schools should work with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.

4.2.7 Further information for schools providing education for a child of compulsory school age can be found in: [Full-time-Enrolment of 14 to 16 year olds in Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges](#).

4.2.8 General information and advice for schools and colleges can be found in the Government's [Missing Children and Adults Strategy](#). & [Keeping children safe in out-of-school settings](#)

4.2.9 **Electively Home Educated**

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

- 4.2.9.2 From September 2016 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended, we must inform our Worcestershire Children First all deletions from our admission register when a child is taken off roll.
- 4.2.9.3 Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, we will work together to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible.

4.3 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) – see Appendix 3

- 4.3.1 We recognise that CSE is a form of child sexual abuse involving criminal behaviours against children and young people which can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. Sexual exploitation involves an individual or group of adults taking advantage of the vulnerability of an individual or groups of children or young people. Victims can be boys or girls. Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into sexual exploitation through the offer of friendship and care, gifts, drugs and alcohol, and sometimes accommodation. It may also be linked to child trafficking.
- 4.3.2 The school addresses the risks of sexual exploitation in the PSHE and SRE curriculum. A common feature of sexual exploitation is that the child often doesn't recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and doesn't see themselves as a victim. The child may initially resent what they perceive as interference by staff, but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse.
- 4.3.3 All staff, volunteers and governors are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation, the fact that the victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual and that it does not always involve physical contact but can occur through the use of technology. All concerns of child sexual exploitation are reported immediately to the DSL.

4.4 Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment - Appendix 4

- 4.4.1 Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.
- 4.4.2 **Woodrush High School will respond to all reports of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment.**
- 4.4.3 For detailed information on what sexual violence and sexual harassment constitutes, important context to be aware of, related legal responsibilities for schools and colleges, advice on a whole school or college approach to preventing child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment and more detailed advice on responding to reports see departmental advice in Section 5 KCSiE 2023

4.5 Serious violence, including Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) - County Lines – Appendix 5

- 4.5.1 This is where children and young people are being exploited and drawn into drug related activity by criminal gangs, groups or individuals. Typically, the gang exploits young or vulnerable people to store and/or supply drugs, move cash and to secure the use of homes belonging to vulnerable adults. There is a cross over between CSE and County Lines and young people are sometimes required to offer sex in order to pay off perceived debts. Concerns about young people being possibly involved should be passed to the DSL who will refer to Police and the Family Front Door/GETSAFE

4.6 Domestic Abuse – Appendix 6

- 4.6.1 We recognise that exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships as well as in the context of their home life.
- 4.6.2 We will ensure that our pupils are educated to ensure they understand what a healthy relationship looks like, for example by using the [WSCB Healthy Relationships – a whole school approach](#) and resources from the [WCC Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence website](#).
- 4.6.3 Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional.
- 4.6.4 Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.
- 4.6.5 All concerns regarding Domestic Abuse will be reported to the DSL, who will ensure that appropriate support is available to the young people and make referrals to the Family Front Door where the threshold for social care intervention is met.

4.7 Extremism and Radicalisation – Appendix 7

- 4.7.1 We recognise that children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. We recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation and extremism is no different to safeguarding against any other vulnerability in today's society. We will ensure that:
- 4.7.2 Through training, staff, volunteers and governors have an understanding of what radicalisation and extremism is, why we need to be vigilant in school and how to respond when concerns arise.
- 4.7.3 There are systems in place for keeping pupils safe from extremist material when accessing the internet in our school by using effective filtering, monitoring and usage policies.
- 4.7.4 The DSL has received Prevent training and will act as the point of contact within our school for any concerns relating to radicalisation and extremism.
- 4.7.5 The DSL will make referrals in accordance with [West Midlands child protection procedures](#) and will represent our school at Channel meetings as required.
- 4.7.6 Through our curriculum, we will promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. We encourage pupils to respect the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 4.7.7 We will use relevant information, tools and resources to help our staff and parents recognise and address extremism and radicalisation in young people, for example the [Educate Against Hate website](#).

4.8 Forced Marriage – Appendix 8

- 4.8.1 Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.
- 4.8.2 A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices as a way to coerce a person into marriage.

Staff at Woodrush High School understand we could potentially play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

- 4.8.3 The Forced Marriage Unit has published [statutory guidance](#) and [Multi-agency guidelines](#), pages 35-36 of which focus on the role of schools and colleges. Woodrush High School staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fm@fco.gov.uk.
- 4.8.4 In addition, since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

4.9 'Honour Based' Abuse and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) – Appendix 8 & 9

- 4.9.1 We recognise that our staff are well placed to identify concerns and take action to prevent children from becoming victims of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and other forms of so-called 'honour-based' abuse such as 'Breast Ironing' and provide guidance on these issues through our safeguarding training.
- 4.9.2 If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBA they should inform the DSL who will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multiagency liaison with police and children's social care.
- 4.9.3 Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on teachers (persons employed or engaged to carry out teaching work). Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers in England and Wales, to personally report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.
- 4.9.4 Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions.
- 4.9.5 We will provide guidance and support to our teachers on this requirement and further information on when and how to make a report can be found in the following Home Office guidance: '[Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation - procedural information](#)' (October 2015). [2023 Forced Marriage Guidance, The right to choose: gov guidance on forced marriage](#)

4.10 Modern Slavery

- 4.10.1 The Modern Slavery Act 2015 places a new statutory duty on public authorities, including schools, to notify the National Crime Agency (NCA) (section 52 of the Act) on observing signs or receiving intelligence relating to modern slavery. The public authority (including schools) bears this obligation where it has 'reasonable grounds to believe that a person may be a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking'. Staff need to be aware of this duty and inform the DSL should they suspect or receive information that either parents or their children may be victims of modern slavery. The DSL will then contact the NCA.

4.11 Child on Child Abuse - Appendix 3

- 4.11.1 We recognise that children are also vulnerable to physical, sexual and emotional abuse by their peers or siblings. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexual violence (such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault) and sexual harassment (such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse); upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery - see **Appendix**); and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

- 4.11.2 Abuse perpetrated by children can be just as harmful as that perpetrated by an adult, so it is important to remember the impact on the victim of the abuse as well as to focus on the support for the child or young person exhibiting the harmful behaviour. Such abuse will always be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult and the same [safeguarding children procedures](#) will apply in respect of any child who is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Staff must never tolerate or dismiss concerns relating to child on child abuse, must not pass it off as ‘banter’, ‘just having a laugh’ or ‘part of growing up’.
- 4.11.3 We will ensure, through training, that staff, volunteers and governors will understand the range of child on child abuse, including sexual violence and sexual harassment, and will be made aware of how to recognise and manage such issues. Staff will be given the skills to identify and manage harmful sexual behaviour using resources such as the [Brook Traffic Light Tool](#). Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk, for example girls, children with SEND and LGBT children.
- 4.11.4 Staff should be aware that such incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and can occur between children outside the school. Staff, and particularly the DSL, should always consider the context in which such incidents and/or behaviours occur – this is known as ‘contextual safeguarding’.
- 4.11.5 Where the abuse is physical, verbal, bullying or cyber-bullying, recording of such incidents and sanctions will be applied in line with our Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies. Where a child discloses safeguarding allegations of a sexual nature against another pupil in the same setting, the DSL should refer to the West Midlands Safeguarding Children procedures website (section 3.3) and seek advice from the Family Front Door or Community Social Worker before commencing its own investigation or contacting parents. This may mean, on occasions, that the school is unable to conduct its own investigation into such incidents. All such incidents will be recorded using our child protection recording forms.
- 4.11.6 Reports of incidents of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be responded to in line with Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- 4.11.7 Support for the victims of abuse will be in line with support outlined in the school’s Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies. For victims of sexual abuse, the school should follow advice given by Children’s Social Care and consider using external agencies, such as Early Help or [West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre](#) to support any strategies that they may be able to provide within school.
- 4.11.8 Depending on the nature of abuse, the school may need to consider providing measures to protect and support the victim, the alleged perpetrator and other pupils and/or staff in the school by means of a risk assessment. The risk assessment should be recorded and kept under review.

4.12 **Racist Incidents**

- 4.12.1 Our policy on racist incidents is set out in our Equality Statement and Behaviour Policy and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. We maintain a log of racist incidents in school through the School’s Management Information System (Arbor).

4.13 **Anti-Bullying**

- 4.13.1 Our policy on anti-bullying is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying, sexting, racist, homophobic and gender-related bullying, will be dealt with in accordance with our anti-bullying policy. We recognise that children with special needs and/or disabilities are more susceptible to being bullied. We maintain a log of bullying incidents in school.

4.13.2 We recognise that there will be occasions when bullying incidents will fall within child protection procedures or may be deemed criminal activity and that it may be necessary to report the concerns to the Family Front Door or to the Police.

5 Supporting Children and Children with Additional Vulnerabilities



5.1 All Children

- 5.1.1 We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame.
- 5.1.2 We acknowledge that school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.
- 5.1.3 We are aware that research shows that at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn.
- 5.1.4 The school will endeavour to support all children by:
 - 5.1.4.1 encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness through the curriculum, as well as promoting respectful relationships, challenging bullying and humiliating behaviour;
 - 5.1.4.2 promoting a positive, supportive and secure environment giving pupils a sense of being valued
 - 5.1.4.3 a consistently applied school behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but that they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred;
 - 5.1.4.4 liaising with other agencies that support the pupil such as Children's Social Care Services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Educational Psychology Service and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children;
 - 5.1.4.5 the use of Early Help Services, through the Family Front Door, when appropriate;
 - 5.1.4.6 notifying Children's Social Care Services immediately there is a significant concern;
 - 5.1.4.7 providing continuing support to a child about whom there have been concerns who leaves the school by ensuring that appropriate information is forwarded under confidential cover to the child's new setting.

5.2 Looked after children and previously looked after children

- 5.2.1 The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that staff have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after legal status and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. They also have information about the child's care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The designated teacher for looked after children and the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the Local Authority's Virtual Head for children in care and previously looked after children.
- 5.2.2 We recognise that a previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and therefore ensure that all staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe.
- 5.2.3 Our designated teacher for looked after children and previously looked after children has the appropriate training and the relevant qualifications and experience of working with this group of children.
- 5.2.4 The DSL will obtain details of the local authority Personal Adviser appointed to guide and support each care leaver and will liaise with them as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

5.3 Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

- 5.3.1 Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. We

ensure their child protection policy reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children

5.3.2 These can include:

5.3.2.1 Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration

5.3.2.2 These children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children

5.3.2.3 The potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs, and

5.3.2.4 Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.

5.3.2.5 Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.

