



Sherwell Valley Primary School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Approved by:

Governing Body

Date: Sept 25

Last reviewed on:

September 2025

Next review due by:

September 2026

Responding to a concern about a child

Where a young person alleges or appears to be the victim of abuse or neglect

- Listen to the child. Take their concerns seriously.
- Reassure the child that you will take action to keep them safe
- Do not promise to keep secrets.
- Make a written record of what the child tells you.
- Explain to the child what you are going to do next.
- Do not question the child further or attempt to question the alleged abuser.

Discuss concerns with the Designated/Deputy Safeguarding Leads (DSL/DDSL)

The DSL at Sherwell valley Primary School is **Cristy Nelson**.

The DDSLs are: **Matt Briant, Debbie Gaywood, Andy Robinson & Hannah Sennett**.

The DDSL Administrator is **Fran Steer**.

If the matter involves the **DSL**, it should be brought to the attention of the **Co-Chairs of Governors (Maria Beer)**.

A written record of the concern will be kept in the **Child Protection section of the child's file**.

A member of staff should contact Children's Social Care directly **only in exceptional circumstances** and are asked to advise the DSL or Deputy DSL that they have done so.

If the child is judged to be in **immediate danger**:
Dial 999 and ask for Police assistance

There is NOT a safeguarding concern

- The DSL will carefully consider if the child/family has any further needs which ought to be addressed.
- The DSL will consult with the family and relevant agencies and undertake an Early Help Assessment if required
- The member of staff who made the referral will be informed of the outcome.

There is a safeguarding concern: the matter should be referred to Children's Social Care

- During Office Hours: contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 01803 208100
- Out of Hours: contact the Emergency Duty Team on 0300 456 4876
- Non-emergency Police: 101

Children's Social Care will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the referral
- Decide (within 24 hours) on next steps
- Inform the referrer of the course of action that has been decided
- Inform the referrer of the course of action that has been decided

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Role	Name/Detail	Status & Review Cycle	Next Review Date
Safeguarding Governor	Maria Beer	Statutory/Annual	September 2026
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Cristy Nelson		

1. Safeguarding and Wellbeing Statement

Sherwell Valley Primary School **recognises our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils.** We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection, and justice. We do this first and foremost by listening to our children and remembering the principle of the Children’s Act 1989 that the welfare of the child is paramount.

Child protection forms part of the school’s safeguarding responsibilities. The Child Protection and Safeguarding policy underpins and guides Sherwell Valley Primary School’s procedures and protocols to ensure its pupils and staff are safe. All our staff understand it is everyone’s responsibility to safeguard and protect children, and the way we try to do this is by developing trusting relationships with children and giving them time to talk to us.

As a school we aspire to a **culture of zero tolerance against any sort of unacceptable behaviour.** We will take seriously any reports of sexual harassment or child on child abuse or discrimination of any kind. As carers you know your children best. Please do not hesitate to contact the key personnel named below to ask for support or to discuss any worries you have for your children and be assured we will do all we can to help. We would also like to emphasise that our responsibilities still apply if your child cannot be in school for any reason so, please do not hesitate to contact us.

2. Terminology

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment, inside or outside the home, including online.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child Protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

Child includes everyone under the age of 18. This includes children who are on roll but educated off site.

Parents refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents, and LA corporate parents.

Governors/Governing body: Governing body should be taken to mean the accountable body for the school/setting or group of schools/settings.

3. Introduction

The following safeguarding legislation and guidance has been considered when drafting this policy:

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (maintained schools only)
- Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 (Independent schools only, including academies)

and CTCs)

- The Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 (Independent schools only, including academies and CTCs)
 - The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
 - The Teacher Standards 2012
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
 - **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2025**
 - Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021 (Post 16 providers)
 - Information Sharing May 2024
 - What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - Filtering and Monitoring standards for schools and colleges
 - DfE Data Protection Guidance for schools 2024
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4. Policy Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children regardless of age, gender, culture, language, race, ability, sexual identity or religion have equal rights to protection, safeguarding and opportunities.
- We recognise that all adults, including temporary staff¹, volunteers and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm and have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or concern that may suggest a child is at risk of harm.
- All staff believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe, and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical, mental wellbeing and moral development of the individual child.
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support and supervision.

¹ Wherever the word "staff" is used, it covers ALL staff on site, including ancillary supply and self-employed staff, contractors, volunteers working with children etc and governors

5. Policy Aims

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside the school or college. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as **contextual safeguarding**, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. These can also be considered as extra-familial contexts.

- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to safeguarding and child protection to pupils, parents, and other partners.
- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence, and independence.
- To provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued, and respected, and feel confident to, and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties, believing they will be effectively listened to.
- To raise the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure we, the school, contribute to assessments of need and support packages for those children.
- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
- To develop a structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the Police and Multi agency safeguarding hub (MASH).
- To ensure that 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 DBS check (according to guidance)², and a single central record is kept for audit.

² DBS checks: detailed guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

6. Values

Supporting Children.

We recognise that a child who is abused or is a witness to violence may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth. We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm. We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn as well as exhibiting signs of mental health problems. We understand the impact on a child's mental health, behaviour and education when experiencing difficulties, abuse and/or neglect.

Our school will support all children by:

- Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness, through the curriculum as well as our relationships, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying.
- Promoting a caring, safe, and positive environment within the school.
- Responding sympathetically to any requests for time out to deal with distress and anxiety.
- Offering details of helplines, counselling, or other avenues of external support.
- Liaising and working together with all other settings, support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
- Notifying Torbay Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as soon as there is a significant concern.
- Providing continuing support to a child about whom there have been concerns who leaves the school by ensuring that appropriate information is copied under confidential cover to the child's new setting and ensuring the school medical records are forwarded as a matter of priority.
- Children are taught to understand and manage risk through our personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and Relationship and Sex Education and through all aspects of school life. This includes online safety; and by accessing and utilising the necessary resources, guidance, and toolkits to support the identification of children requiring mental health support, support services and assessments and the subsequent systems and processes.
- We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our children by providing children with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends, and an ethos of protection.

The school community will therefore:

- Work to establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are always listened to.
 - Include regular consultation with children e.g., through safety questionnaires, participation in anti-bullying week, asking children to report whether they have had happy/sad lunchtimes/playtimes.
 - Ensure that all children know there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
 - Include safeguarding across the curriculum, including PSHE and opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help; this will include anti-bullying work, online-safety, road safety, pedestrian, and cycle training; provide focussed activities to prepare key year groups for transition to new settings and/or key stages e.g., more personal safety/independent travel; and
 - Ensure all staff, pupils and parents are aware of school guidance for their use of mobile technology and the safeguarding issues around the use of mobile technologies and their associated risks have been shared.
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7. Safe School, Safe Staff

We will ensure that:

- All staff and volunteers read and understand **KCSiE 2025** as required and relevant to their role at the school.
- All staff receive information about the school's safeguarding arrangements, the school's safeguarding statement, staff behaviour policy (**code of conduct**)³, child protection and safeguarding policy, Relationship policy, the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education, the role and names of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and their deputies, and sign to say they have read, understood, and will abide by it.
- All staff receive safeguarding and child protection information (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes and understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring)
- All staff receive safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, in line with advice from **Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership (TSCP)** which is regularly updated (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, but at least annually.
- All members of staff are trained in and receive regular updates in online safety and reporting concerns.

- All staff, governors and trustees receive appropriate child protection and safeguarding (including online) at induction. They should renew this annually, to maintain their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse.
- The Child Protection and Safeguarding policy is made available via the school website or other means and that parents/carers are made aware of this policy and their entitlement to have a copy via the school handbook / newsletter / website. All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members regarding child protection procedures through the publication of the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and reference to it in the school's handbook.
- The school provides a coordinated offer of **Early Help** when additional needs of children are identified and contributes to early help arrangements and inter- agency working and plans; assessments and plans are recorded on the Children's Services database.
- Our vetting's policy will seek to ensure the suitability of adults working with children on school sites at any time, for example, by having evidence of DBS checks having been undertaken.
- Any visits to school by professionals will be booked in advance and the DSL made aware.
- Community users organising activities for children are aware of the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, guidelines, and procedures.
- The names of the designated members of staff for child protection, the DSL/DDSL are clearly advertised in the school with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.

