



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

St Raphael's Catholic Primary School

This policy was adopted in September 2025 and ratified by Governors in October 2025

This policy is due for review on September 2026

Useful contacts

Head Teacher Mrs Lynn Lakner

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Mrs Lynn Lakner

Deputy DSL Mr David Matthews

Safeguarding Officer Miss Gail Southworth

Designated Teacher for Looked after Children Mrs Lynn Lakner

Chair of Governors Mrs Naomi Scowcroft

Nominated Governor for Safeguarding and Child Protection Barbara Robinson

Local Authority Designated officer – Ray Sied Tel 0161 342 4398

Email ray.sied@tameside.gov.uk

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Hours – Monday to Wednesday 8.30am to 5pm, Thursday 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday 8.30am to 4pm Tel 0161 342 4101 Out of hours Tel 0161 342 2222

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Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

1 INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.

Our pupils' welfare is our paramount concern. The governing body will ensure that our school will safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and work together with other agencies to ensure that we have adequate arrangements to identify, assess and support those children who are suffering or likely to suffer harm.

Here at St Raphael's Catholic Primary we are a community and all those directly connected, staff members, governors, parents, families and pupils, have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure.

2 OUR ETHOS

We believe that at St Raphael's Catholic Primary we should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

We recognise the importance of providing an environment within our setting that will help children feel safe and respected. We recognise the importance of enabling children to talk openly and to feel confident that they will be listened to.

We recognise that all adults within our school, including permanent and temporary staff, volunteers and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm.

We will work with parents to build an understanding of our responsibilities to ensure the welfare of all children, including the need for referrals to other agencies in some situations.

3 SCOPE

In line with the law, this policy defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 years.

This policy applies to all members of staff in our setting, including all permanent, temporary and support staff, governors, volunteers, contractors and external service or activity providers.

4 DEFINITION

For the purpose of this policy, St Raphael's Catholic Primary will define safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing the impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

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- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

5 **LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

This policy will have consideration for, and be in compliance with, the following Legislation and statutory guidance:

Legislation

Children Act 1989
 Children Act 2004
 Education Act 2002
 Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations 2003
 Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
 School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009, as amended
 Equality Act 2010
 Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
 The Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)
 The Children and Families Act 2014
 The Sexual Offences Act 2003
 Children and Social care Act 2017
 GDPR May 2018
 DfE Data Protection guidance for schools (DfE, 2024b).

Statutory guidance

DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children
 DfE (2025)
) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
 DfE (2015) 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'
 DfE (2018) 'Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners'
 DfE (2018) 'Disqualification under the Childcare Act' 2006
 DfE (2015) 'The Prevent duty: Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers'

Local Guidance

Tameside Safeguarding Children Partnership - Thresholds for Assessment and the Continuum of need Guidance
 Tameside Safeguarding Children Partnership – Tameside Children's needs Framework
 Greater Manchester Safeguarding partnership guidance

Key Updates 2025 from Keeping Children Safe in Education

1. **Online Harms:** The guidance now explicitly includes **misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories** as online harms that schools must address. This reflects the growing risks associated with digital content and the need for schools to safeguard children from potentially harmful information.

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2. **Safeguarding in Alternative Provisions:** Clarifications have been made regarding safeguarding expectations for pupils in alternative provision settings. Schools are required to obtain written confirmation that appropriate safeguarding checks have been conducted on staff at these providers.
3. **Role of Virtual School Heads:** The responsibilities of Virtual School Heads have been expanded to include promoting the educational achievement of children in kinship care, not just those in local authority care. This change aims to ensure that all children in such arrangements receive adequate support.
4. **Statutory Attendance Guidance:** The guidance now formally recognizes the **Working Together to Improve School Attendance** as statutory, clarifying the legal requirements for schools regarding attendance monitoring and reporting.
5. **Simplified Recruitment Checks:** References to the Teaching Regulation Agency's Employer Access Service have been replaced with direct links to GOV.UK, making it easier for schools to access essential recruitment checks.
6. **Future Guidance Expectations:** The KCSIE 2025 document indicates that revised guidance on **Relationships, Sex, and Health Education (RSHE)** and guidance for **gender-questioning children** is expected to be published in the near future, with links to the resources to be included in the final version of KCSIE.