5.3.3 Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will therefore require close liaison with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy) and the SENCO

5.3.4 We consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place.

5.3.4.1 [SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years](#), and

5.3.4.2 [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

5.3.5 And from specialist organisations such as:

5.3.5.1 The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Support Services (SENDIASS). SENDIASS offer information, advice and support for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. All local authorities have such a service: [Find your local IAS service \(councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk\)](#)

5.3.5.2 [Mencap](#) - Represents people with learning disabilities, with specific advice and information for people who work with children and young people

5.4 Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBT)

5.4.1 The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.

5.4.2 Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that at Woodrush High School we endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

5.4.3 LGBT inclusion is part of the statutory Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum and there is a range of support available to help schools counter homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and abuse.

5.5 Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm

5.5.1 Children who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)

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

5.5.3 Local authorities should share the fact a child has a social worker, and the designated safeguarding lead should hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. This should be

considered as a matter of routine. There are clear powers to share this information under existing duties on both local authorities and schools and colleges to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- 5.5.4 Where children need a social worker, this should inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services).
- 5.5.5 Findings from the Children in Need review, [‘Improving the educational outcomes of Children in Need of help and protection’](#) contains further information; the conclusion of the review, [‘Help, protection, education’](#) sets out action Government is taking to support this.

5.6 Mental Health

- 5.6.1 All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- 5.6.2 Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.
- 5.6.3 Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children’s experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.
- 5.6.4 If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy, and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.
- 5.6.5 The DfE has published advice and guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying, and Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools. In addition, Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among young people including its guidance Promoting children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing.



6 Other Safeguarding Protocols

6.1 Positive Physical Intervention / Use of reasonable force

- 6.1.1 Our policy on positive handling is set out in our Policy on the Use of Positive Physical Intervention and acknowledges that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury or damage to property.
- 6.1.2 We acknowledge that when applying reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEN or disabilities or with medical conditions, it is important to recognise their additional vulnerability and make every effort to reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use reasonable force.
- 6.1.3 We understand that physical intervention of a nature that causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under management of allegations or disciplinary procedures.
- 6.1.4 Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention will be appropriately trained in the Team Teach technique, or equivalent.
- 6.1.5 All incidences of physical intervention will be recorded in accordance with the Team Teach recommended procedures. Red Book
- 6.1.6 We recognise that touch is appropriate in the context of working with children and all staff have been given 'safe working practice' guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundaries.
- 6.1.7 We recognise that the adoption of a 'no contact' policy could leave staff unable to fully support and protect our pupils.
- 6.1.8 We follow guidance from the DfE - [Use of reasonable force in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612222/Use_of_reasonable_force_in_schools_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

6.2 Alternative Provision (Offsite Education)

- 6.2.1 Woodrush High School are aware of the additional risk of harm that their pupils may be vulnerable to when educated offsite.
- 6.2.2 The Department has issued two pieces of statutory guidance to which commissioners of Alternative Provision should have regard:
 - 6.2.2.1 [Alternative provision](#) – DfE Statutory Guidance
 - 6.2.2.2 [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school](#)
- 6.2.3 We will always check that each Alternative Provision will have their own safeguarding protocols and policies in place before a child is placed at each provision.

6.3 Information Sharing & Confidentiality

- 6.3.1 Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse.
- 6.3.2 All personal information will be processed fairly and lawfully in line with our duties under the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR and will be held safely and securely. However, we recognise that this is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child being placed at risk of harm.
- 6.3.3 We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.
- 6.3.4 The Headteacher or DSL will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.
- 6.3.5 All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
- 6.3.6 All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being.

- 6.3.7 When a child about whom concerns have been raised and recorded leaves the school, the DSL will consider if it would be appropriate to share information with the new school in advance of the child leaving to ensure that support is in place for when the child arrives.

6.4 Communication with Parents

- 6.4.1 We recognise that good communication with parents is crucial in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children effectively.
- 6.4.2 We will always undertake appropriate discussion with parents prior to involvement of another agency **unless to do so would place the child or an adult at further risk of harm or would impede a criminal investigation.**
- 6.4.3 We will ensure that parents understand the responsibilities placed on the school and staff to safeguard children and their duty to co-operate with other agencies in this respect.

6.5 Supporting and Supervision of Staff

- 6.5.1 We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting.
- 6.5.2 We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSL and to seek further support such as counselling or regular supervision, as appropriate.
- 6.5.3 We will enable supervision for the DSL through network meetings, direct consultation with the Safeguarding in Education Adviser or Consultant Social Workers in order to promote best practice and challenge unsatisfactory or poor practice.
- 6.5.4 In order to reduce the risk of allegations being made against staff, and ensure that staff are competent, confident and safe to work with children, they will be made aware of safer working practice guidance and will be given opportunities in training to develop their understanding of what constitutes safe and unsafe behaviour.

6.6 Safer Recruitment and Selection of Staff (Including Supply Staff)

- 6.6.1 The school has a written recruitment and selection policy statement and procedures linking explicitly to this policy. The statement is included in all job advertisements, publicity material, recruitment websites, and candidate information packs.
- 6.6.2 The recruitment process is robust in seeking to establish the commitment of candidates to support the school's measures to safeguard children and to identify, deter or reject people who might pose a risk of harm to children or are otherwise unsuited to work with them.
- 6.6.3 References are requested and scrutinised for all candidates prior to interview and any discrepancies or concerns are raised and discussed during interview, including for any volunteers and internal candidates. References are always requested directly from the referee and verified as being from a senior person with appropriate authority; electronic references are checked to ensure they originate from a legitimate source. Where specific questions have not been answered satisfactorily or insufficient information is provided, the referee will be contacted directly for further clarification. Where references are not forthcoming, despite reminders, the candidate will be asked to provide an alternative referee.
- 6.6.4 Criminal history and suitability to work with children information should only be requested from applicants who have been shortlisted.
- 6.6.5 In addition, as part of our shortlisting process we will consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school or college might want to explore with the applicant at interview. We will inform shortlisted candidates that online searches may be done as part of due diligence checks. See Part two - Legislation and the Law for information on data protection and UK GDPR

- 6.6.6 All staff working within our school who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability, including verification of their identity, qualifications and a satisfactory barred list check, enhanced DBS check and a right to work in the UK.
- 6.6.7 All teachers working within our school have been checked using the [Teacher Services website](#) to ensure they have been awarded QTS, they have completed their teacher induction and that there are no prohibitions, sanctions or restrictions in place that might prevent them from taking part in certain activities or working in specific positions, e.g. management posts.
- 6.6.8 The school seeks written assurance from supply and third-party agencies, alternative providers, initial teacher training providers and contractors that they have undertaken all appropriate checks on any of their staff that work with or have regular contact with our pupils.
- 6.6.9 Our governors are subject to an enhanced DBS check without barred list check and have been checked to ensure they are not disqualified from holding office under a section 128 direction.
- 6.6.10 The school maintains a single central record of recruitment checks for audit purposes.
- 6.6.11 Any member of staff working in regulated activity prior to receipt of a satisfactory DBS check will not be left unsupervised and will be subject to a risk assessment.
- 6.6.12 Volunteers who are not working in regulated activity, will be supervised at all times. A risk assessment will be undertaken to help decide whether an enhanced DBS check, without barred list check, is required.

6.7 Allegations against staff (Including Supply Staff/Volunteers and Contractors)

- 6.7.1 We acknowledge that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff, Supply Staff or volunteer.
- 6.7.2 If staff have safeguarding concerns, or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including supply staff and volunteers) posing a risk of harm to children, then:
 - 6.7.2.1 this should be referred to the headteacher
 - 6.7.2.2 where there are concerns/allegations about the headteacher, this should be referred to the chair of governors,
- 6.7.3 If such an allegation is made, which meets the criteria as identified in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Headteacher, unless the allegation concerns the Headteacher, in which case the Chair of Governors will be informed immediately. Where the Headteacher is the sole proprietor, the allegation will be reported directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- 6.7.4 The Headteacher (or Chair of Governors) on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with LADO, prior to undertaking any investigation.
- 6.7.5 The school will follow the DfE, [West Midlands Safeguarding Children](#) and [LA procedures](#) for managing allegations against staff, a copy of which is available in school.
- 6.7.6 The case manager (This will be the headteacher, or, where the headteacher is the subject of an allegation, the chair of governors) will be guided by the LADO in all matters relating to the case, including suspension, sharing of information and any follow up investigation.
- 6.7.7 Whilst the school is not the employer of supply teachers, we shall ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In no circumstances should a school decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the local authority designated officer (LADO) to determine a suitable outcome. Governing bodies and proprietors should discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, whilst they carry out their investigation.
- 6.7.8 Agencies should be fully involved and co-operate in any enquiries from the LADO, police and/or children's social services. The school will usually take the lead because agencies do not have direct access to children or other school staff, so they will not be able to collect the facts when an allegation is made, nor do they have all the relevant information required by the LADO as part of the referral process. Supply teachers, whilst not employed by the school, are under the supervision, direction and control of the governing body or proprietor when working in the school. They should be advised to contact their trade union representative if they have

one, or a colleague for support. The allegations management meeting which is often arranged by the LADO should address issues such as information sharing, to ensure that any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are considered by the school during the investigation.

- 6.7.9 When using an agency, the school will inform the agency of its process for managing allegations. This should include inviting the agency's human resource manager or equivalent to meetings and keeping them up to date with information about its policies.

6.8 Allegations that do not meet the harm threshold

- 6.8.1 If an allegation does not meet the threshold, we will manage appropriately to safeguard young people.

6.9 Low Level Concerns and how to report them

- 6.9.1 The School and Governing Body have policies and processes to deal with any concerns (including allegations) which do not meet the harm threshold, referred to as 'low-level' concerns.
- 6.9.2 We ensure that Woodrush High School promotes an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of our school (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.
- 6.9.3 Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical. If implemented correctly, this should:
- 6.9.3.1 encourage an open and transparent culture
 - 6.9.3.2 enable schools to identify inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour early
 - 6.9.3.3 minimise the risk of abuse and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the institution.
- 6.9.4 **What is a low-level concern?**
- 6.9.4.1 The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or may have acted in a way that:
- 6.9.4.1.1 is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO. Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:
 - 6.9.4.1.1.1 being over friendly with children
 - 6.9.4.1.1.2 having favourites
 - 6.9.4.1.1.3 taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
 - 6.9.4.1.1.4 engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or
 - 6.9.4.1.1.5 humiliating pupils.
 - 6.9.4.2 Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.
 - 6.9.4.3 Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.
 - 6.9.4.4 It is crucial that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of the school from becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings
- 6.9.5 Low level concerns about a member of staff will always be recorded. If there are concerns about Supply Staff, volunteers or Contractors, these should be reported to their employer to ensure that any pattern of inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Staff are also encouraged to feel confident to self-refer if they feel that they have been in a situation which

could be misinterpreted as being compromising or if they feel that they may have behaved in a way that falls below the expected standards of professionalism.