³ The code of conduct should include acceptable use of technology, staff & pupil relationship boundaries and communications, including the use of social media.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

All members of The Governing Body understand and fulfil their responsibilities, namely, to:

- Ensure that there is an effective Child Protection and Safeguarding policy (including filtering & monitoring) together with a staff behaviour policy (code of conduct).
- Child protection, safeguarding, recruitment and managing allegations policies and procedures, including the staff behaviour policy (code of conduct), are consistent with TSCP guidance and statutory requirements, are reviewed annually and the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy is publicly available on the school website or by other

means.

- Ensures that all staff including temporary staff and volunteers are provided with the school's child protection and safeguarding policy and staff Code of Conduct.
- All staff have read the appropriate sections of **KCSiE 2025**, and mechanisms are in place to assist staff in understanding and discharging their roles and responsibilities as set out in the guidance.
- The school operates a **safer recruitment procedure** that includes statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children and disqualification by association regulations and by ensuring that there is at least one person on every recruitment panel who has completed safer recruitment training.
- The school has procedures for dealing with reports of abuse against staff (including the Headteacher), supply staff, volunteers and against other children and that a referral is made to the **DBS** if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns or would have had they not resigned.
- A member of the Governing Body/Board, usually the Chair, is nominated to liaise with the local authority (LA) on Child Protection issues and in the event of a report of abuse made against the Headteacher.
- A member of the senior leadership (SLT) team has been appointed as the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** by the Governing Body/Board who will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection and that the role is explicit in the role holder's job description.
- On appointment, the DSL and deputies undertake appropriate **Level 3 identified training** offered by TSCP or other provider every two years.
- All professionals working consistently with vulnerable pupils should receive robust supervision and guidance.
- All other staff have safeguarding training updated as appropriate; but at least annually.
- At least one member of the governing body has completed safer recruitment training to be repeated every five years.
- Children are taught about safeguarding (including online safety) as part of a broad and balanced curriculum covering relevant issues through personal social health and economic education (PSHE) and/or for maintained schools through relationship and sex education (RSE).
- Appropriate safeguarding responses are in place for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect including sexual abuse or exploitation and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.
- Appropriate online filtering and monitoring systems are in place⁴.

- Enhanced DBS checks (without barred list checks unless the governor is also a volunteer at the school) are in place for all Governors.
- Any weaknesses in Child Protection are remedied immediately.

⁴ 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. Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The Headteacher will ensure that:

- The Child Protection and Safeguarding policy is effective, and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff.
- Sufficient time, training, support, resources, including cover arrangements where necessary, is allocated to the DSL and deputy(ies) DSL(s) to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at child protection and other necessary meetings.
- Where there is a safeguarding concern that the child's wishes, and feelings are considered when determining what action to take and what services to provide.
- Systems are in place for children to express their views and give feedback which operate with the best interest of the child at heart.
- All staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle-blowing procedures.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online.
- They liaise with the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**, before taking any action and on an ongoing basis, where an allegation is made against a member of staff, supply staff or volunteer; and
- Anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Holds ultimate responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online

safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring).

- Will liaise with the headteacher or to inform him or her of issues - especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This should include being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult – see Appendix 7
- Will liaise with the head teacher to ensure the school fully adheres to the DfE **Searching, screening and confiscation guidance for schools**⁵ paying particular attention to the requirements in respect of strip searching and the encouragement to involve parents in decision making.
- Acts as a source of support and expertise in carrying out safeguarding duties for the whole school community.
- Will have the necessary knowledge and understanding to recognise possible children at risk of contextual and/or extra familial abuse or exploitation.
- Encourages a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings.
- Is appropriately trained with updates every two years and will refresh their knowledge and skills at regular intervals but at least annually.
- Will refer a child if there are concerns about possible abuse, to the **MASH**⁶, and act as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns. **Enquiries⁷ must be followed up in writing**, if referred by telephone.
- Will keep detailed, accurate records, either written or using appropriate online software, of all concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral. The rationale for all decision making will be recorded alongside concerns.
- Will ensure that all such records are kept confidential, stored securely and are separate from pupil records, until the child's **25th birthday**.
- Will ensure that an indication of the existence of the additional file is marked on the pupil records.
- Will ensure that when a pupil leaves the school, relevant child protection information is passed to the new school (separately from the main pupil file) 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 ensuring secure transit and that confirmation of receipt is obtained.
- In addition to the child protection file, the designated safeguarding lead should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the DSL of the new school or college in advance of a child leaving; for example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives. All transfers should be made securely.

- Will liaise with the LA, its safeguarding partners and work with other agencies and professionals in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.
- Has a working knowledge of TSCP procedures.
- Will ensure that either they, or another staff member, attend case conferences, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings; contribute to assessments, and provide a report where required which has been shared with the parents/carers.
- Will ensure that if a pupil has a child protection plan and is absent in the educational setting without explanation for two days their social worker will be alerted to the fact.
- Will ensure that all staff sign to say they have read, understood, and agree to work within the school's child protection policy, behaviour policy, staff Code of conduct and KCSiE 2024 and ensure that the policies are used appropriately.
- Will organise child protection and safeguarding induction, regularly updated training, and provide a minimum of annual updates on (including online safety) for all school staff, keep a record of attendance and address any absences.
- Will contribute to and provide, with the Headteacher and Co-Chairs of Governors, the "Audit of Statutory Duties and Associated Responsibilities" (S175/157 audit) to be submitted annually to the TSCP.
- Understands locally agreed processes for providing early help assessments and intervention and will support members of staff where Early Help is appropriate, or completion of the exploitation tool is necessary; and
- Will ensure that the names of the designated members of staff for Child Protection, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and deputies, are clearly advertised in the school, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.

⁵ [Searching, Screening and Confiscation \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

⁶ All new enquiries go to the MASH 01803 2018100. In an emergency out of hours referrals can be made to the Emergency Duty Team on 0300 456 4876 or Police. Online forms are available via Hub - Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership

⁷ This is an incomplete footnote from the original source.

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) (DDSLs):

- Is/ are trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, in the absence of the DSL, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils.

- In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL the deputy will assume all the functions above.

All School Staff:

- Understand that it is everyone's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and that they have a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action. This includes concerns about people who use our school site, regardless of pupils attending their groups.
- Consider, always, what is in the best interests of the child.
- Have a role to play in ensuring there is a whole school approach to safeguarding, including promoting a culture of zero tolerance towards any form of abuse, including child on child abuse.
- Will be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect both familial and contextual; and recognise that contextual harm can take a variety of different forms.
- Know how to respond to a pupil who alleges or appears to be the victim of abuse through delivery of 'Working together to Safeguard Children', and 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'.
- Will refer any safeguarding or child protection concerns to the DSL or if necessary, where the child is at immediate risk to the police or MASH.
- Will be aware of the TSCP Professional Differences (**Escalation**) policy⁸ or the duty to report concerns if the DSL fails to do so without reasonable cause.
- Are aware of the **Early Help** process and understand their role within it including identifying emerging problems for children who may benefit from an Early Help assessment, liaising with the DSL in the first instance and supporting other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment through information sharing. In some cases, staff may act as the Lead Professional in Early Help cases
- Will provide a safe and nurturing environment in which children can learn.

9. Confidentiality

- Sherwell Valley Primary School recognises that to effectively meet a child's needs,

safeguard their welfare, and protect them from harm the school must contribute to inter-agency working in line with **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)** and share information between professionals and agencies where there are concerns.

- All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies to safeguard children and that the **Data Protection Act 2018⁹ is not a barrier to sharing information** where the failure to do so would place a child at risk of harm.
- All staff must be aware that they **cannot promise a child to keep secrets** which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.
- However, we also recognise that all matters relating to child protection are personal to children and families. Therefore, in this respect they are confidential, and the Head teacher or DSLs will only disclose information about a child to other members of staff on a **need-to-know basis**.
- We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to **MASH with their parents /carers** unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will seek advice from the MASH. **Torbay Education Safeguarding Service (TESS)** Schools can also consult with TESS safeguarding advisors.

10. Child Protection Procedures

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 the family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or 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 by another child or children.

Abuse and neglect may also take place outside of the home, (**contextual safeguarding**) and this may include (but is not limited to), sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, radicalisation. Further information about the four categories of abuse; physical, emotional, sexual and neglect, and indicators that a child may be being abused can be found in the appendices.

Any child in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of **"It could happen here"**.

There are also several **specific safeguarding concerns** that we recognise our pupils may experience.