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The lead person with overall responsibility for child protection and safeguarding is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (**DSL**), **Lynn Lakner, Dep. David Matthews**. The DSL (and any deputies) are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate people to advise on safeguarding concerns.

The role of the DSL includes:

MANAGING REFERRALS – the DSL will:

- Refer all cases of suspected abuse to Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and to the Police if a crime may have been committed.
- Liaise with the head teacher about safeguarding issues relating to individual children, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff members on matters of child protection and safeguarding.
- If early help is appropriate the DSL will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment. They will monitor any cases referred to early help.

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and consider referral through MASH to children's services where the situation does not improve.

- Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required.

RECORD KEEPING – the DSL will:

Ensure a stand-alone file is created as necessary for children with safeguarding concerns.

Maintain a chronology of significant incidents for each child with safeguarding concerns.

Ensure such records are kept confidentially and securely and separate from the child's educational record.

When a child leaves our educational establishment, the DSL will make contact with the DSL at the new educational establishment and will ensure that the child protection file is forwarded to the receiving educational establishment in an appropriately agreed manner. We will retain evidence to demonstrate how the file has been transferred; this may be in the form of a written confirmation of receipt from the receiving educational establishment and/or evidence of recorded delivery. Consideration will be given as to whether it will be appropriate to share any information with the new school in advance of the child leaving.

INTER-AGENCY WORKING AND INFORMATION SHARING – the DSL will:

Cooperate with Children's Social Care for enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Attend, or ensure other relevant staff members attend, child protection conferences, core group meetings and other multi-agency meetings, as required.

Liaise with other agencies working with the child, share information as appropriate and contribute to assessments.

New safeguarding partners and child death review partner arrangements are to be in place. Locally, the three safeguarding partners (the local authority; a clinical commissioning group for an area within the local authority; and the chief officer of police for a police area in the local authority area) will make arrangements to work together with appropriate relevant agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs.

DSL TRAINING

Undertake appropriate training, **updated every two years**, and update knowledge and skills at least annually in order to

- be able to recognise signs of abuse and how to respond to them, including special circumstances such as child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, fabricated or induced illness
- be aware of responsibilities under the Prevent duty
- understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, e.g. the Tameside Safeguarding Children Continuum of Need guidance and tools and the early help planning processes;

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- have a working knowledge of how the local authority conducts initial and review child protection case conferences and contribute effectively to these; and
- be alert to the specific needs of children in need (as specified in section 17 of the Children Act 1989), those with special educational needs, pregnant teenagers and young carers.

Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the educational establishment's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, including providing induction on these matters to new staff members.

Organise whole-educational establishment child protection training for all staff members regularly, and provide updates at least annually. Ensure staff members who miss the training receive it by other means, e.g. by joining another educational establishment's training.

Ensure the educational establishment allocates time and resources every year for relevant staff members to attend training.

Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any action the educational establishment takes to protect them.

Maintain accurate records of staff induction and training.

DSL Role in AWARENESS RAISING

Review the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures annually and liaise with the educational establishment's governing body to update and implement them.

Make the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures available publicly and raise awareness of parents that referrals about suspected abuse may be made and the role of the educational establishment in any investigations that ensue.

Provide updates to the educational establishment on any changes to child protection legislation and procedures and relevant learning from local and national serious case reviews, at least annually.

DSL - QUALITY ASSURANCE

Monitor the implementation of and compliance with policy and procedures, including periodic audits of child protection and welfare concerns files (at a minimum once a year).

Complete an audit of the educational establishment's safeguarding arrangements at frequencies specified by the Tameside Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Provide regular reports, to the governing body detailing changes and reviews to policy, training undertaken by staff members and the number of children with child protection plans and other relevant data.

Take lead responsibility for remedying any deficiencies and weaknesses identified in child protection arrangements.

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4.2 Designated Teacher for Cared for Children

The **Designated Teacher** who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of children who are looked after is Mrs Lynn Lakner. They will work with the Local Authority and Virtual Educational Establishment Head to discuss how available funding can be best used to support the progress of looked after children and meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan. The designated teacher also has responsibility to promote the educational achievements who have left care i.e. been adopted, special guardianship etc.

4.3 Nominated Governor for Safeguarding

The **nominated governor** responsible for safeguarding to champion good practice is Miss Barbara Robinson. They will liaise with the head teacher and provide information and reports to the governing body.