- 6.9.6 All low-level concerns should be recorded in writing. The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible. Records will be retained by the Headteacher and will be reviewed regularly so that potential patterns of concerning behaviour can be identified. Should the level of concern reach the harms threshold the case will be referred to the LADO. Records will be retained until the individual ceases to be employed in the school.
- 6.10 Abuse of Position of Trust**
- 6.10.1 We recognise that as adults working in the school, we are in a relationship of trust with pupils in our care and acknowledge that it could be considered a criminal offence to abuse that trust.
- 6.10.2 We acknowledge that the principle of equality embedded in the legislation of the Sexual Offenders Act 2003 applies irrespective of sexual orientation: neither homosexual nor heterosexual relationships are acceptable within a position of trust.
- 6.10.3 We recognise that the legislation is intended to protect young people in education who are over the age of consent but under 18 years of age.
- 6.11 Complaints or Concerns expressed by Pupils, Parents, Staff or Volunteers**
- 6.11.1 We recognise that listening to children is an important and essential part of safeguarding them against abuse and neglect. To this end, any expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet in relation to an individual child will be listened to and acted upon in order to safeguard his/her welfare.
- 6.11.2 We will also seek to ensure that the child or adult who makes a complaint is informed not only about the action the school will take but also the length of time that will be required to resolve the complaint. The school will also endeavour to keep the child or adult regularly informed as to the progress of his/her complaint. The school's complaints procedures are readily available.
- 6.12 Whistleblowing (Confidential Reporting)**
- 6.12.1 We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.
- 6.12.2 All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of colleagues using the school's confidential reporting (whistleblowing) policy.
- 6.12.3 Whistleblowing concerns about the Headteacher should be raised with the Chair of Governors. Where the Headteacher is also the sole proprietor, concerns should be reported directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- 6.12.4 Staff will be made aware that if they feel unable to raise a child protection failure internally, they can contact the [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](#).
- 6.13 Photography and use of images (including hand-held devices)**
- 6.13.1 The welfare and protection of our children is paramount, and consideration should always be given to whether the use of photography will place our children at risk. Images may be used to harm children, for example as a preliminary to 'grooming' or by displaying them inappropriately on the internet, particularly social networking sites.
- 6.13.2 For this reason, consent is always sought when photographing children using any means and including iPads, smart phones or cameras and additional consideration given to photographing vulnerable children, particularly Looked After Children or those known to be fleeing domestic violence. Consent must be sought from those with parental responsibility (this may include the Local Authority in the case of Looked After Children).

- 6.13.3 Many pupils own or have access to handheld devices and parents are encouraged to consider measures to keep their children safe when using the internet and social media at home and in the community.
- 6.14 Staff/pupil relationships**
- 6.14.1 The school provides advice to staff regarding their personal online activity and has strict rules regarding online contact and electronic communication with pupils. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action or child protection investigation.
- 6.15 Health & Safety**
- 6.15.1 Our Health & Safety policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the safeguarding of our children both within the school environment and when away from the school, for example when undertaking school trips and visits.
- 6.15.2 Risk Assessments are undertaken and reviewed regularly, in respect of site security, risk of children being drawn into terrorism or exposed to extremist behaviour, risk to and from children displaying harmful behaviour.
- 6.16 Safe Environment**
- 6.16.1 The school undertakes appropriate risk assessments and checks in respect of all equipment and of the building and grounds in line with local and national guidance and regulations concerning health and safety.
- 6.16.2 The school has adequate security arrangements in place in respect of the use of its grounds and buildings by visitors both in and out of school hours.
- 6.16.3 Visitors to the school, for example visiting speakers, theatre groups or curriculum specialists, will be appropriately checked and vetted, to ensure they are not linked to extremist groups or promoting extremist or other harmful material.
- 6.17 Private fostering arrangements**
- 6.17.1 A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16 or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. Children looked after by the local authority or who are placed in a residential school, children's home or hospital are not considered to be privately fostered.
- 6.17.2 Private fostering occurs in all cultures, including British culture and children may be privately fostered at any age.
- 6.17.3 Most privately fostered children remain safe and well, but safeguarding concerns have been raised in some cases, so it is important that schools are alert to possible safeguarding issues, including the possibility that a child has been trafficked into the country.
- 6.17.4 By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify Children's Services as soon as possible.
- 6.17.5 If we become aware of a privately fostering arrangement, we will check that Children's Services have been informed.
- 6.18 Homelessness**
- 6.18.1 Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household

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

- 6.18.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live. The following factsheets usefully summarise the new duties: Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets. The new duties shift focus to early intervention and encourage those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.
- 6.18.3 In most cases school staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Children's services will be the lead agency for these young people and the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure appropriate referrals are on the provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation.

6.19 **Challenge and Escalation**

- 6.19.1 We recognise that professional disagreements may arise between any agencies and resolving problems is an integral part of co-operation and joint working to safeguard children.
- 6.19.2 As part of our responsibility for safeguarding children, we acknowledge that we must be prepared to challenge each other if we feel that responses to concerns, assessments or the way in which plans are implemented are not safeguarding the child and promoting their welfare.
- 6.19.3 We are aware of the [WSCP escalation procedures](#) for raising concerns in respect of poor practice and recognise our responsibility to utilise these as and when necessary, in the interests of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

6.20 **Other Relevant Policies**

- 6.20.1 The Governing Body's statutory responsibility for safeguarding the welfare of children goes beyond basic child protection procedures.
- 6.20.2 The duty is now to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activity and functions. This policy therefore complements and supports a range of other policies, for instance:
 - 6.20.2.1 Staff Behaviour / Staff Code of Conduct
 - 6.20.2.2 Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and other Staff
 - 6.20.2.3 Complaints Procedure
 - 6.20.2.4 Behaviour Management
 - 6.20.2.5 Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy
 - 6.20.2.6 Anti-Bullying, including cyber-bullying
 - 6.20.2.7 Positive Physical Intervention
 - 6.20.2.8 Special Educational Needs
 - 6.20.2.9 Trips and visits
 - 6.20.2.10 Work experience and extended work placements
 - 6.20.2.11 First aid and the administration of medicines

6.20.2.12 Health and Safety

6.20.2.13 Intimate Care

6.20.2.14 Sex and Relationships Education

6.20.2.15 Safe and Appropriate Use of Images

6.20.2.16 Equal Opportunities

6.20.2.17 E-safety and Acceptable Internet Use

6.20.2.18 Whistleblowing (Confidential Reporting)

6.20.2.19 Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation

6.20.3 The above list is not exhaustive but when undertaking development or planning of any kind the school will need to consider safeguarding matters.



Logging a Concern about a Child’s Safety and Welfare – all visitors

Pupil's name:		Year Group:	
D.o.b			
Date:		Time:	
Name:	
Print		Signature	
Position:			
Note the reason(s) for recording the incident.			
Details of concern/incident - record the who/what/where/when factually (continue on reverse of sheet if necessary):			
Any other relevant information (witnesses, immediate action taken)			
Action taken			
Reporting staff signature Date			
DSL – Response/Outcome			
DSL signature Date			

Check to make sure your report is clear now - and will also be clear to a stranger reading it next year.

PLEASE PASS THIS FORM TO YOUR DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

Continuation Sheet

Incident /Concern; other relevant information; Action Taken; Outcome

PUPIL NAME:

DATE

DETAILS

Signature



Recognition & Identification of Abuse

Definitions taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, Appendix A

What is abuse?

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

Indicators of Abuse

Caution should be used when referring to lists of signs and symptoms of abuse. Although the signs and symptoms listed below may be indicative of abuse there may be alternative explanations. In assessing the circumstances of any child any of these indicators should be viewed within the overall context of the child's individual situation including any disability.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse is difficult to:

- define
- identify/recognise
- prove.

Emotional abuse is chronic and cumulative and has a long-term impact. Indicators may include:

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Sudden speech disorders
- Continual self-deprecation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc.')
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this')
- Unusual physical behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation) - consider within the context of any form of disability such as autism
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Children suffering from emotional abuse may be withdrawn and emotionally flat. One reaction is for the child to seek attention constantly or to be over-familiar. Lack of self-esteem and developmental delay are again likely to be present
- Babies – feeding difficulties, crying, poor sleep patterns, delayed development, irritable, non-cuddly, apathetic, non-demanding
- Toddler/Pre-School – head banging, rocking, bad temper, 'violent', clingy. From overactive to apathetic, noisy to quiet. Developmental delay – especially language and social skills
- School age – Wetting and soiling, relationship difficulties, poor performance at school, non-attendance, antisocial behaviour. Feels worthless, unloved, inadequate, frightened, isolated, corrupted and terrorised
- Adolescent – depression, self-harm, substance abuse, eating disorder, poor self-esteem, oppositional, aggressive and delinquent behaviour

- Child may be underweight and/or stunted
- Child may fail to achieve milestones, fail to thrive, experience academic failure or under achievement
- Also consider a child's difficulties in expressing their emotions and what they are experiencing and whether this has been impacted on by factors such as age, language barriers or disability

NEGLECT

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment), failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers) or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

There are occasions when nearly all parents find it difficult to cope with the many demands of caring for children. But this does not mean that their children are being neglected. Neglect involves ongoing failure to meet a child's needs.

Neglect can often fit into six forms which are:

- Medical – the withholding of medical care including health and dental.
- Emotional – lack of emotional warmth, touch and nurture
- Nutritional – either through lack of access to a proper diet which can affect in their development.
- Educational – failing to ensure regular school attendance that prevents the child reaching their full potential academically
- Physical – failure to meet the child's physical needs
- Lack of supervision and guidance – meaning the child is in dangerous situations without the ability to risk assess the danger.²

Common Concerns:

With regard to the child, some of the regular concerns are:

- The child's development in all areas including educational attainment
- Cleanliness
- Health
- Children left at home alone and accidents related to this
- Taking on unreasonable care for others
- Young carers

Neglect can often be an indicator of further maltreatment and is often identified as an issue in serious case reviews as being present in the lead up to the death of the child or young person. It is important to recognise that the most frequent issues and concerns regarding the family in relation to neglect relate to parental capability. This can be a consequence of:

- Poor health, including mental health or mental illness
- Disability, including learning difficulties
- Substance misuse and addiction
- Domestic violence

School staff need to consider both acts of *commission* (where a parent/carer deliberately neglects the child) and acts of *omission* (where a parent's failure to act is causing the neglect). This is a key consideration with regard to school attendance where parents are not ensuring their child attend school regularly.