- child absent from education

- child missing from home or care
- child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- child criminal exploitation
- bullying including cyberbullying
- domestic abuse
- drugs
- fabricated or induced illness
- faith abuse
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- forced marriage
- gangs and youth violence
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- mental health
- private fostering
- radicalisation
- youth produced sexual imagery (sexting) and sextortion (financially motivated sexual extortion)
- teenage relationship abuse
- trafficking
- child on child abuse
- up skirting
- serious violence

Staff are aware that behaviours linked to drug taking, alcohol abuse, truanting and sexting put children in danger and that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. We also recognise that abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are complex and are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. Staff are aware that in most cases multiple issues will overlap one another. Staff also recognise that harm can occur when children witness the ill treatment of others, particularly when they see, hear or experience domestic abuse and its effects.

If staff are concerned about a child's welfare

If staff notice any indicators of abuse/neglect or signs that a child may be at risk of harm they should record these concerns on **Cpoms** and pass it to the DSL. If using an electronic alert, the sender should not assume the DSL will immediately receive this and any serious concerns should be reported immediately. If concerns are discussed in person with the DSL details should also be recorded in writing

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk but have no 'real' evidence. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, and they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical or inconclusive signs may have been noticed. Sherwell Valley Primary School recognises that the signs may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a relative is unwell, or an accident has occurred. However, they may also indicate a child is being abused or needs safeguarding.

In these circumstances staff will try to give the child the opportunity to talk. It is fine for staff to ask the pupil if they are OK or if they can help in any way. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL and put them in writing. If the pupil does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below regarding a pupil making a report of abuse or displaying behaviours that suggest they may have been abused.

We recognise that it takes a lot of courage for a child to tell someone they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, guilty, or scared, their abuser may have threatened that something will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults or believe that what has happened is their fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abuse. A child who tells/shows that they have been abused may have to tell their story on several subsequent occasions to the police and/or social workers. Therefore, it is vital that their first experience of talking to a trusted adult is a positive one.

During their conversation with the pupil staff will:

- Listen to what the child has to say and allow them to speak freely.
- Remain calm and not overact or give any indication of being shocked or alarmed – the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting the listener.
- Reassure the child that it is not their fault and that they have done the right thing in telling someone.
- Not be afraid of silences – staff must remember how difficult it is for the pupil and allow them time to talk.
- Take what the child is telling them seriously.
- Avoid asking leading questions, where possible allow the child to take the lead.

- Limit questions to those necessary to try and obtain a context.
- Where sexual abuse has been alleged or a report of criminal abuse do not ask additional questions telephone the **MASH** for advice, however, do not stop the child talking.
- Avoid jumping to conclusions, speculation or making accusations.
- Not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who is being abused.
- Avoid admonishing the child for not telling them sooner. Saying things such as 'I do wish you had told me about it when it started' may be the staff member's way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean they have done something wrong; and
- Tell the child what will happen next.

If a pupil talks to any member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing the staff member will let the child know that they will have to pass the information on – staff are not allowed to keep secrets.

The member of staff should write up their conversation as soon as possible on **Cpoms** in the child's own words. Staff should make this a matter of priority. The record should be signed and dated, the member of staff's name should be printed, and it should also detail where the report/statement was made and who else was present. The record should be handed to the **DSL**.

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and normally the **DSL/DDSL** will contact the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion, or report.

However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's **MASH** e.g., familial sexual abuse.

Where there are concerns about **forced marriage or honour-based violence parents should not be informed a referral is being made** as to do so may place the child at a significantly increased risk. In some circumstances it would be appropriate to contact the police.

Making a referral

- Concerns about a child having been abused should be immediately raised with the **DSL** who will help decide whether a referral to children's **MASH** or other support is

appropriate in accordance with **TSCP interactive threshold tool**¹⁰

- If a referral is needed, then the **DSL** should make this rapidly and there must be systems in place to enable this to happen. However, anyone can make a referral and if for any reason a staff member thinks a referral is appropriate and one hasn't been made, they can and should consider making a referral themselves.
- The child (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.
- If after a referral the child's situation does not appear to be improving the **DSL** (or the person that made the referral) should press for re-consideration to ensure their concerns have been addressed, and most importantly the child's situation improves.
- If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's **MASH and/or the police immediately**.
- Where referrals are not made by the **DSL**, the **DSL** should be informed as soon as possible.

Supporting our Staff

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.

We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the **DSL** and to seek further support as appropriate.

All professionals working consistently with vulnerable pupils should receive supervision and guidance.

11. Children who are particularly vulnerable

Sherwell Valley Primary School recognises that some children are more vulnerable to abuse and neglect and that additional barriers exist when recognising abuse for some children.

We understand that this increase in risk is due more to societal attitudes and assumptions or child protection procedures which fail to acknowledge children's diverse circumstances, rather than the individual child's personality, impairment, or circumstances.

In some cases, possible indicators of abuse such as a child's mood, behaviour or injury might be assumed to relate to the child's impairment or disability rather than giving a cause for concern. Or a focus may be on the child's disability, special educational needs, or situation without consideration of the full picture. In other cases, such as bullying, the child may be disproportionately impacted by the behaviour without outwardly showing any signs that they are experiencing it.

Some children may also find it harder to tell others about abuse due to communication barriers, lack of access to a trusted adult or not being aware that what they are experiencing is abuse.

Any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs.
- has special educational needs (regardless of whether they have a statutory education, health, and care plan).
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups.
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home.
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and is alternative provision or a pupil referral unit.
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, or exploitation.
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse.
- has returned home to their family from care.
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect.
- is at risk of being radicalised.
- is a privately fostered child.
- has an imprisoned parent or carer, or is affected by parental offending.
- Is experiencing mental health, wellbeing difficulties.

11. Anti-Bullying/Cyberbullying

Our school policy on anti-bullying is set out in a separate document and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. This includes all forms e.g., cyber, racist, homophobic and gender related bullying. We keep a record of known bullying incidents which is shared with and analysed by the governing body. All staff are aware that children with SEND and / or differences/perceived differences are more vulnerable to being bullied / victims of child abuse.

If the bullying is particularly serious, or the anti-bullying procedures are seen to be ineffective, the Headteacher and the **DSL** will consider implementing child protection procedures and/or consider legislation regarding hate crimes¹¹. The subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in **PHSE** education.

12. Racist Incidents

A racist incident is 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'. (Recommendation 12 of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry).

This includes refusal to co-operate with others on the basis of race, racist remarks or jokes, racial intimidation and name-calling or cyber bullying.

Racism, as with other forms of discrimination, can be considered a **hate crime**. As such it may be necessary to report this to the police. The behaviour policy will be considered for all incidents of racism.

[Hate Crime \(campaign.gov.uk\)](http://campaign.gov.uk)

¹² [Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

All racist incidents will be recorded, and schools are encouraged to send these to the local authority. The form can be downloaded from the **TSCP** website Safeguarding in Education - Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership.

13. Radicalisation and Extremism

The **Prevent Duty for England and Wales (2015)** ¹² under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on education and other children's services to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Extremism is defined as ‘as ‘vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

Some children are at risk of being radicalised; adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal, or dangerous.

Sherwell Valley Primary School is clear that exploitation of vulnerable children and radicalisation should be viewed as a **safeguarding concern** and follows the Department for Education guidance for schools and childcare providers on preventing children and young people from being drawn into terrorism¹².

Sherwell Valley Primary School seeks to protect children and young people against the messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, or to Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and extremist Animal Rights movements.

School staff receive training to help identify early signs of radicalisation and extremism. Indicators of susceptibility to radicalisation are detailed in Appendix 6.

Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable pupils to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the school follows the **DfE advice Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC** (spiritual, moral, social, and cultural education) in Schools (2014)¹³.

The school governors, the Headteacher and the **DSL** will assess the level of risk within the school and put actions in place to reduce that risk. Risk assessment may include the use of school premises by external agencies, anti-bullying policy and other issues specific to the school’s profile, community, and philosophy.

When any member of staff has concerns that a pupil may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with the **DSL**. They should then follow normal safeguarding procedures. If the matter is urgent then **Devon & Cornwall Police must be contacted by dialling 999**. In non-urgent cases where police advice is sought then dial **101**. The Department of Education has also set up a dedicated telephone helpline for staff and governors to raise concerns around Prevent (020 7340 7264).

14. Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse represents at least one quarter of all violent crime. It is actual or threatened physical, emotional, psychological, financial, or sexual abuse. It involves the use of power and

control by one person over another. It occurs regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, age, and religion, mental or physical ability. Domestic abuse can also involve other types of abuse.