4.4 Head teacher

The **head teacher**, Mrs Lynn Lakner, will ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the governing body are fully implemented and sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable staff members to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities.

4.5 Governing Body

The **governing body** is collectively responsible for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are fully embedded within our school's ethos and reflected our day-to-day practice. They are responsible for ensuring that the Designated Safeguarding Lead is an appropriate member of staff from the school leadership team.

4.6 All Staff

All staff members, governors, volunteers and external providers know how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse, how to respond to pupils who disclose abuse and what to do if they are concerned about a child. Staff know that if they have any concerns about a child's welfare they should act on them immediately.

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

5 SUPPORTING CHILDREN

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence are likely to have low self-esteem and may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helpless, humiliated and some sense of blame. Our educational establishment may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in their lives.

We accept that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.

We will support all pupils by:

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- ensuring the content of the curriculum includes social and emotional aspects of learning;
- ensuring a comprehensive curriculum response to e-safety, enabling children and parents to learn about the risks of new technologies and social media and to use these responsibly;
- relevant issues may be covered through relationships education and relationships and sex education and/or through PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education)
- ensuring that child protection is included in the curriculum to help children stay safe, recognise when they do not feel safe and identify who they might or can talk to;
- providing pupils with a number of appropriate adults to approach if they are in difficulties;
- supporting the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence;
- encouraging development of self-esteem and self-assertiveness while not condoning aggression or bullying;
- ensuring repeated hate incidents, e.g. racist, homophobic or gender- or disability-based bullying, are considered under child protection procedures;
- liaising and working together with other support services and those agencies involved in safeguarding children; and
- monitoring children who have been identified as having welfare or protection concerns and providing appropriate support.
- ensuring that all staff are aware of the early help process, and understand their role in it, including acting as the lead professional where appropriate.
- ensuring that all staff understand the additional safeguarding issues of children with special educational needs and disabilities and how to address them
- monitoring attendance patterns and reviewing and responding to them as part of welfare and protection procedures
- take children's wishes and feelings into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.
- If school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil

6 RECORD KEEPING

All child protection and welfare concerns, discussions and decisions made will be recorded in writing and kept in a confidential file and stored securely.

If a child about whom there have been concerns transfers to another educational establishment all appropriate information, including child protection and welfare concerns, will be forwarded under confidential cover to the pupil's new educational establishment as a matter of priority.

The updated guidance in KCSIE 2025 highlights that, as well as keeping records of concerns, discussions and decisions, designated safeguarding leads should keep record of the rationale for any decisions made.

7 SAFER WORKFORCE AND MANAGING CONCERNS ABOUT OR ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

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All staff will be subjected to safeguarding checks in line with the statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Educational establishments and Colleges, September 2025*.

We will ensure that agencies and third parties supplying staff provide us evidence that they have made the appropriate level of safeguarding checks on individuals working in our educational establishment. We will also ensure that any agency worker presenting for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Every job description and person specification will have a clear statement about the safeguarding responsibilities of the post holder.

We will ensure that at least one member of every interview panel who conducts an interview has completed safer recruitment training.

We have a procedure in place to handle allegations against members of staff and volunteers in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Educational establishments and Colleges, September 2025*. In accordance with local guidance we adhere to Greater Manchester safeguarding procedures – Managing allegations against staff guidance and Safer Recruitment

Any allegation made against a staff member or concern raised about a member of staff, volunteer or visitor will be dealt with by the head teacher. In the case of allegations made against the head teacher the case manager will be the chair of governors. The procedure for managing allegations is detailed in Appendix A.

8 STAFF INDUCTION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

All new members of staff, including newly-qualified teachers and teaching assistants, will be given induction that includes basic child protection training on how to recognise signs of abuse, how to respond to any concerns, e-safety and familiarisation with the safeguarding and child protection policy, staff code of conduct, *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Educational establishments and Colleges, Part One*, and other related policies. We will ensure that staff understand the difference between a safeguarding concern and a child in immediate danger or at risk of significant harm.

The DSL will undergo updated child protection training every two years. In addition to this their knowledge and skills should be updated regularly, and at least annually, to keep up with developments relevant to the role.