Many of the signs of neglect are visible. However, school staff may not instinctively know how to recognise signs of neglect or know how to respond effectively when they suspect a pupil is being neglected. Children spend considerable time in school, so staff have opportunities to identify patterns over time and recognise and respond to concerns about their safety and welfare. All concerns should be recorded and reflected upon, not simply placed in a file.

Here are some signs of possible neglect:

Physical signs:

² Source: Horwath, J (2007): Child neglect: identification and assessment: Palgrave Macmillan

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Emaciation
- Untreated medical problems
- The child seems underweight and is very small for their age
- The child is poorly clothed, with inadequate protection from the weather
- Neglect can lead to failure to thrive, manifest by a fall away from initial centile lines in weight, height and head circumference. Repeated growth measurements are crucially important
- Signs of malnutrition include wasted muscles and poor condition of skin and hair. It is important not to miss an organic cause of failure to thrive; if this is suspected, further investigations will be required
- Infants and children with neglect often show rapid growth catch-up and improved emotional response in a hospital environment
- Failure to thrive through lack of understanding of dietary needs of a child or inability to provide an appropriate diet; or may present with obesity through inadequate attention to the child's diet
- Being too hot or too cold – red, swollen and cold hands and feet or they may be dressed in inappropriate clothing
- Consequences arising from situations of danger – accidents, assaults, poisoning
- Unusually severe but preventable physical conditions owing to lack of awareness of preventative health care or failure to treat minor conditions
- Health problems associated with lack of basic facilities such as heating
- Neglect can also include failure to care for the individual needs of the child including any additional support the child may need as a result of any disability

Behavioural signs:

- No social relationships
- Compulsive scavenging
- Destructive tendencies
- If they are often absent from school for no apparent reason
- If they are regularly left alone, or in charge of younger brothers or sisters
- Lack of stimulation can result in developmental delay, for example, speech delay, and this may be picked up opportunistically or at formal development checks
- Craving attention or ambivalent towards adults, or may be very withdrawn
- Delayed development and failing at school (poor stimulation and opportunity to learn)
- Difficult or challenging behaviour

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.

When dealing with concerns regarding physical abuse, refer any suspected non-accidental injury to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay so that they are able to seek appropriate guidance from the police and/or Children's Services in order to safeguard the child.

Staff must be alert to:

- Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns; improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries;
- Injuries that are not consistent with the story: too many, too severe, wrong place or pattern, child too young for the activity described.

Physical signs:

- Bald patches
- Bruises, black eyes and broken bones
- Untreated or inadequately treated injuries
- Injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs, back, abdomen
- Scalds and burns
- General appearance and behaviour of the child may include:
 - Concurrent failure to thrive: measure height, weight and, in the younger child, head circumference;

- Frozen watchfulness: impassive facial appearance of the abused child who carefully tracks the examiner with his eyes.
- Bruising:
 - Bruising patterns can suggest gripping (finger marks), slapping or beating with an object.
 - Bruising on the cheeks, head or around the ear and black eyes can be the result of non-accidental injury.
- Other injuries:
 - Bite marks may be evident from an impression of teeth
 - Small circular burns on the skin suggest cigarette burns
 - Scalding inflicted by immersion in hot water often affects buttocks or feet and legs symmetrically
 - Red lines occur with ligature injuries
 - Retinal haemorrhages can occur with head injury and vigorous shaking of the baby
 - Tearing of the frenulum of the upper lip can occur with force-feeding. However, any injury of this type must be assessed in the context of the explanation given, the child's developmental stage, a full examination and other relevant investigations as appropriate.
 - Fractured ribs: rib fractures in a young child are suggestive of non-accidental injury
 - Other fractures: spiral fractures of the long bones are suggestive of non-accidental injury

Behavioural signs:

- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather
- Refusal to undress for gym
- Chronic running away
- Fear of medical help or examination
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Fear of physical contact - shrinking back if touched
- Admitting that they are punished, but the punishment is excessive (such as a child being beaten every night to 'make him study')
- Fear of suspected abuser being contacted
- Injuries that the child cannot explain or explains unconvincingly
- Become sad, withdrawn or depressed
- Having trouble sleeping
- Behaving aggressively or be disruptive
- Showing fear of certain adults
- Having a lack of confidence and low self-esteem
- Using drugs or alcohol
- Repetitive pattern of attendance: recurrent visits, repeated injuries
- Excessive compliance
- Hyper-vigilance

SEXUAL ABUSE

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

Sexual abuse is usually perpetrated by people who are known to and trusted by the child – e.g. relatives, family friends, neighbours, people working with the child in school or through other activities.

Characteristics of child sexual abuse:

- It is usually planned and systematic – people do not sexually abuse children by accident, though sexual abuse can be opportunistic;

- Grooming the child – people who abuse children take care to choose a vulnerable child and often spend time making them dependent. This can be done in person or via the internet through chat-rooms and social networking sites;
- Grooming the child’s environment – abusers try to ensure that potential adult protectors (parents and other carers especially) are not suspicious of their motives. Again, this can be done in person or via the internet through chat-rooms and social networking sites.

In young children behavioural changes may include:

- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Being overly affectionate - desiring high levels of physical contact and signs of affection such as hugs and kisses
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a babysitter or child minder
- They may start using sexually explicit behaviour or language, particularly if the behaviour or language is not appropriate for their age
- Starting to wet again, day or night/nightmares

In older children behavioural changes may include:

- Extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia
- Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Being isolated or withdrawn
- Inability to concentrate
- Become worried about clothing being removed
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism
- Genital discharge or urinary tract infections
- Marked changes in the child's general behaviour. For example, they may become unusually quiet and withdrawn, or unusually aggressive. Or they may start suffering from what may seem to be physical ailments, but which can't be explained medically
- The child may refuse to attend school or start to have difficulty concentrating so that their schoolwork is affected
- They may show unexpected fear or distrust of a particular adult or refuse to continue with their usual social activities
- The child may describe receiving special attention from a particular adult, or refer to a new, "secret" friendship with an adult or young person
- Children who have been sexually abused may demonstrate inappropriate sexualised knowledge and behaviour
- Low self-esteem, depression and self-harm are all associated with sexual abuse

Physical signs and symptoms for any age child could be:

- Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, venereal diseases
- Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Any features that suggest interference with the genitalia. These may include bruising, swelling, abrasions or tears
- Soreness, itching or unexplained bleeding from penis, vagina or anus
- Sexual abuse may lead to secondary enuresis or faecal soiling and retention
- Symptoms of a sexually transmitted disease such as vaginal discharge or genital warts, or pregnancy in adolescent girls

Sexual Abuse by Young People

The boundary between what is abusive and what is part of normal childhood or youthful experimentation can be blurred. The determination of whether behaviour is developmental, inappropriate or abusive will hinge around the related concepts of true consent, power imbalance and exploitation. This may include children and

young people who exhibit a range of sexually problematic behaviour such as indecent exposure, obscene telephone calls, fetishism, bestiality and sexual abuse against adults, peers or children.

Developmental Sexual Activity encompasses those actions that are to be expected from children and young people as they move from infancy through to an adult understanding of their physical, emotional and behavioural relationships with each other. Such sexual activity is essentially information gathering and experience testing. It is characterised by mutuality and of the seeking of consent.

Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour can be inappropriate socially, inappropriate to development, or both. In considering whether behaviour fits into this category, it is important to consider what negative effects it has on any of the parties involved and what concerns it raises about a child or young person. It should be recognised that some actions may be motivated by information seeking, but still cause significant upset, confusion, worry, physical damage, etc. It may also be that the behaviour is “acting out” which may derive from other sexual situations to which the child or young person has been exposed.

If an act appears to have been inappropriate, there may still be a need for some form of behaviour management or intervention. For some children, educative inputs may be enough to address the behaviour.

Abusive sexual activity includes any behaviour involving coercion, threats, aggression together with secrecy, or where one participant relies on an unequal power base.

Assessment

In order to more fully determine the nature of the incident the following factors should be given consideration. The presence of exploitation in terms of:

- **Equality** – consider differentials of physical, cognitive and emotional development, power and control and authority, passive and assertive tendencies
- **Consent** – agreement including all the following:
 - Understanding that is proposed based on age, maturity, development level, functioning and experience
 - Knowledge of society’s standards for what is being proposed
 - Awareness of potential consequences and alternatives
 - Assumption that agreements or disagreements will be respected equally
 - Voluntary decision
 - Mental competence
- **Coercion** – the young perpetrator who abuses may use techniques like bribing, manipulation and emotional threats of secondary gains and losses that is loss of love, friendship, etc. Some may use physical force, brutality or the threat of these regardless of victim resistance.

In evaluating sexual behaviour of children and young people, the above information should be used only as a guide.



APPENDIX 3

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation is a form of abuse which involves children (male and female, of different ethnic origins and of different ages) receiving something in exchange for sexual activity.

‘Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.’ (DfE – February 2017)

The definition and further guidelines can be found in the DfE document : [Child sexual exploitation - Definition and a guide for practitioners](#)

Who is at risk?

Child sexual exploitation can happen to any young person from any background. Although the research suggests that the females are more vulnerable to CSE, boys and young men are also victims of this type of abuse.

The characteristics common to all victims of CSE are not those of age, ethnicity or gender, rather their powerlessness and vulnerability. Victims often do not recognise that they are being exploited because they will have been groomed by their abuser(s). As a result, victims do not make informed choices to enter into, or remain involved in, sexually exploitative situations but do so from coercion, enticement, manipulation or fear. Sexual exploitation can happen face to face and it can happen online. It can also occur between young people.

In all its forms, CSE is child abuse and should be treated as a child protection issue.

WARNING SIGNS AND VULNERABILITIES CHECKLIST³

The evidence available points to several factors that can increase a child’s vulnerability to being sexually exploited. The following are typical **vulnerabilities in children prior to abuse**:

- Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (including parental substance use, domestic violence, parental mental health issues, parental criminality)
- History of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of ‘honour’-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect)
- Recent bereavement or loss
- Gang association either through relatives, peers or intimate relationships (in cases of gang-associated CSE only)
- Attending school with young people who are sexually exploited
- Learning disabilities
- Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families
- Friends with young people who are sexually exploited
- Homeless
- Lacking friends from the same age group
- Living in a gang neighbourhood
- Living in residential care

³ The Office of the Children’s Commissioner (2012) Interim Report - Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Group and Gangs.