We use the term **domestic abuse** to reflect that abusive and controlling behaviours do not necessarily involve physical violence. Slapping, punching, kicking, bruising, rape, ridicule, constant criticism, threats, manipulation, sleep deprivation, social isolation, and other controlling behaviours all count as abuse.

Living in a home where domestic abuse takes place is harmful to children and can have a serious impact on their behaviour, wellbeing and understanding of healthy, positive relationships. **Children who witness domestic abuse are victims of abuse and have suffered or are at risk of significant harm.** Staff are alert to the signs and symptoms of a child suffering or witnessing domestic abuse – See Appendix 5.

Government legislation enacted in 2021 recognises that a child who sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, domestic abuse and is related to the person being abused or the perpetrator is also to be regarded as a victim of domestic abuse.

In addition, the age limit for criminal offences related to domestic abuse was lowered from 18 to 16, to recognise that young people can experience abuse in their relationships.

15. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Both **CSE** and **CCE** are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. This power imbalance could be due to age, gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and /or access to economic or other resources. The abuse could be linked to an exchange for something the victim perceives that they need or want and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It may involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when the activity appears consensual, and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online. More definitions and indicators are included in Appendix 3. Any concerns that a child is being or is at risk of being sexually or criminally exploited should be passed without delay to the **DSL**. Sherwell Valley Primary School is aware there is a clear link

between **regular school absence/truancing, CSE and CCE**. Staff should consider a child to be at potential CSE/CCE risk in the case of regular school absence/truancing and make reasonable enquiries with the child and parents to assess this risk.

The **DSL** will use the **TSCP Exploitation Toolkit**¹⁴ on all occasions when there is a concern that a child is being or is at risk of being sexually or criminally exploited or where indicators have been observed that are consistent with a child who is being or who is at risk of being sexually or criminally exploited. The Exploitation Toolkit will indicate to the **DSL** whether a **MASH** referral is necessary. If the **DSL** is in any doubt, they will contact TESS or the **MASH**.

If a child is in immediate danger the police should be called on **999**.

Sherwell Valley Primary School is aware that a child often is not able to recognise the coercive nature of the abuse and does not see themselves as a victim. Consequently, the child may resent what they perceive as interference by staff. However, staff must act on their concerns as they would for any other type of abuse.

Sherwell Valley Primary School includes the risks of sexual and criminal exploitation in the **PHSE and RSE curriculum**. Pupils will be informed of the grooming process and how to protect themselves from people who may potentially be intent on causing harm. They will be supported in terms of recognising and assessing risk in relation to **CSE/CCE**, including online, and knowing how and where to get help.

16. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act (2003). It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. A **mandatory reporting duty** requires teachers to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s, which are identified in the course of their professional work, to the **police**¹⁵.

The duty applies to all persons in Sherwell Valley Primary School who are employed or engaged to carry out 'teaching work' in the school, whether or not they have qualified teacher status. The duty applies to the individual who becomes aware of the case to make a report. It should not be transferred to the **DSL**; however, the **DSL** should be informed.

If a teacher is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her or a teacher observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth, the teacher should **personally make a report to the police force in which the girl resides by calling 101**. The

report should be made by the close of the next working day.

School staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators of **FGM** which are set out in Appendix 4. Concerns about FGM outside of the mandatory reporting duty should be reported as per Sherwell Valley Primary School's child protection procedures. Staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female pupils about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period. There should also be consideration of potential risk to other girls in the family and practicing community.

Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm the teacher should report the case immediately to the police, including dialling **999** if appropriate.

There are **no circumstances** in which a teacher or other member of staff should examine a girl.

¹⁵ [Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation)

17. Forced Marriage

A **forced marriage** is a marriage in which one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities cannot) consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual, and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

Forced marriage is an appalling and indefensible practice and is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse, and a serious abuse of human rights. Since June 2014 forcing someone to marry has become a **criminal offence** in England and Wales under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage which is common in several cultures. The families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

School staff should **never attempt to intervene directly** as a school or through a third party. Contact should be made with **MASH/police**.

Since 27 February 2023, it is an offence¹⁶ to carry out any conduct for the purpose of causing a child to enter into a marriage before the child's eighteenth birthday (whether or not the conduct amounts to violence, threats, any other form of coercion or deception).

¹⁶ Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage and multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of forced marriage (accessible version) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

18. Honour-based Abuse

Honour based abuse (HBA) can be described as a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such abuse can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

Honour based abuse might be committed against people who;

- become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion.
- want to get out of an arranged marriage.
- want to get out of a forced marriage.
- wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture.

It is a violation of human rights and may be a form of domestic and/or sexual abuse. There is no, and cannot be, honour or justification for abusing the human rights of others.

19. One Chance Rule

This term is used in the **FGM Guidance** for schools produced by the national FGM centre July 2019 FGM schools guidance. Multi agency statutory guidance dated July 20 FGM Statutory guidance July 20 does not appear to use the term, however, the expression is intended to convey the importance of acting promptly and recognise there may be “only one chance to speak to a pupil who is a potential victim and have just one chance to save a life.

Sherwell Valley Primary School is aware that if the victim is not offered support following a report of abuse that the **‘One Chance’** opportunity may be lost. Therefore, all staff are aware of their responsibilities and obligations when they become aware of potential forced marriage, FGM and HBA cases.

20. Mental Health

Staff will 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. Whilst school recognise that only appropriately trained professionals can diagnose mental health problems; staff are able to make day to day observations of children and identify such behaviour that may suggest they are experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. School is also aware of the many studies evidencing the impact on the emotional wellbeing of Covid and lockdown and the many adverse experiences children and their families may have faced.

Adverse Childhood Experiences have been shown to impact on a child's mental health, behaviour, and education through adolescence and adulthood will be covered in safeguarding awareness training and updates. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, they will share this with the **DSL or deputy**. An informative video produced by NHS Wales can be seen [here](#)

21. Private Fostering Arrangements

A **private fostering arrangement** occurs when someone other than a parent or 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 18 if the child is disabled. Children cared for by the local authority or who are placed in residential schools, children's homes or hospitals are not considered to be privately fostered. Private fostering occurs in all cultures, including British culture and children may be privately fostered at any age.

Sherwell Valley Primary School recognises that most privately fostered children remain safe and well but are aware that safeguarding concerns have been raised in some cases. Therefore, all staff are alert to possible safeguarding issues, including the possibility that the child has been **trafficked** into the country.

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. However, when a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement, they will raise this with the **DSL** and the **DSL will notify MASH of the circumstances**.

Pupils attending schools through schemes such as the **Whitehouse Guardian Scheme** may be defined as privately fostered and a referral to the **MASH** must be completed.

22. Cared for children and previously cared for children

The most common reason for children becoming cared for is because of abuse and neglect, although there may be other reasons, such as parental poor health. Sherwell Valley Primary School ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep cared for/previously cared for children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's cared for legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.

The designated teacher for cared for children and the **DSL** have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the **Torbay Council's virtual school head for children in care**.

The designated teacher for cared for children works with the virtual school head to discuss how **Pupil Premium Plus** funding can be best used to support the progress of cared for children in the school and meet the needs in the child's personal education plan. The designated teacher will follow the statutory guidance 'Promoting the education of Cared for Children'.

23. Children Absent from Education

Children can be absent from education for a variety of reasons, however, it is important to closely monitor absence. **Repeated and/or prolonged absence could be an indication of safeguarding concerns**. It could also indicate mental health concerns.

Early intervention can be vital, and parents/carers will be contacted at the earliest opportunity. The school will hold more than one emergency contact number for pupils and students when reasonably possible.

The **DSL** will monitor unauthorised absences and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority particularly where children go missing on repeat occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day in conjunction with 'Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities'¹⁷. Staff must be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

24. Online Safety

The breadth of issues classified within **online safety** is considerable and ever evolving but can be categorized into four areas of risk:

- **Content:** being subject to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: pornography racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
- **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.
- **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,
- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

Our pupils increasingly use electronic equipment daily to access the internet and share content and images via social media sites which are constantly emerging.

Unfortunately, some adults and other children use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts or emails, to grooming and enticing children to engage in sexual behaviour such as webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. Pupils may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate material such as pornographic websites or those which promote extremist behaviour, criminal activity, suicide or eating disorders.

Sherwell Valley Primary School has an **online safety policy** which explains how we try to keep pupils safe in school and how we respond to online safety incidents (See flowchart at the beginning of this document.)