All staff members of the educational establishment will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (whole-educational establishment training) which is regularly updated. The DSL will provide briefings to the educational establishment on any changes to child protection legislation and procedures and relevant learning from local and national serious case reviews as required, but at least annually.

The nominated governor for safeguarding and child protection will attend relevant training this training will be updated every two years.

The educational establishment will maintain accurate records of staff induction and training.

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9 CONFIDENTIALITY, CONSENT AND INFORMATION SHARING

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.

The head teacher or the DSL will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis, and in the best interests of the child.

All staff members must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being.

All staff members have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

All our staff members who come into contact with children will be given appropriate training to understand the purpose of information sharing in order to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

We will ensure that staff members are confident about what they can and should do under the law, including how to obtain consent to share information and when information can be shared without consent. This is covered in greater detail in

Appendix

A.

10 INTER-AGENCY WORKING

We will develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, including agencies providing early help services to children, the police and Children's Social Care.

We will ensure that relevant staff members participate in multi-agency meetings and forums, including child protection conferences and core groups, to consider individual children.

We will participate in serious case reviews, other reviews and file audits as and when required to do so by the Tameside Safeguarding Children Partnership.

11 CONTRACTORS, SERVICE AND ACTIVITY PROVIDERS AND WORK PLACEMENT PROVIDERS

We will ensure that contractors and providers are aware of our educational establishment's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures. We will require that employees and volunteers provided by these organisations use our procedure to report concerns.

We will seek assurance that employees and volunteers provided by these organisations and working with our children have been subjected to the appropriate level of safeguarding check in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Educational establishments and Colleges, September 2025*. If assurance is not obtained, permission to work with our children or use our educational establishment premises may be refused.

When we commission services from other organisations, we will ensure that compliance with our policy and procedures is a contractual requirement.

12 WHISTLE-BLOWING AND COMPLAINTS

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

We will ensure that all staff members are 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. If necessary, they will speak with the head teacher, the chair of the governing body or with the Local Authority Designated Officer. Should staff not feel able to raise concerns they can call the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on 0800 028 0285.

We have a clear reporting procedure for children, parents and other people to report concerns or complaints, including abusive or poor practice.

We will actively seek the views of children, parents and carers and staff members on our child protection arrangements through surveys, questionnaires and other means.

13 SITE SECURITY

All staff members have a responsibility to ensure our buildings and grounds are secure and for reporting concerns that may come to light.

We check the identity of all visitors and volunteers coming into educational establishment. Visitors are expected to sign in and out in the office visitors' log and to display a visitor's badge while on the educational establishment site. Any individual who is not known or identifiable will be challenged for clarification and reassurance.

The educational establishment will not accept the behaviour of any individual, parent or anyone else, that threatens educational establishment security or leads others, child or adult, to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse the person access to the educational establishment site.

14 QUALITY ASSURANCE

We will ensure that systems are in place to monitor the implementation of and compliance with this policy and accompanying procedures. This will include periodic audits of child protection files and records by the DSL

We will complete an audit of the educational establishment's safeguarding arrangements at frequencies specified by the Tameside Safeguarding Childcare Partnership and using the audit tool provided by them for this purpose.

The educational establishment's senior management and the governing body will ensure that action is taken to remedy without delay any deficiencies and weaknesses identified in child protection arrangements.

15 POLICY REVIEW

This policy and the procedures will be reviewed every academic year. All other linked policies will be reviewed in line with the policy review cycle.

The DSL will ensure that staff members are made aware of any amendments to policies and procedures.

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16 LINKED POLICES AND PROCEDURES

The following policies and procedures are relevant for the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedure.

- Administration of Medicines Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing from Education Policy and Procedures
- Complaints procedure
- Drug and Alcohol Education Policy
- E-safety Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Keeping Records of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns: Guidance for Early Years Settings, Educational establishments and Colleges
- Health and Safety Policy and other linked policies and risk assessments
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Mental Health and Well-being Policy
- Offsite Activities and Educational Visits Policy and risk assessments
- Physical Education and Sports Guidance
- Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy and Guidance
- Premises Inspection Checklist
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Safeguarding Policy
- PSHEe Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and procedures
- Teachers' Standards, Department for Education guidance available on [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk)
- Relationship and Sex Education Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Policy
- Staff code of conduct/behaviour policy
- Letting Policy

Appendix A -Child Protection and Safeguarding

1 DEFINITIONS

Abuse, including neglect, is a form of maltreatment. A person may abuse or neglect child by inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. Children may be abused within their family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Children are any people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday; a 16-year- old, whether living independently, in further education, in the armed forces or in hospital, is a child and is entitled to the same protection and services as anyone younger.