- Living in hostel, bed and breakfast accommodation or a foyer
- Low self-esteem or self-confidence
- Young carer

The following signs and behaviour are generally seen in children who are **already being sexually exploited**:

- Missing from home or care
- Physical injuries
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Involvement in offending
- Repeat sexually-transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations
- Absent from school
- Evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through the internet and/or social networking sites
- Estranged from their family
- Receipt of gifts from unknown sources
- Recruiting others into exploitative situations
- Poor mental health
- Self-harm
- Thoughts of or attempts at suicide

Evidence shows that any child displaying several vulnerabilities from the above lists should be considered to be at high risk of sexual exploitation.

All schools should ensure that there is a dedicated lead person with responsibility for implementing local guidance in respect of child sexual exploitation. This would normally be the DSL.

The DSL must ensure they are aware of the guidance on Child Sexual Exploitation on the West Midlands Safeguarding Children Procedures website: <http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/local-content/4cjN/child-sexual-exploitation-risk-assessment>

The DSL must ensure that all staff are aware of signs and symptoms of CSE and know that these must be reported and recorded as child protection concerns. The DSL must follow the Worcestershire Pathway for dealing with issues of CSE, including completion of the screening tool.



APPENDIX 4

CHILD ON CHILD SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARRASMENT

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. We understand the importance that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff are aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. We know that evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment and Harmful Sexual Behaviour - What are sexual violence, sexual harassment & Harmful Sexual Behaviour?

Sexual Violence

It is important that schools and colleges are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way and that it can happen both inside and outside of school/college. When referring to sexual violence in this advice, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual violence. For the purpose of this advice, when referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003¹⁴ as described below:

- **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. (Schools should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.)
- **Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent:** A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)
- **What is consent?** Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. Further information about consent can be found here: [Rape Crisis England & Wales - Sexual consent](#)
 - a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
 - the age of consent is 16; 17
 - sexual intercourse without consent is rape

Sexual Harassment

For the purpose of this advice, when referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school/college. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so 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.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment 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: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. 18 It may include
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and videos. As set out in UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (which provides detailed advice for schools and colleges) taking and sharing nude photographs of U18s is a criminal offence
- sharing of unwanted explicit content
- 'upskirting' (is a criminal offence)
- sexualised online bullying
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats

At Woodrush High School it is important that we consider sexual harassment in broad terms. Sexual harassment (as set out above) creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

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

Action following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

In all cases of child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment, Woodrush High School will follow the protocols as set out by Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 – Section 5

This will involve:

- Working with appropriate agencies for support including the local authority social care and the police
- Managing the report
- Consider confidentiality and anonymity
- Make an immediate risk and needs assessment
- Assess options on managing the report – Internally, early help, local authority, police
- Safeguarding and supporting the victim
- Safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s) and children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour
- Possible Sanctions in accordance with the school's behaviour policy
- Working with parents and carers
- Safeguarding other children

Woodrush High School carefully consider any report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment. The designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the school's initial response.

Important considerations will include:

- the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. We will support victims to be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. This will however need to be balanced with the school's duty and responsibilities to protect other children;
- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour;
- the ages of the children involved;
- the developmental stages of the children involved;
- any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator(s) significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty
- if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse (sexual abuse can be accompanied by other forms of abuse and a sustained pattern may not just be of a sexual nature).

Children sharing a classroom: Initial considerations when the report is made

- Any report of sexual violence is likely to be traumatic for the victim.
- However, reports of rape and assault by penetration are likely to be especially difficult with regard to the victim, and close proximity with the alleged perpetrator(s) is likely to be especially distressing. Whilst the school establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children's social care and the police, the alleged perpetrator(s) should be removed from any classes they share with the victim.
- The school should also consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) a reasonable distance apart on school premises (including during any before or after school-based activities) and on transport to and from the school, where appropriate. These actions are in the best interests of all children involved and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator(s).
- For other reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) and considerations regarding shared classes, sharing school premises and school transport, should be considered immediately.
- In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated, reflecting the considerations set out at paragraph 391. The wishes of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the protection of all children in the school will be especially important when considering any immediate actions.

Options to manage the report

- Woodrush High School will consider every report on a case-by-case basis. When to inform the alleged perpetrator(s) will be a decision that should be carefully considered.
- Where a report is going to be made to children's social care and/or the police, then, as a general rule, we will speak to the relevant agency and discuss next steps and how the alleged perpetrator(s) will be informed of the allegations. However, as per general safeguarding principles, this does not and should not stop us from taking immediate action to safeguard children, where required. There are a number of likely scenarios to consider when managing any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment.
 - that sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers.
 - are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school staff;
 - are there other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.

Safeguarding and supporting the victim

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and should help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the victim.

- The needs and wishes of the victim should be paramount (along with protecting the child) in any response. It is important they feel in as much control of the process as is reasonably possible. Wherever possible, the victim, if they wish, should be able to continue in their normal routine. Overall, the priority should be to

make the victim's daily experience as normal as possible, so that the school or college is a safe space for them.

- Consider the age and the developmental stage of the victim, the nature of the allegation(s) and the potential risk of further abuse. Schools and colleges should be aware that, by the very nature of sexual violence and sexual harassment, a power imbalance is likely to have been created between the victim and alleged perpetrator(s).
- The victim should never be made to feel they are the problem for making a report or made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Consider the proportionality of the response. Support should be tailored on a case-by-case basis. The support required regarding a one-off incident of sexualised name-calling is likely to be vastly different from that for a report of rape.
- Schools and colleges should be aware that sexual assault can result in a range of health needs, including physical, mental, and sexual health problems and unwanted pregnancy. Children and young people that have a health need arising from sexual assault or abuse can access specialist NHS support from a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). SARCs offer confidential and non-judgemental support to victims and survivors of sexual assault and abuse. They provide medical, practical, and emotional care and advice to all children and adults, regardless of when the incident occurred.
- It will be important in all scenarios that decisions and actions are regularly reviewed and that relevant policies are updated to reflect lessons learnt. It is particularly important to look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour. Where a pattern is identified, the school or college should decide on a course of action. Consideration should be given as to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school or college that enabled the inappropriate behaviour to occur and where appropriate extra teaching time and/or staff training could be delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

Safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s)

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and should help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s):

- Woodrush High School will have a difficult balancing act to consider. On one hand, we need to safeguard the victim (and the wider pupil/student body) and on the other hand provide the alleged perpetrator(s) with an education, we will safeguard and support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions.
- We will Consider the age and the developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator(s) and nature of the allegations. Any child will likely experience stress because of being the subject of allegations and/or negative reactions by their peers to the allegations against them.
- We will Consider the proportionality of the response. Support (and sanctions) should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The alleged perpetrator(s) may potentially have unmet needs (in some cases these may be considerable) as well as potentially posing a risk of harm to other children. Harmful sexual behaviours in young children may be (and often are) a symptom of either their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices and or materials. Advice should be taken, as appropriate, from children's social care, specialist sexual violence services and the police.
- If an alleged perpetrator does move to another educational institution (for any reason), we will inform the new educational institution of any ongoing support needs and where appropriate, potential risks to other children and staff. The designated safeguarding lead will take responsibility to ensure this happens as well as transferring the child protection file.
- The [National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers \(NOTA\)](#) provides support for professionals involved in work with, or related to, sexual offending.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is **not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.**
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"; and

- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.



APPENDIX 5

CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE) – COUNTY LINES

What is County Lines?

County Lines is a very serious issue where criminal gangs set up a drug dealing operation in a place outside their usual operating area. Gangs will move their drug dealing from big cities (e.g. London, Manchester, Liverpool etc.) to smaller towns and rural areas in order to make more money. This can have a really big effect on the community who live there and bring with it serious criminal behaviour.

The UK Government defines county lines as:

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Child criminal exploitation is increasingly used to describe this type of exploitation where children are involved, and is defined as:

Child Criminal Exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Criminal exploitation of children is broader than just county lines and includes, for instance, children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft.

Crimes Associated with County Lines

Drugs

County lines commonly involves the illegal distribution and dealing of seriously dangerous drugs from one city/town to another. The most common drugs involved are heroin and cocaine (crack and powder), but also MDMA, cannabis, amphetamines and spice.

Violence

Gangs sometimes use violence to threaten children and young people when recruiting them. Gangs also violently assault children and young people working for them if they find their drugs or money to be missing. Weapons such as firearms, knives, bats, acid are sometimes used to make violent threats.

Exploitation

Gangs recruit and use children and young people to move drugs and money for them. Children as young as 11 years old are recruited, often using social media. They are exploited and forced to carry drugs between locations, usually on trains or coaches. They are also forced to sell drugs to local users.

Sexual Exploitation

Young girls are often groomed and forced into relationships with gang members and are made to perform sexual acts.

Signs to look out for

A young person's involvement in county lines activity often leaves signs. A person might exhibit some of these signs, either as a member or as an associate of a gang dealing drugs.

- Are they always going missing from school or their home?
- Are they travelling alone to places far away from home?
- Do they suddenly have lots of money/lots of new clothes/new mobile phones?
- Are they receiving much more calls or texts than usual?
- Are they carrying or selling drugs?

- Are they carrying weapons or know people that have access to weapons?
- Are they in a relationship with or hanging out with someone/people that are older and controlling?
- Do they have unexplained injuries?
- Do they seem very reserved or seem like they have something to hide?
- Do they seem scared?
- Are they self-harming?

Terms associated with County Lines

Here are some words/terms that are commonly used when describing county lines activity. someone using these words might be involved in or might know of County Lines activity.

Cuckooing

Cuckooing is when drug gangs take over the home of a vulnerable person through violence and intimidation, using it as their base for selling/manufacturing drugs.

Signs of cuckooing:

- An increase in people coming and going
- An increase in cars or bikes outside
- Litter outside
- Signs of drugs use
- You haven't seen the person who lives there recently or when you have, they have been anxious or distracted.

Going Country

This is the most popular term that describes County Lines activity. It can also mean the act of travelling to another city/town to deliver drugs or money.

Trapping

The act of selling drugs. Trapping can refer to the act of moving drugs from one town to another or the act of selling drugs in one.

Trap House

A building used as a base from where drugs are sold (or sometimes manufactured). These houses usually are occupied by someone (usually adult drug users) but sometimes young people are forced to stay in trap houses.

Trap line

This refers to when someone owns a mobile phone specifically for the purpose of running and selling of drugs.

What to do if you have concerns a young person is involved in County Lines

Follow your normal safeguarding procedures and refer to your school's DSL. The DSL will refer on to Children's Social Care and/or the Police, if the young person is at immediate risk of harm.

Further information is available in the regional guidance of the [West Midlands Child Protection Procedures](#).