Sherwell Valley Primary School will also provide advice to parents when pupils are being asked to learn online at home and consider how best to safeguard both pupils and staff.

Pupils are taught about online safety throughout the curriculum, and all staff receive online

safety training which is regularly updated. The school Online Safety Curriculum Champions are **Abi Mildoon** and **Caitlin Knapman**.

25. Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

The **DSL, Governing Body/Board and Head Teacher** will take due regard to Part 5, **KCSiE 2025**.

In most instances, pupils will behave towards each other in a respectful manner. Where they do not, this will be covered by our behaviour policy. However, some reports of abuse may be of such a serious nature that they may raise safeguarding concerns. Sherwell Valley Primary School recognise that children can abuse their peers and that **child-on-child abuse** can happen in any school. It will not be passed off as **'banter'** or **'part of growing up'**. The forms of child-on-child abuse are outlined below. Further detail is available in Appendix 1.

- **Domestic abuse** – an incident or pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, financial and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent against a current or former dating partner regardless of gender or sexuality.
- **Child Sexual Exploitation** – children under the age of 18 may be sexually abused in the context of exploitative relationships, contexts and situations by peers who are also under 18.
- **Harmful Sexual Behaviour** – Children and young people presenting with sexual behaviours that are outside of developmentally 'normative' parameters and harmful to themselves and others (For more information, please see Appendix 1.
- **Up skirting** – 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.
- **Serious Youth Violence¹⁸** – Any offence of most serious violence or weapon enabled crime, where the victim is aged 1-19' i.e., murder, manslaughter, rape, wounding with intent and causing grievous bodily harm. 'Youth violence' is defined in the same way, but also includes assault with injury offences. All staff will receive training so that they are aware of indicators which may signal that children are at risk from or involved with serious violence and crime.

The term **child on child abuse** can refer to all these definitions and a child may experience one or multiple facets of abuse at any one time. We will adopt a whole school approach to addressing child on child abuse and the policy is detailed in Appendix 1.

26. Youth produced sexual imagery (sexting)

The practice of children sharing images and videos via text message, email, social media, or mobile messaging apps has become commonplace. However, this online technology has also given children the opportunity to produce and distribute sexual imagery in the form of photos and videos. Such imagery involving anyone under the age of **18 is illegal**.

Youth produced sexual imagery refers to both images and videos where:

- A person under the age of 18 creates and shares sexual imagery of themselves with a child under the age of 18.
- A person under the age of 18 shares sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18 with a child under the age of 18 or an adult.
- A person under the age of 18 is in possession of sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18.

All incidents of this nature should be treated as a **safeguarding concern** and in line with government guidance¹⁹.

Cases where sexual imagery of people under 18 has been shared by adults and where sexual imagery of a person of any age has been shared by an adult to a child is **child sexual abuse** and should be responded to accordingly.

If a member of staff becomes aware of an incident involving youth produced sexual imagery, they should follow the child protection procedures and refer to the **DSL** as soon as possible. The member of staff should **confiscate the device involved and set it to flight mode or, if this is not possible, turn it off**. Staff should **not view, copy or print** the youth produced sexual imagery.

The **DSL** should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff and subsequent interviews with the children involved (if appropriate). Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is reason to believe that involving parents would put the child at risk of harm. At any point in the process if there is concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to **MASH or the Police** as appropriate.

Immediate referral at the initial review stage should be made to **MASH/Police** if:

- The incident involves an **adult**.
- There is good reason to believe that a young person has been **coerced, blackmailed or groomed** or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to

special education needs).

- What you know about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the child's development stage or are **violent**.
- The imagery involves sexual acts.
- The imagery involves anyone aged **12 or under**.
- There is reason to believe a child is at **immediate risk of harm** owing to the sharing of the imagery, for example the child is presenting as suicidal or self-harming.

If none of the above apply then the **DSL** will use their **professional judgement** to assess the risk to pupils involved and may decide, with input from the Headteacher, to respond to the incident without escalation to MASH or the police. Such decisions will be recorded.

In applying judgement, the **DSL** will consider if;

- There is a significant age difference between the sender/receiver.
- there is any coercion or encouragement beyond the sender/receiver.
- The imagery was shared and received with the knowledge of the child in the imagery.
- the child is more vulnerable than usual i.e., at risk.
- there is a significant impact on the children involved.
- The image is of a severe or extreme nature.
- The child involved understands consent.
- the situation is isolated or if the image has been more widely distributed.
- There are other circumstances relating to either the sender or recipient that may add cause for concern i.e., difficult home circumstances.
- The children have been involved in incidents relating to youth produced imagery before.

If any of these circumstances are present the situation will be **escalated** according to our child protection procedures, including reporting to the police or **MASH**. Otherwise, the situation will be managed within the school.

The **DSL** will record all incidents of youth produced sexual imagery, including both the actions taken, actions not taken, reasons for doing so and the resolution in line with safeguarding recording procedures.

27. Allegations against staff

All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.

Guidance about conduct and safe practice, including safe use of mobile phones by staff and volunteers will be given at induction.

We understand that a pupil may make a report of abuse against a member of staff or staff may have concerns about another staff member. If such a report is made, or information is received which suggests that a person may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the report or made aware of the information, will **immediately inform the Headteacher**.

The Headteacher on all such occasions will discuss the report of abuse with the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** at the earliest opportunity and before taking any further action.

If the report made to a member of staff concerns the Headteacher, the person receiving the report of abuse will **immediately inform the Chairs of Governors** who will consult the **LADO** as above, without notifying the Headteacher first.

The school will follow the Torbay procedures for **“Managing allegations against staff”**, procedures set out in **KCSiE 2025** and the school’s **Managing Allegations policy and procedures**.

Suspension of the member of staff, excluding the Headteacher, against whom an allegation has been made, needs careful consideration, and the Headteacher will seek the advice of the **LADO** and an **HR Consultant** in making this decision. In the event of an allegation against the Headteacher, the decision to suspend will be made by the **Co-Chairs of the Governing Board** with advice as above.

We have a procedure for managing the suspension of a contract for a community user in the event of an allegation arising in that context.

Staff, parents, and governors are reminded that **publication of material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law**. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing including content placed on social media sites.

28. Whistleblowing

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues, poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding arrangements. If it becomes necessary to consult outside the school, they should speak in the first instance, to the **LADO** following the **Whistleblowing Policy**.

The **NSPCC whistleblowing helpline** is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. 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**

Whistleblowing re the Headteacher should be made to the **Chair of the Governing Body** whose contact details are readily available to staff (as pertinent to setting).

29. Physical Intervention

- We acknowledge that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a **last resort**, when a child is endangering him/herself or others, and that it must always be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness.
 - Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention will be appropriately trained.
 - We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.
 - We recognise that touch is appropriate in the context of working with children, and all staff have been given 'Safe Practice' guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundary.
-

30. Confidentiality, sharing information and GDPR

We acknowledge that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, when a child is endangering him/herself or others, and that it must always be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness.

Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention will be appropriately trained.

We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

We recognise that touch is appropriate in the context of working with children, and all staff have been given 'Safe Practice' guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundary.

31. Linked policies

This policy also links to our policies on:

- Relationship
 - Staff Behaviour Policy / Code of Conduct
 - Whistleblowing
 - Anti-bullying
 - Health & Safety
 - Allegations against staff
 - Attendance
 - Curriculum
 - PSHE
 - Teaching and Learning
 - Administration of medicines
 - ²⁰ Data Protection Act 2018
 - Information sharing: advice for practitioners (publishing.service.gov.uk)
-

Appendix 1 Child on child abuse: Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment

The boundary between what is abusive and what is part of normal childhood or youthful experimentation can be blurred. There should be a **zero-tolerance** attitude towards any form of derogatory behaviour. The determination of whether behaviour is developmental, inappropriate, or abusive will hinge around the related concepts of **true consent, power imbalance and exploitation**. Staff should be vigilant too:

- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals
- up skirting

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 seeking 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, educational input may be enough to address the behaviour.

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

Informed consent: In 2015 (recirculated in 2018) Thames Valley police produced a video on the topic of consent using the analogy of asking for a cup of tea. Consent is everything. The video is reproduced on the Devon and Cornwall website alongside a range of resources

including a good consent guide

[Dorset Police and Devon and Cornwall Police working in Partnership \(devon-cornwall.police.uk\)](http://devon-cornwall.police.uk).

They highlight the following: Sexual consent is where a person has the freedom to agree to sexual activity. It is vital the person instigating sex makes sure their partner is participating freely and readily.

For there to be informed consent the following must be present

- 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.

The **TSCP** offers guidance for responding to sexually harmful behaviour and encourages the use of the **AIM checklists** to assess the behaviour. The checklists can be found on iLearn

Responding to Reports

Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment. All reports of child-on-child abuse will be made on a case-by-case basis with the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy taking a leading role using their professional judgement and supported by other agencies such as social care or the police as required. Where possible consider the TSCP Harmful Sexual Behaviour policy and AIM checklists.

The immediate response to a report

- The school or college will take all reports seriously and will reassure the victim that they

will be supported and kept safe.

- All staff will be trained to manage a report. Reports should always include the rationale for any decisions made.
- Staff will **not promise confidentiality** as the concern will need to be shared further (for example, with the designated safeguarding lead or social care) staff will however only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it.
- A written report will be made as soon after the interview as possible recording the facts as presented by the child. These may be used as part of a statutory assessment if the case is escalated later.
- Where the report includes an online element the school or college will follow advice on searching, screening, and confiscation. The staff will not view/ forward images unless unavoidable and only if another member of staff (preferably the DSL) is present.
- The **DSL** will be informed as soon as possible.

Risk Assessment

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the **DSL/DDSL** will make an **immediate risk and needs assessment**. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The risk and needs assessment should consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support.
- The alleged perpetrator; and
- All the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school or college, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them; Risk assessments will be recorded (written or electronic say where these are filed) and be kept under review. The **DSL/DDSL** will ensure they are engaging with **MASH**.

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

Following an incident, we will consider:

- The wishes of the victims in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- 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 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.
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff, and other related issues and wider context?

Follow up Actions

Whilst the school or college establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children’s social care and the police:

- The perpetrator will be removed from any classes they share with the victim.
- We will consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart from school or college premises and on transport to and from the school or college. These actions are in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator.

Options to manage the report

Manage internally

I. In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, we may decide that the children concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising the behaviour and bullying policies and by providing pastoral support. This decision will be made based on the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All decisions, and discussions around making these decisions will be recorded and stored (by whom, where).

II. In line with (I) above, we may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions but may benefit from **early help**. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child’s life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

Refer to MASH

I. Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, we will make a referral to the MASH. Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the DSL/DDSL will be working alongside, and cooperating with, the relevant lead social worker. Collaborative work will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator and any other children that require support.

Reporting to the Police

I. Any report to the police will generally be made through the MASH as above. The DSL/DDSL will follow local processes for referrals. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is this will be passed on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach.

Where a report has been made to the police, the school or college will consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. They will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity. Where there is a criminal investigation, we will work closely with the relevant agencies to support all children involved (especially potential witnesses). Where required, advice from the police will be sought to help us.

II. Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator, we will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the school or college takes do not jeopardise the police investigation.

The end of the criminal process

I. If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, the school will update its **risk assessment**, ensuring relevant protections are in place for all children. We will consider any suitable action following our **behaviour policy**. If the perpetrator remains in school/academy we will be very clear as to our expectations regarding the perpetrator now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions we think are reasonable and proportionate about the perpetrator's timetable. Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other pupils or students in the school or college. We will ensure all children involved are protected, especially from any **bullying or harassment** (including online).

II. Where cases are classified as '**no further action**' (NFA'd) by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is no guilty verdict, we will continue to offer support to the victim and the alleged perpetrator for as long as is necessary. A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress the report does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. We will continue to support all parties in this instance.

III. Whatever the response, it should be underpinned by the principle that there is a **zero-tolerance approach** to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.

Support for Children Affected by sexual assault

I. Support for victims of sexual assault is available from a variety of agencies - see **Appendix 8**. We will support the victim of sexual assault to remain in school but if they are unable to do so we will enable them to continue their education elsewhere. This decision will be made only at the request of the child and their family. If they are moved, we will ensure the new school is aware of the ongoing support they may need. The **DSL** will support this move. Where there is a criminal investigation, the alleged perpetrator will be removed from any shared classes with the victim, and we will also consider how best to keep them a reasonable distance apart within the school premises or on school transport. This is in the best interest of the children concerned and should not be perceived as being a judgement of guilt before any legal proceedings.

II. We will work closely with the police. Where a criminal investigation into a **rape or assault by penetration** leads to a conviction or caution, we may take suitable action, if we have not already done so. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the same school or college would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other pupils or students).

III. Where a criminal investigation into **sexual assault** leads to a conviction or caution, we may, if we have not already done so, consider any suitable sanctions using our behaviour policy, including consideration of **permanent exclusion**. Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the school or college, the principle would be to continue keeping the victim and perpetrator in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school and college premises and transport. The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.

IV. Reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment will, in some cases, not lead to a report to the police (for a variety of reasons). In some cases, rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault or sexual harassment are reported to the police and the case is not progressed or are reported to the police and ultimately result in a not guilty verdict. None of this means the offence did not happen or that the victim lied. The process will have affected both victims and alleged perpetrators. Appropriate support will be provided to both as required and consideration given to sharing classes and potential contact as required on a case-by-case basis. All the above will be considered with the **needs and wishes of the victim at the heart of the process** (supported by parents and carers as required). Any arrangements should be kept under review.

Physical Abuse

I. While a clear focus of child-on-child abuse is around sexual abuse and harassment, **physical assaults and initiation violence and rituals** from pupils to pupils can also be abusive. These are equally not tolerated and if it is believed that a crime has been committed, will be reported to the police. The principles from the **anti-bullying policy** will be applied in these cases, with recognition that any police investigation will need to take priority. When dealing with other alleged behaviour which involves reports of, for example, emotional and/or physical abuse, staff can draw on aspects of **Hackett's continuum** (see above) to assess where the alleged behaviour falls on a spectrum and to decide how to respond. This could include, for example, whether it:

- is socially acceptable
- involves a single incident or has occurred over a period of time
- is problematic and concerning
- involves any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination e.g., related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability
- involves an element of coercion or pre-planning
- involves a power imbalance between the child/children allegedly responsible for the behaviour involves a misuse of power

Online Behaviour

I. Many forms of child-on-child abuse have an element of online behaviour including behaviours such as **cyberbullying and sexting**. Policies and procedures concerning this type of behaviour can be found in the anti-bullying policy and online safety policy.

Prevention

I. Our school actively seeks to raise awareness of and **prevent** all forms of child-on-child abuse by:

II. Educating all Governors, SLT, staff and volunteers, pupils, and parents about this issue.

III. This will include training all Governors, SLT, staff and volunteers on the nature, prevalence, and effect of child-on-child abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it.

IV. This includes: (a) **Contextual Safeguarding/extra familial abuse**; (b) The identification and classification of specific behaviours; and (c) The importance of taking seriously all forms of child-on-child abuse (no matter how low level they may appear) and ensuring that no form of child-on-child abuse is ever dismissed as horseplay or teasing.

V. Educating children about the nature and prevalence of child-on-child abuse via **PSHE and**

the wider curriculum.

VI. Pupils are frequently told what to do if they witness or experience such abuse, the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it, including vulnerability of those who inflict such abuse.

VII. They are regularly informed about the school's approach to such issues, including its **zero-tolerance policy** towards all forms of child-on-child abuse.

VIII. Engaging parents on this issue by: (a) Talking about it with parents, both in groups and one to one; (b) Asking parents what they perceive to be the risks facing their child and how they would like to see the school address those risks. (c) Involving parents in the review of school policies and lesson plans; and (d) Encouraging parents to hold the school to account on this issue.

IX. Ensuring that all child-on-child abuse issues are fed back to the school's safeguarding team so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify pupils who maybe in need of additional support. [This is done by way of, for example, a weekly staff meeting at which all concerns about pupils (including child-on-child abuse issues) are discussed]

X. Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside the classroom).

XI. Working with Governors, SLT, all staff and volunteers, pupils and parents to address equality issues, to promote positive values, and to encourage a **culture of tolerance and respect** amongst all members of the school community.

XII. Creating conditions in which our pupils can aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships.

XIII. Creating a culture in which our pupils feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgmental environment, and have them listened to; and

XIV. Responding to cases of child-on-child abuse **promptly and appropriately.**

Multi-agency working

I. The school actively engages with its local partners in relation to child-on-child abuse, and works closely with: **TSCP, MASH, Children's Social care, Early Help** and/or other relevant agencies, other schools, and the community in general, including our young people and their families. The relationships the school has built with these partners are essential to ensuring that the school is able to prevent, identify early and appropriately handle cases of child-on-child abuse.