Further guidance is available in the Home Office's publication '[County Lines: criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults](#)'.



APPENDIX 6

Effects of domestic abuse on children and young people

The impact of domestic abuse on the quality of a child's or young person's life is very significant. Children and young people who live with domestic abuse are at increased risk of behavioural problems, emotional trauma, and mental health difficulties in adult life.

The impact of domestic abuse on children and young people can be wide-ranging and may include effects in any or all of the following areas:

Physical: Children and young people can be hurt either by trying to intervene and stopping the violence or by being injured themselves by the abuser. They may develop self-harming behaviour, or eating disorders. Their health could be affected, as they may not be being cared for appropriately. They may have suicidal thoughts or try to escape or blank out the abuse by using drugs, alcohol or by running away.

Sexual: There is a high risk that children and young people will be abused themselves where there is domestic abuse. In homes where living in fear is the norm, and situations are not discussed, an atmosphere of secrecy develops and this creates a climate in which sexual abuse could occur. In addition to this, children and young people may sometimes be forced to watch the sexual abuse of their mother/carer. This can have long-lasting effects on the sexual and emotional development of the child/young person.

Economic: The parent or carer of the child or young person may have limited control over the family finances. Therefore, there might be little or no money available for extra-curricular activities, clothing or even food, impacting on their health and development.

Emotional: Children and young people will often be very confused about their feelings – for example, loving both parents/carers but not wanting the abuse to continue. They may be given negative messages about their own worth, which may lead to them developing low self-esteem. Many children and young people feel guilty, believing that the abuse is their fault. They are often pessimistic about their basic needs being met and can develop suicidal thoughts. Some children and young people may internalise feelings and appear passive and withdrawn or externalise their feelings in a disruptive manner.

Isolation: Children and young people may become withdrawn and isolated; they may not be allowed out to play; and if there is abuse in the home they are less likely to invite their friends round. Schooling may be disrupted in many ways, and this may contribute to their growing isolation. They may frequently be absent from school as they may be too scared to leave their mother alone. They may have to move away from existing friends and family – e.g. into a refuge or other safe or temporary accommodation.

Threats: Children and young people are likely to have heard threats to harm their mother/father. They may have been directly threatened with harm or heard threats to harm their pet. They also live under the constant and unpredictable threat of violence, resulting in feelings of intimidation, fear and vulnerability, which can lead to high anxiety, tension, confusion and stress.

This clearly highlights that living with domestic abuse has a significant impact on a child's ability to achieve the five outcomes as outlined in the *Every Child Matters* agenda:

- be healthy;
- stay safe;
- enjoy and achieve;
- make a positive contribution;
- achieve economic well-being.

What you might see in school

- Unexplained absences or lateness – either from staying at home to protect their parent or hide their injuries, or because they are prevented from attending school;
- Children and young people attending school when ill rather than staying at home;
- Children and young people not completing their homework, or making constant excuses, because of what is happening at home;
- Children and young people who are constantly tired, on edge and unable to concentrate through disturbed sleep or worrying about what is happening at home;
- Children and young people displaying difficulties in their cognitive and school performance;
- Children and young people whose behaviour and personality changes dramatically;
- Children and young people who become quiet and withdrawn and have difficulty in developing positive peer relations;
- Children and young people displaying disruptive behaviour or acting out violent thoughts with little empathy for victims;
- Children and young people who are no trouble at all.

This list is not exhaustive – this is intended to give you an idea of some of the types of behaviour that could be presented.

What schools can do

Schools can create an environment which both promotes their belief and commitment that domestic abuse is not acceptable, and that they are willing to discuss and challenge it.

For many victims, the school might be the one place that they visit without their abusive partner.

It would help if schools displayed posters or had cards/pens available with information about domestic abuse and contact details for useful agencies: for example, NSPCC **0808 800 5000** and ChildLine **0800 11 11**; Parentline **0808 800 2222**; Worcestershire's Forum Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (WFADSA) [website](#) and West Mercia Women's Aid 24 hr. helpline: **0800 980 3331**.

West Mercia Constabulary - Police Domestic Abuse Units 101.

Research shows that the repeated use of physical, sexual, psychological and financial abuse is one of the ways in which male power is used to control women. The underlying attitudes which legitimate and perpetuate violence against women should be challenged by schools as part of the whole school ethos.

Schools can support individual children and young people by:

- Introducing a **whole-school philosophy** that domestic abuse is unacceptable;
- **Responding to disclosures** and potential child protection concerns; recognising that domestic abuse and forced marriage may be a child protection concern; policies and procedures must include domestic abuse;
- **Giving emotional support** – the child or young person might need referral to a more specialist service or need additional support to complete coursework, exams etc.;
- **Facilitating a peer support network** – children and young people can become isolated but often welcome talking to friends about their problems;
- **Offering practical support** – if children or young people are new to the school they may not yet have a uniform, they may also need financial help with extra-curricular activities, or they may be unfamiliar with the syllabus, the area, where to hang out, etc.;
- **Providing somewhere safe and quiet** to do their homework or just to sit and think;
- **Improving the self-esteem and confidence** of children and young people by:
 - offering them opportunities to take on new roles and responsibilities;
 - offering tasks which are achievable and giving praise and encouragement;
 - monitoring their behaviour and setting clear limits;

- criticising the action, not the person;
- helping them to feel a sense of control in their school lives;
- involving them in decision making;
- helping them to be more assertive;
- respecting them as individuals;
- encouraging involvement in extra-curricular activities.

From The Expect Respect Education Toolkit – Women’s Aid

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass is a police and education early information sharing partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support for children and young people experiencing domestic abuse. Information is shared by the police with a school's trained Key Adult (Designated Safeguarding Lead) prior to the start of the next school day after officers have attended a domestic abuse incident thus enabling appropriate support to be given, dependent upon the needs and wishes of the child. Children experiencing domestic abuse are negatively impacted by this exposure; domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm. Operation Encompass aims to mitigate this harm by enabling immediate support, making a child's day better and giving them a better tomorrow.

The DSL’s responsibility – the DSL should:

- View the Operation Encompass website (www.operationencompass.org) for further information;
- Ensure the Safeguarding Education Adviser has up to date contact information;
- Ensure the Operation Encompass referral record document is retained in the same way as other child protection documents, in a secure place;
- Identify and brief a colleague who can deputise in his/her absence;
- Ensure that all teaching staff are aware of Operation Encompass and understand the confidential nature of any information passed to them and that this information must be treated in the same way as any other child protection information;
- Inform parents that the school is part of Operation Encompass (using the template letter supplied);
- Inform the Governing Body that the school is part of Operation Encompass and the Governor with responsibility for safeguarding should have a working knowledge of the principles;
- Include details of Operation Encompass in the school prospectus and on the school website to ensure that all new parents are informed of the school’s involvement.
- Consider displaying Operation Encompass posters around the school.

On receiving a Domestic Abuse notification, the DSL should:

- complete the Operation Encompass referral record
- notify class teachers or year leaders
- If there's no change to the child’s behaviour - just monitor and log the DA
- If the child displays poor behaviour choices /seems upset/withdrawn, offer the relevant support needed

Bear in mind

- Victim of incident may be anxious that the information will be shared inappropriately.
- Notification may not give details as to which parent is the perpetrator/victim – any disclosure to the ‘wrong’ parent could heighten risk.
- Need to be aware who is ‘connected’ to the child – e.g. TA/lunchtime supervisor may be child’s relative / friend of the family.
- **Inappropriate sharing of information could heighten the risk for the victim and/or the child.**

If in doubt, consult with the Family Front Door (01905 822666)



RADICALISATION AND EXTREMISM

Preventing Radicalisation

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools' safeguarding approach.

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

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

What is Prevent?

Prevent is the Government's strategy to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, **in all its forms**. Prevent works at the pre-criminal stage by using early intervention to encourage individuals and communities to challenge extremist and terrorist ideology and behaviour.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015), places a duty on specified authorities, including schools and colleges, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism ("the Prevent duty"). The Prevent duty reinforces existing duties placed upon educational establishments for keeping children safe by:

- Ensuring a broad and balanced curriculum is in place schools to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils;
- Assessing the risk of pupils being drawn into extremist views;
- Ensuring safeguarding arrangements by working in partnership with local authorities, police and communities;
- Training staff to provide them with the knowledge and ability to identify pupils at risk;
- Keeping pupils safe online, using effective filtering, monitoring and usage policies.

Warning Signs/Indicators of Concern

There is no such thing as a "typical extremist": those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity.

Pupils may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors. It is vital that school staff are able to recognise those vulnerabilities. However, this list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that all young people experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purposes of violent extremism.

Factors which may make pupils more vulnerable may include:

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

Pupils who are vulnerable to radicalisation may also be experiencing:

- Substance and alcohol misuse
- Pressure
- Influence from older people or via the Internet
- Bullying
- Domestic violence
- Race/hate crime

Behaviours which may indicate a child is at risk of being radicalised or exposed to extremist views could include:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and/or spending increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists;
- Loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause;
- Pupils accessing extremist material online, including through social networking sites;
- Possessing or accessing materials or symbols associated with an extremist cause;
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage;
- Pupils voicing opinions drawn from extremist ideologies and narratives, this may include justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues;
- Graffiti symbols, writing or art work promoting extremist messages or images;
- Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour increasingly centred on an extremist ideology, group or cause;
- Changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group;
- Attempts to recruit others to the group/cause;
- Using insulting to derogatory names for another group;
- Increase in prejudice-related incidents committed by that person – these may include:
 - physical or verbal assault
 - provocative behaviour
 - damage to property
 - derogatory name calling
 - possession of prejudice-related materials
 - prejudice related ridicule or name calling
 - inappropriate forms of address
 - refusal to co-operate
 - attempts to recruit to prejudice-related organisations
 - condoning or supporting violence towards others
 - Parental reports of changes in behaviour, friendship or actions and requests for assistance;
 - Partner schools, local authority services, and police reports of issues affecting pupils in other schools.

Referral Process

All concerns about young people vulnerable to radicalisation should be referred to the DSL in the first instance. The DSL will follow safeguarding procedures including:

- Talking to the young person about their behaviour/views/on-line activity/friends etc.;
- Discussion with parents/carers about the concerns;
- Checking out on-line activity, including social media if possible;
- Providing in-house support, if available;
- Providing Early Help targeted support if necessary.

If concerns persist, then the DSL should make a referral to the Family Front Door, usually with the knowledge and consent of the young person.

The referral will then be subject to a triage process to decide whether or not it meets the threshold for a referral to Channel. If it does, the DSL should be prepared to attend the Channel Panel meeting to share the concerns and help identify any intervention required. Further feedback to the Channel Panel will be expected following intervention to decide whether there are still concerns.