They help the school:

- I. To develop a good awareness and understanding of the different referral pathways that operate in its local area, as well as the preventative and support services which exist.
- II. To ensure that our pupils can access the range of services and support they need quickly.
- III. To support and help inform our local community's response to child-on-child abuse.
- IV. To increase our awareness and understanding of any concerning trends and emerging risks in our local area to enable us to take preventative action to minimise the risk of these being experienced by our pupils. The school actively refers to concerns/reports of child-on-child abuse where necessary to **MASH and other safeguarding partners**. Children resident out of the county but attending our school will be reported to their home Children's Services. In cases involving children who are subject to risk, harm, and abuse and who are cared for, the children's social workers will be informed and a coordinated approach to address any incidents or concerns will be required.

As well as having strategies for dealing with incidents we will consider what we can do to foster healthy and respectful relationships between all pupils including through **RSE and PSHE education**. The most effective preventative education programme will be through a **whole school approach** that prepares pupils for life. The school has a clear set of values and standards, and these will be upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. This will be underpinned by the school's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, and by a planned programme of evidence-based content delivered through the whole curriculum. Such a programme will be appropriate to the age and stage of development (especially when considering **SEND children** and their cognitive understanding), and may tackle such issues as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships.
- What respectful behaviour looks like.
- Consent.
- Gender roles, stereotyping, and equality.
- Body confidence and self-esteem.
- Prejudiced behaviour.
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong; and
- Addressing cultures of sexual harassment

Some useful definitions:

Stop It Now offers a useful summary of definitions and consequences of sexual assault in addition to helpful resources. [Definition of child sexual abuse - Stop It Now](#)

All staff, but especially the **DSL (or deputy)** should be considering the context within which

incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as **contextual safeguarding**, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Additional considerations for schools When considering harmful sexual behaviour, ages, and the stages of development of the children are critical factors to consider. 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. Schools and colleges should ensure that their response to sexual violence and sexual harassment between children of the same sex is equally robust as it is for sexual violence and sexual harassment between children of the opposite sex.

Appendix 2 Recognising signs of child abuse

Categories of Abuse:

- **Physical Abuse**
- **Emotional Abuse** (including Domestic Abuse)
- **Sexual Abuse** (including child sexual exploitation)
- **Neglect**

Signs of Abuse in Children:

The following non-specific signs may indicate something is wrong:

- Significant change in behaviour
- Extreme anger or sadness
- Aggressive and attention-needing behaviour
- Suspicious bruises with unsatisfactory explanations
- Lack of self-esteem
- Self-injury
- Depression and/or anxiousness
- Age-inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Criminality
- Substance abuse

- Mental health problems
- Poor attendance

Risk Indicators:

The factors described in this section are frequently found in cases of child abuse. Their presence is not proof that abuse has occurred, but:

- Must be regarded as **indicators of the possibility of significant harm**
- This justifies the need for careful assessment and discussion with designated / named / lead person, manager, (or in the absence of all those individuals, an experienced colleague)
- May require consultation with and / or referral to **Children's Services**

The absence of such indicators does not mean that abuse or neglect has not occurred.

In an abusive relationship the child may:

- Appear frightened of the parent/s
- Act in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development (though full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups)

The parent or carer may:

- Persistently avoid child health promotion services and treatment of the child's episodic illnesses
- Have unrealistic expectations of the child
- Frequently complain about/to the child and may fail to provide attention or praise (high criticism/low warmth environment)
- Be absent or misusing substances
- Persistently refuse to allow access on home visits
- Be involved in domestic abuse
- Staff should be aware of the potential risk to children when individuals, previously known or suspected of having abused children, move into the household.

Recognising Physical Abuse

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury
- Several different explanations provided for an injury

- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment
- The parents/carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury
- Parents are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a “cry for help” and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury)
- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries

Bruising

Children can have accidental bruising, but the following must be considered as non-accidental unless there is evidence, or an adequate explanation provided:

- Any bruise to a **pre-crawling or pre-walking baby**
- Bruising in or around the mouth, particularly in small babies which may indicate force feeding
- Two simultaneous bruised eyes, without bruising to the forehead, (**rarely accidental**, though a single bruised eye can be accidental or abusive)
- Repeated or multiple bruising on the head or on sites unlikely to be injured accidentally
- Variation in colour possibly indicating injuries caused at different times
- The outline of an object used e.g., **belt marks, handprints or a hairbrush**
- Bruising or tears around, or behind, the earlobe/s indicating injury by pulling or twisting
- Bruising around the face
- **Grasp marks** on small children
- Bruising on the arms, buttocks and thighs may be an indicator of sexual abuse

Bite Marks

- Bite marks can leave clear impressions of the teeth. Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped. Those over **3 cm in diameter** are more likely to have been caused by an adult or older child. A medical opinion should be sought where there is any doubt over the origin of the bite.

Burns and Scalds

It can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns and scalds and will always require experienced medical opinion. Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious e.g:

- Circular burns from cigarettes (but maybe friction burns if along the bony protuberance of the spine)

- Linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements
- Burns of uniform depth over a large area
- Scalds that have a line indicating **immersion or poured liquid** (a child getting into hot water is his/her own accord will struggle to get out and cause splash marks)
- Old scars indicating previous burns/scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation
- Scalds to the buttocks of a small child, particularly in the absence of burns to the feet, are indicative of **dipping into a hot liquid or bath**.

Fractures

Non-mobile children rarely sustain fractures. There are grounds for concern if:

- The history provided is vague, non-existent, or inconsistent with the fracture type
- There are associated old fractures
- Medical attention is sought after a period of delay when the fracture has caused symptoms such as swelling, pain or loss of movement
- There is an unexplained fracture in the first year of life

Scars

Many scars or scars of different sizes or ages, or on different parts of the body, may suggest abuse.

Recognising Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Developmental delay
- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent/carer e.g., anxious, indiscriminate, or no attachment
- Indiscriminate attachment or failure to attach
- Aggressive behaviour towards others
- Scapegoated within the family
- Frozen watchfulness, particularly in pre-school children

- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence
- Withdrawn or seen as a “loner” – difficulty relating to others

Recognising Signs of Sexual Abuse

Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and/or fear. **Recognition can be difficult unless the child reports abuse and is believed.** There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional/behavioural.

Some **behavioural indicators** associated with this form of abuse are:

- Inappropriate sexualised conduct
- Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child’s age
- Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation
- **Self-harm** (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts
- Involvement in prostitution or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes e.g. for sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties)

Some **physical indicators** associated with this form of abuse are:

- Pain or itching of genital area
- Blood on underclothes
- Pregnancy in a younger girl where the father of the child is not identified
- Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted disease, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia, or clothing

It is rare for children to make false claims about sexual abuse, and any reports should always be taken seriously.

Recognising Neglect

Evidence of neglect is built up over a period and can cover different aspects of parenting.

Indicators include:

- Failure by parents or carers to meet the basic essential needs e.g., adequate food,

clothes, warmth, hygiene and medical care

- A child seen to be listless, apathetic and irresponsive with no apparent medical cause
- Failure of child to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss
- Child thrives away from home environment
- Child frequently absent from school
- Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent
- Child abandoned or left alone for excessive periods

Graded Care Profile 2

The Graded Care Profile should be used to help assess neglect in addition to considering the [Torbay Neglect Strategy](#). How the GCP2 assessment tool for neglect supports families and practitioners to achieve change NSPCC Learning

Appendix 3 Exploitation (including Child Sex Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation and County Lines)

The following highlights common signs which can assist professionals in identifying children or young people who may be victims of sexual or criminal **exploitation**.

Signs include:

- **Going missing** from home or school
- Regular school **absence/truancing**
- Underage sexual activity
- Inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour
- Sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex
- Repeat sexually transmitted infections
- In girls, repeat pregnancy, abortions, miscarriage
- Receiving unexplained gifts or gifts from unknown sources
- Having **multiple mobile phones** and worrying about losing contact via mobile
- Online safety concerns such as youth produced sexual imagery or being coerced into sharing explicit images.

- Having unaffordable new things (clothes, mobile) or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs)
- Changes in the way they dress
- Going to hotels or other unusual locations to meet friends
- Seen at known places of concern
- Moving around the country, appearing in new towns or cities, not knowing where they are
- Getting in/out of different cars driven by unknown adults
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Contact with known perpetrators
- Involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations
- Hanging out with groups of older people, or anti-social groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- Associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
- Recruiting other young people to exploitative situations
- Truancy, exclusion, disengagement with school, opting out of education altogether
- Unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual)
- **Mood swings, volatile behaviour, emotional distress**
- **Self-harming, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, overdosing, eating disorders**
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Getting involved in crime
- Police involvement, police records
- Involved in gangs, gang fights, gang membership
- Injuries from physical assault, physical restraint, sexual assault.

Consent

[Gillick competency and Fraser guidelines help people who work with children to balance the need to listen to children's wishes with the responsibility to keep them safe.](#)

In relation to children who are exploited, consideration should be given to if a child is consenting but:

- the structure of grooming by their abuser means they do not understand the power differential, and they will often side with their abuser (**coerced abused consent**)
- they believe that their own and or families survival depends on them and therefore they are exploited for money, food, drugs and or accommodation (**survival abused consent**)

- normalising violent non – consenting sex (given access to pornography, sexting, music lyrics, gang culture, peer pressure) other young people sometimes groom others to get out of being abused or assaulted themselves. (**Abused normalised consent**)
- professionals unconsciously normalise the abuse i.e. “all 14-year-olds have sex” (**professional condoned abused consent**)

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

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults being exploited to move (and store) drugs and money. The same grooming models used to coerce, intimidate, and abuse individuals for sexual and criminal exploitation are also used for grooming vulnerable individuals for county lines.

Appendix 4 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

It is essential that staff are aware of FGM practices and the need to look for signs, symptoms, and other indicators of FGM. **If a member of staff... discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, the member of staff must report this to the Police.**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003. It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons.

Section 5B of the 2003 Act introduces a **mandatory reporting duty** which requires regulated health and social care professionals and **teachers** in England and Wales to report ‘**known**’ **cases of FGM in under 18s** which they identify in the course of their professional work **to the police**.

Types of procedure:

- **Type 1 Clitoridectomy** – partial/total removal of clitoris
- **Type 2 Excision** – partial/total removal of clitoris and labia minora
- **Type 3 Infibulation** entrance to vagina is narrowed by repositioning the inner/outer labia
- **Type 4** all other procedures that may include: pricking, piercing, incising, cauterising and scraping the genital area.

Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening are:

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- Family taking a long trip abroad
- Child's family being from one of the **'at risk' communities** for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:

- Prolonged absence from school and other activities
- Behaviour changes on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- Bladder or menstrual problems
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
- Complaining about pain between the 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 urinal tract infection
- Report on abuse

The 'One Chance' rule

As with Forced Marriage there is the 'One Chance' rule. It is essential that settings/schools/colleges act without delay and make a referral to children's services.

Appendix 5 Domestic Abuse (including Operation Encompass)

How does it affect children?

Children can be traumatised by seeing and hearing violence and abuse. They may also be directly targeted by the abuser or take on a protective role and get caught in the middle. Government legislation enacted in **2021 recognises that a child who sees, hears, or**

experiences the effects of domestic abuse is also to be regarded as a victim of domestic abuse. The age limit for criminal offences related to domestic abuse was lowered from 18 to 16.

What are the signs to look out for?

Children affected may:

- Change their usual behaviour and become withdrawn, tired, start to wet the bed, and have behavioural difficulties.
- Not wanting to leave their house or may become reluctant to return.
- Others will excel, using their time in your care as a way to escape from their home life.

What should I do if I suspect a family is affected by domestic abuse?

- Torbay Domestic Abuse Service (TDAS) 0800 2000 247
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline (Refuge) 0808 2000 247

Operation Encompass helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help for children. Police will inform the **'key adult'** within school if they have been called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household **before registration the next day**. The National Operation Encompass Teachers' Helpline is 0204 513 9990 (Monday to Friday 8:00am – 1:00pm).

Appendix 6 Indicators of susceptibility to radicalisation

Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

Extremism is defined by the Government in the Prevent Strategy as: **Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law,**

individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Pupils may become vulnerable to radicalisation through a range of social, personal, and environmental factors.

Indicators of susceptibility include:

- **Identity Challenges** – distanced from their cultural/religious heritage, discomfort about their place in society.
- **Personal Challenges** – family tensions; sense of isolation; low self-esteem; dissociated from existing friends and involved with a new group; searching for answers about identity, faith and belonging.
- **Personal Circumstances** – migration; local community tensions; events affecting country of origin; sense of grievance triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy.
- **Unmet Aspirations** – perceptions of injustice; feeling of failure; rejection of civic life.
- **Experiences of Criminality** – involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment, and poor resettlement.
- **Special Educational Need** – difficulties with social interaction, empathy, understanding consequences of actions, and awareness of others' motivations.

More critical risk factors could include:

- Being in contact with **extremist recruiters**.
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with social networking.
- Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature.
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantages.
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues.
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations; and
- Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour.
- Experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and/or personal crisis.

The **Prevent duty** ensures schools have 'due regard' to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. **Channel** is the voluntary, confidential support program which focuses on providing support at an early stage to individuals that have been identified as being susceptible to radicalisation.

Appendix 7 Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984) – Code C

The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy)** are aware of the requirement for children to have an **appropriate adult** when in contact with Police officers who suspect them of an offence.

- **PACE** states that anyone who appears to be under **18**, shall, in the absence of clear evidence that they are older, be treated as a child.
- If an officer has any reason to suspect that a person of any age may be **vulnerable**, then that person is entitled to be accompanied by an appropriate adult at any point.
- The DSL (or deputy) will communicate any vulnerabilities known by the school to any police officer who wishes to speak to a pupil. This communication will be recorded on **CPOMS**.
- If the DSL does not feel the officer is acting in accordance with PACE, they should ask to speak with a supervisor or contact **101** to escalate their concerns.
- A person whom there are grounds to suspect of an offence must be **cautioned** before questioned.
- A Police Officer must not caution a juvenile or a vulnerable person unless the **appropriate adult is present**.

The '**appropriate adult**' means, in the case of a child:

1. the parent, guardian or, if the juvenile is in the care of a local authority or voluntary organisation, a person representing that authority or organisation.
2. a social worker of a local authority

Failing these, some other responsible adult aged 18 or over who is not: a police officer, employed by the police, under the direction or control of the chief officer of a police force; or a person who provides services under contractual arrangements to assist that force.

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

Appendix 8 Resources

Further advice on child protection is available from:

- **NSPCC:** <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/>
- **Childline:** <http://www.childline.org.uk/pages/home.aspx>
- **SARC** (Sexual Assault Referral Service <http://sarchelp.co.uk/paediatric-service/>)
- **Anti-Bullying Alliance:** <http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>
- **Intercom trust transgender guidance**
- **Childnet International** <http://www.childnet.com/>
- **Thinkuknow** (CEOP Education) <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>
- **Safer Internet Centre** <http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>
- **Lucy Faithfull Foundation's** <https://shorespace.org.uk/>

Appendix 9 Safeguarding contacts including the MASH

- **For early help queries:** earlyhelp@torbay.gov.uk
- **Lorrie Layne, Community Engagement Officer (Early Help):** 07771 806870
- **For MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub):**
 - **Telephone:** 01803 208100
 - **Email:** MASH@torbay.gov.uk
- **MASH Referral Form available here**
 - <http://www.torbaysafeguarding.org.uk/professionals/hub/>
- **For the Emergency Duty Team out of working hours:** 0300 456 4876
- **Police non-emergency:** 101
- **For all LADO enquiries (Local Authority Designated Officer):**
 - **Duty LADO:** 01803 208541
 - **Email:** cpunit@torbay.gov.uk
- **Early help assessments and MASH referrals can now be submitted via the Online Portal.**

The online portal offers the following:

- It provides the facility for **partners, parents, young people and members of the public**

to make referrals into **MASH** and **Early Help** directly.

- It optimises performance by automating the referral process internally.
- It allows Early Help, for the first time, to have its own "front door," representing a significant milestone for Torbay in connecting with its stakeholders.

Note on using the portal:

- To use the online portal, you will be required to set up an account, which is a one-off process.
- If you have any difficulties, use the links to the referral forms on the **Hub - Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership** website (refer to the full Appendix 9 contact details).
- A recording of the new MASH Referral Process can be viewed on **iLearn**.