Further information can be found in the [West Midlands Safeguarding Children procedures](#).

APPENDIX 8

HONOUR BASED ABUSE



Forced Marriage – a form of Domestic Abuse and a crime in England and Wales

Forced Marriage should be recognised as a human rights abuse – and should always invoke child protection procedures within the school.

A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties, and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage – in an arranged marriage the families take a leading role in choosing the marriage partner. The marriage is entered into freely by both people.

Warning signs

Warning signs can include a sudden drop in performance, truancy from lessons and conflicts with parents over continuation of the student's education.

There may be excessive parental restrictions and control, a history of domestic abuse within the family, or extended absence through sickness or overseas commitments. Students may also show signs of depression or self-harming, and there may be a history of older siblings leaving education early to get married.

The justifications

Most cases of forced marriage in the UK involve South Asian families. This is partially a reflection of the fact that there is a large established South Asian population in the UK. It is clear, however, that forced marriage is not a solely South Asian phenomenon — there have been cases involving families from East Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Africa.

Some forced marriages take place in the UK with no overseas element, while others involve a partner coming from overseas, or a British citizen being sent abroad. Parents who force their children to marry often justify it as protecting them, building stronger families and preserving cultural or religious traditions. They may not see it as wrong.

Forced marriage can never be justified on religious grounds: every major faith condemns it and freely given consent is a pre-requisite of Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh marriage.

Culture

Often parents believe that they are upholding the cultural traditions of their home countries, when in fact practices and values there have changed. Some parents come under significant pressure from their extended families to get their children married.

The law

Sexual intercourse without consent is rape, regardless of whether this occurs within the confines of a marriage. A girl who is forced into marriage is likely to be raped and may be raped until she becomes pregnant.

In addition, the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act (2007) makes provision for protecting children, young people and adults from being forced into marriage without their full and free consent through Forced Marriage Protection Orders. Breaching a Forced Marriage Protection Order is a criminal offence.

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 makes it a criminal offence, with effect from 16th June 2014, to force someone to marry. This includes:

- Taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the marriage takes place);
- Marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they're pressured into it or not).

What to do if a student seeks help

- The student should be seen immediately in a private place, where the conversation cannot be overheard.
- The student should be seen on her own, even if she attends with others.
- Develop a safety plan in case the student is seen i.e. prepare another reason why you are meeting.
- Explain all options to the student and recognise and respect her wishes. If the student does not want to be referred to Children's Services, you will need to consider whether to respect the student's wishes — or whether

the student's safety requires further action to be taken. If you take action against the student's wishes you must inform the student.

- Establish whether there is a family history of forced marriage — i.e. siblings forced to marry.
- Advise the student not to travel overseas and discuss the difficulties she may face.
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit.
- Liaise with Police and Children's Services to establish if any incidents concerning the family have been reported.
- Refer to Police if there is any suspicion that there has been a crime or that one may be committed.
- Refer the student with her consent to the appropriate local and national support groups, and counselling services.

What to do if the student is going abroad imminently

The Forced Marriage Unit advises education professionals to gather the following information if at all possible — it will help the unit to locate the student and to repatriate her:

- a photocopy of the student's passport for retention — encourage her to keep details of her passport number and the place and date of issue
- as much information as possible about the family (this may need to be gathered discretely)
- full name and date of birth of student under threat
- student's father's name
- any addresses where the student may be staying overseas
- potential spouse's name
- date of the proposed wedding
- the name of the potential spouse's father if known
- addresses of the extended family in the UK and overseas

Specific information

It is also useful to take information that only the student would know, as this may be helpful during any interview at an embassy or British High Commission — in case another person of the same age is produced pretending to be the student.

Professionals should also take details of any travel plans and people likely to accompany the student. Note also the names and addresses of any close relatives remaining in the UK and a safe means to contact the student — a secret mobile telephone, for example, that will function abroad.

Forced marriage: what educators should NOT do

- treat such allegations merely as domestic issues and send the student back to the family home
- ignore what the student has told you or dismiss the need for immediate protection
- approach the student's family or those with influence within the community, without the express consent of the student, as this will alert them to your concern and may place the student in danger
- contact the family in advance of any enquires by the Police, Children's Services or the Forced Marriage Unit, either by telephone or letter
- share information outside child protection information sharing protocols without the express consent of the student
- breach confidentiality except where necessary in order to ensure the student's safety
- attempt to be a mediator

Further guidance is available from The Forced Marriage Unit:

Tel: (+44) (0)20 7008 0151 between 9.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. Monday to Friday

Emergency Duty Officer (out of hours): (+44) (0)20 7008 1500

E-mail: fmufco@fco.gov.uk **Website:** www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage

FMU publications: [The Right to Choose: multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage – June 2014](#) and [Multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of Forced marriage – June 2014](#)

See also: *DfE Guidance 'Forced Marriage – How to protect, advise and support victims of forced marriage – information and practice guidelines for professionals' May 2019;* and [West Mercia regional procedures](#).



APPENDIX 9

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Breast Ironing – a form of Human Rights Abuse

What is FGM?

FGM includes procedures that intentionally alter or injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

There are four known types of FGM, all of which have been found in the UK:

Type 1 – clitoridectomy: partial or total removal of the clitoris and, in very rare cases, only the prepuce (the fold of skin surrounding the clitoris)

Type 2 – excision: partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora (the labia are the ‘lips’ that surround the vagina)

Type 3 – infibulation: narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal. The seal is formed by cutting and repositioning the inner, or outer, labia, with or without removal of the clitoris

Type 4 – other: all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g., pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterising the genital area.

FGM is sometimes known as ‘female genital cutting’ or female circumcision. Communities tend to use local names for this practice, including ‘sunna’.

Why is FGM carried out?

It is believed that:

- It brings status and respect to the girl and that it gives a girl social acceptance, especially for marriage.
- It preserves a girl’s virginity/chastity.
- It is part of being a woman as a rite of passage.
- It upholds the family honour.
- It cleanses and purifies the girl.
- It gives the girl and her family a sense of belonging to the community.
- It fulfills a religious requirement believed to exist.
- It perpetuates a custom/tradition.
- It helps girls and women to be clean and hygienic.
- It is cosmetically desirable.
- It is mistakenly believed to make childbirth safer for the infant.

Religion is sometimes given as a justification for FGM. For example, some people from Muslim communities argue that the Sunna (traditions or practices undertaken or approved by the prophet Mohammed) recommends that women undergo FGM, and some women have been told that having FGM will make them ‘a better Muslim’. However, senior Muslim clerics at an international conference on FGM in Egypt in 2006 pronounced that FGM is not Islamic, and the London Central Mosque has spoken out against FGM on the grounds that it constitutes doing harm to oneself or to others, which is forbidden by Islam.

Within which communities is FGM known to be practised?

According to the Home Office it is estimated that up to 24,000 girls under the age of 15 are at risk of FGM.

UK communities that are most at risk of FGM include Kenyan, Somali, Sudanese, Sierra Leone, Egyptian, Nigerian and Eritrean, as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdish, Indonesian and Pakistani.

Obviously, this not to say that all families from the communities listed above practise FGM, and many parents will refuse to have their daughters subjected to this procedure. However, in some communities a great deal of pressure can be put on parents to follow what is seen as a cultural or religious practice.

Is FGM harmful?

FGM is extremely harmful and is often described as brutal because of the way it is carried out, and its short and long-term effects on physical and psychological health.

FGM is carried out on children between the ages of 0 and 15, depending on the community in which they live. It is often carried out without any form of sedation and without sterile conditions. The girl or young woman is held down while the procedure of cutting takes place and survivors describe extreme pain, fear and feelings of abandonment.

Where the vagina is cut and then sewn up, only a very small opening may be left. This is often seen as a way to ensure that when the girl enters marriage, she is a virgin. In some communities the mother of the future husband and the girl's own mother will take the girl to be cut open before the wedding night.

Repeat urinary tract infections are a common problem for women who have undergone FGM, and for some, infections come from menstruation being restricted. Many women have problems during pregnancy and childbirth. The removal of the clitoris denies women physical pleasure during sexual activity and some groups will practise complete removal to ensure chastity.

Is it illegal?

FGM is internationally recognised as a violation of the human rights of girls and women and is illegal in most countries – including the UK. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 came into force in 2004:

The act makes it illegal to:

- practise FGM in the UK
- take girls who are British nationals or permanent residents of the UK abroad for FGM, whether or not it is lawful in that country
- aid and abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad.

The offence carries a penalty of up to 14 years in prison, and/or a fine.

Signs, symptoms and indicators

The following list of possible signs and indicators are not diagnostic but are offered as a guide as to what kind of things should alert professionals to the possibility of FGM.

Things that may point to FGM happening:

- a child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- a family arranging a long break abroad
- a child's family being from one of the 'at-risk' communities for FGM (see above)
- knowledge that an older sibling has undergone FGM
- a young person talks of going abroad to be 'cut' or get ready for marriage.

Things that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:

- prolonged absence from school or other activities
- behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as the child being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- bladder or menstrual problems
- finding it difficult to sit still, and looking uncomfortable
- complaining about pain between their legs
- mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
- reluctance to take part in physical activity
- repeated urinary tract infection
- disclosure.

Mandatory Reporting Duty

Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on teachers. Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers in England and Wales, to personally report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried

out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. Further information on when and how to make a report can be found in the following Home Office guidance: '[Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation - procedural information](#)' (October 2015).

What is breast ironing?

Breast Ironing is practiced in some African countries, notably Cameroon. Girls aged between 9 and 15 have hot pestles, stones or other implements rubbed on their developing breast to stop them growing further. In the vast majority of cases breast ironing is carried out by mothers or grandmothers and the men in the family are unaware. Estimates range between 25% and 50% of girls in Cameroon are affected by breast ironing, affecting up to 3.8 million women across Africa.

Why does breast ironing happen?

The practice of breast ironing is seen as a protection to girls by making them seem 'child-like' for longer and reduce the likelihood of pregnancy. Once girls' breasts have developed, they are at risk of sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage and kidnapping; consequently, breast ironing is more prevalent in cities. Cameroon has one of the highest rates of literacy in Africa and ensuring that girls remain in education is seen as an important outcome of breast ironing.

Breast ironing is physical abuse

Breast ironing is a form of physical abuse that has been condemned by the United Nations and identified as Gender-based Violence. Although, countries where breast ironing is prevalent have ratified the African Charter on Human Rights to prevent harmful traditional practices, it is not against the law.

Breast ironing does not stop the breasts from growing, but development can be slowed down. Damage caused by the 'ironing' can leave women with malformed breasts, difficulty breastfeeding or producing milk, severe chest pains, infections and abscesses. In some cases, it may be related to the onset of breast cancer.

Breast Ironing in the UK

Concerns have been raised that breast ironing is also to be found amongst African communities in the UK, with as many as 1000 girls at risk. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) mentions breast ironing on page 83, as part of the section on so-called 'honour-based' violence. Staff worried about the risk of breast ironing in their school should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible. Schools need to know the risk level within their communities and tackle the risk as appropriate.

What should schools do?

Where schools have a concern about a child, they should contact Children's Social Care Services. If the concerns are based on more concrete indicators – i.e., the young person says this is going to happen to them, or disclosure that it has happened to them or to an older sister – schools should make a child protection referral and inform the Police as required by the mandatory reporting duty. Schools should not:

- contact the parents before seeking advice from children's social care;
- make any attempt to mediate between the child/young person and parents.

It is important to keep in mind that the parents may not see FGM or Breast Ironing as a form of abuse; however, they may be under a great deal of pressure from their community and or family to subject their daughters to it. Some parents from identified communities may seek advice and support as to how to resist and prevent FGM for their daughters, and education about the harmful effects of FGM and Breast Ironing may help to make parents feel stronger in resisting the pressure of others in the community. Remember that religious teaching does not support FGM or Breast Ironing.

The 'one chance' rule

In the same way that we talk about the 'one chance rule' in respect of young people coming forward with fears that they may be forced into marriage, young people disclosing fears that they are going to be sent abroad for FGM are taking the 'one chance', of seeking help.

It is essential that we take such concerns seriously and act without delay. Never underestimate the determination of parents who have decided that it is right for their daughter to undergo FGM. Attempts to mediate may place the child/young person at greater risk, and the family may feel so threatened at the news of their child's disclosure that they bring forward their plans or take action to silence her.



SEXTING

What is sexting?

Sexting is the exchange of self-generated sexually explicit images, through mobile picture messages or webcams over the internet.

Sexting is often seen as flirting by children and young people who think that it's part of normal life.

Often, incidents of sexting are not clear-cut or isolated; schools may encounter a variety of scenarios. Sexting incidents can be divided into two categories – aggravated and experimental⁴:

Aggravated incidents of sexting involve criminal or abusive elements beyond the creation of an image. These include further elements, adult involvement or criminal or abusive behaviour by minors such as sexual abuse, extortion, threats, malicious conduct arising from personal conflicts, or creation or sending or showing of images without the knowledge or against the will of a minor who is pictured.

Experimental incidents of sexting involve youths taking pictures of themselves to share with established boy or girlfriends, to create romantic interest in other youth, or for reasons such as attention seeking. There is no criminal element (and certainly no criminal intent) beyond the creation and sending of the images and no apparent malice or lack of willing participation.

The consequences of sexting can be devastating for young people. In extreme cases it can result in suicide or a criminal record, isolation and vulnerability. Young people can end up being criminalised for sharing an apparently innocently image which may have, in fact, been created for exploitative reasons.

Because of the prevalence of sexting, young people are not always aware that their actions are illegal. In fact, sexting as a term is not something that is recognised by young people and the 'cultural norms' for adults can be somewhat different. Some celebrities have made comments which appear to endorse sexting – 'it's okay, as long as you hide your face' - giving the impression that sexting is normal and acceptable. However, in the context of the law it is an illegal activity and young people must be made aware of this.

The Law - Much of the complexity in responding to youth produced sexual imagery is due to its legal status. Making, possessing and distributing any imagery of someone under 18 which is 'indecent' is illegal. This includes imagery of yourself if you are under 18. 'Indecent' is not defined in legislation. For most purposes, if imagery contains a naked young person, a topless girl, and/or displays genitals or sex acts, including masturbation, then it will be considered indecent. Indecent images may also include overtly sexual images of young people in their underwear.

The law criminalising indecent images of children was created long before mass adoption of the internet, mobiles and digital photography. It was also created to protect children and young people from adults seeking to sexually abuse them or gain pleasure from their sexual abuse. It was not intended to criminalise children. Despite this, young people who share sexual imagery of themselves, or peers, are breaking the law.

The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) has made clear that incidents involving youth produced sexual imagery should primarily be treated as safeguarding issues. Schools may respond to incidents without involving the police. Where the police are notified of incidents of youth produced sexual imagery they are obliged, under the Home Office Counting rules and National Crime Recording Standards, to record the incident on their crime systems. The incident will be listed as a 'crime' and the young person involved will be listed as a 'suspect.' **This is not the same as having a criminal record.**

Every 'crime' recorded on police systems has to be assigned an outcome from a predefined list of outcome codes. As of January 2016, the Home Office launched a new outcome code (outcome 21) to help formalise the discretion available to the police when handling crimes such as youth produced sexual imagery. This means that even though a young person has broken the law and the police could provide evidence that they have done so, the police can record that they chose not to take further action as it was not in the public interest.

⁴ Reprinted from Wolak and Finkelhor 'Sexting: a Typology' March 2011

Action to take in the case of an incident of sexting

Step 1 – Disclosure by a student

Sexting disclosures should follow the normal safeguarding practices and protocols. A student is likely to be very distressed especially if the image has been circulated widely and if they don't know who has shared it, seen it or where it has ended up. They will need pastoral support during the disclosure and after the event. They may even need immediate protection or a referral to Social Care.

The following questions will help decide upon the best course of action:

- Is the student disclosing about themselves receiving an image, sending an image or sharing an image?
- What sort of image is it? Is it potentially illegal or is it inappropriate?
- Are the school child protection and safeguarding policies and practices being followed? For example, has the DSL been consulted and is their advice and support available?
- How widely has the image been shared and is the device in their possession?
- Is it a school device or a personal device?
- Does the student need immediate support and or protection?
- Are there other students and or young people involved?
- Do they know where the image has ended up?

This situation will need to be handled very sensitively. Whatever the nature of the incident, ensure school safeguarding and child protection policies and practices are adhered to.

Step 2 – Searching a device

It is highly likely that the image will have been created and potentially shared through mobile devices. The image may not be on one single device, but may be on a website or on a multitude of devices; it may be on either a school-owned or personal device. It is important to establish the location of the image but be aware that this may be distressing for the young person involved, so be conscious of the support they may need.

When searching a mobile device the following conditions should apply:

- The action is in accordance with the school's child protection and safeguarding policies
- The search is conducted by the head teacher or a person authorised by them
- A member of the safeguarding team is present
- The search is conducted by a member of the same sex

If any illegal images of a child are found you should consider whether to inform the police. As a general rule it will almost always be proportionate to refer any incident involving "aggravated" sharing of images to the police, whereas purely "experimental" conduct may proportionately be dealt with without such referral, most particularly if it involves the child sharing images of themselves.

Any conduct involving, or possibly involving, the knowledge or participation of adults should always be referred to the police.

If an "experimental" incident is not referred to the police the reasons for this should be recorded in writing.

Always put the child first. Do not search the device if this will cause additional stress to the student/person whose image has been distributed.

If there is an indecent image of a child on a website or a social networking site then you should report the image to the site hosting it. In the case of a sexting incident involving a child or young person where you feel that they may be at risk of abuse then you should report the incident directly to CEOP www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-report, so that law enforcement can make an assessment, expedite the case with the relevant provider and ensure that appropriate action is taken to safeguard the child.

Step 3 – What to do and not do with the image

If the image has been shared across a personal mobile device:

- Confiscate and secure the device;
- Don't view the image unless there is a clear reason to do so;
- Don't send, share or save the image anywhere;
- Don't allow students to view images or send, share or save them anywhere.

If the image has been shared across a school network, a website or social network:

- Block the network to all users and isolate the image;
- Don't send or print the image;
- Don't move the material from one place to another;
- Don't view the image outside of the protocols of your safeguarding policies and procedures.

Step 4 – Who should deal with the incident?

Whoever the initial disclosure is made to must act in accordance with the school safeguarding policy, ensuring that the DSL or a senior member of staff is involved in dealing with the incident.

The DSL should always record the incident. Senior management should also always be informed. There may be instances where the image needs to be viewed and this should be done in accordance with protocols. The best interests of the child should always come first; if viewing the image is likely to cause additional stress, staff should make a judgement about whether or not it is appropriate to do so.

Step 5 - Deciding on a response

There may be a multitude of reasons why a student has engaged in sexting – it may be a romantic/sexual exploration scenario or it may be due to coercion.

It is important to remember that it won't always be appropriate to inform the police; this will depend on the nature of the incident. However, as a school it is important that incidents are consistently recorded. It may also be necessary to assist the young person in removing the image from a website or elsewhere.

If indecent images of a child are found:

- Act in accordance with your child protection and safeguarding policy, e.g. notify DSL
- Store the device securely
- Carry out a risk assessment in relation to the young person (see Appendix B of the Safeguarding Children in Education Guidance for a Sexting Risk Assessment pro-forma and flow chart)
- Make a referral if needed
- Contact the police (if appropriate)
- Put the necessary safeguards in place for the student, e.g. they may need counselling support, immediate protection and parents must also be informed.
- Inform parents and/or carers about the incident and how it is being managed.

Step 6 – Contacting other agencies (making a referral)

If the nature of the incident is high-risk, consider contacting Children's Social Care. Depending on the nature of the incident and the response you may also consider contacting local police or referring the incident to CEOP.

Understanding the nature of the incident, whether experimental or aggravated, will help to determine the appropriate course of action.

Step 7 – Containing the incident and managing pupil reaction

Sadly, there are cases in which victims of sexting have had to leave or change schools because of the impact the incident has had on them. The student will be anxious about who has seen the image and where it has ended up. They will seek reassurance regarding its removal from the platform on which it was shared. They are likely to need support from the school, their parents and their friends. Education programmes can reinforce to all students the impact and severe consequences that this behaviour can have. Consider engaging with your local police and asking them to talk to the students.

Other staff may need to be informed of incidents and should be prepared to act if the issue is continued or referred to by other students. The school, its students and parents should be on high alert, challenging behaviour and ensuring that the victim is well cared for and protected. The students' parents should usually be told what has happened so that they can keep a watchful eye over their child, especially when they are online at home. Creating a supportive environment for students in relation to the incident is very important.

Step 8 – Reviewing outcomes and procedures to prevent further incidences

As with all incidents, a review process ensures that the matter has been managed effectively and that the school has the capacity to learn and improve its handling procedures. Incidents of sexting can be daunting for a school to manage, especially if the image has been widely shared between pupils in school.

Further information is available from the [NSPCC](#)