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

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years to teenage years.

Harm is ill treatment or impairment of health and development, including impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

Safeguarding children is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** is defined in [Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children \(July 2018\)](#) as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health and development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Significant harm is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in the family in the best interests of the child. Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 states 'where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health or development, his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child.'

2 CATEGORIES OF ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such that it causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve:

- making a child feel worthless, unloved or inadequate
- only there to meet another's needs
- inappropriate age or developmental expectations
- overprotection and limitation of exploration, learning and social interaction
- seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another, e.g. domestic abuse
- making the child feel worthless and unloved - high criticism and low warmth
- serious bullying (including cyberbullying)
- exploitation or corruption

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, it may involve a parent failing to:

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

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

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

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Activities may involve physical contact, including penetration of any part of the body, or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children looking at or in the production of sexual images, including on the internet, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Child sexual exploitation is also sexual abuse; it involves children and young people receiving something, for example accommodation, drugs, gifts or affection, as a result of them performing sexual activities, or having others perform sexual activities on them. It could take the form of grooming of children, e.g. to take part in sexual activities or to post sexual images of themselves on the internet.

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Child-on-child abuse involves children abuses other children. This can happen both inside and outside of school. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child on child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.
(See KCSIE 2025)

3 SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

Staff should be aware of specific safeguarding issues such as:

- child missing from education
- children and the Court System
- child missing from home or care
- children with family members in prison
- Child on child abuse
- child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- county lines
- bullying including cyberbullying
- domestic abuse
- drugs
- E-safety
- 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)
- homelessness
- “honour-based” violence
- mental health
- child on child abuse
- private fostering
- preventing radicalisation and the Prevent duty
- self-harm and suicidal behaviour

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- serious violent crime
- sexting (also known as Youth Produced Imagery)
- sexual violence/harassment
- teenage relationship abuse
- trafficking
- upskirting

Further Information on Children Missing from Education

A child going missing from education is a potential sign of abuse or neglect, particularly on repeat occasions.

The updated guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024 also stated that:
'deliberately missing education' should read 'unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education.'

The updated guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2023 also stated that:
'being absent, as well as missing, from education can be warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation.'

Educational establishments and colleges should put in place appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing again.

All educational establishments must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend educational establishment regularly, or has been absent without the educational establishment's permission for a continuous period of 10 educational establishment days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the educational establishment and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).

We may request more than one emergency contact number for each pupil or student in order to be able to contact more than one responsible adult if a child who is missing education is also identified as a welfare and /or safeguarding concern.

Refer to Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2025

Further information on Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the

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relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

Teachers and educational establishment staff are more likely to see victims on a regular basis than almost any other professional. They will notice recurrent or prolonged absences and significant changes in behaviour. They are key to identifying children at risk and raise concerns at an early stage, to potentially halt the grooming process before sexual exploitation has begun. Teachers will highlight concerns about missing children as they may be at risk of child sexual exploitation.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual exploitation:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- Children who regularly miss educational establishment

Due to the nature of the grooming methods used by their abusers, it is very common for children and young people who are sexually exploited not to recognise that they are being abused. Practitioners should be aware that young people particularly aged 17 and 18 may believe themselves to be acting voluntarily and will need practitioners to work with them so they can recognise that they are being sexually exploited.

As much as possible it is important that the young person is involved in decisions that are made about them.

CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION; COUNTY LINES

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns or in the local area. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered. Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years;
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

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Further Information on Domestic Abuse

The definition of “domestic violence and abuse” was updated by the Home Office in March 2013 to include the reality that many young people are experiencing domestic abuse and violence in relationships at a young age. They may therefore be Children in Need or likely to suffer significant harm. The latest definition from the Home Office is as follows:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional

Staff should be aware that any disclosures made by children may have a background in domestic abuse and that this abuse may be part of an overall pattern of abuse or violence towards women and girls in the family. That said domestic abuse can also be experienced by males and assumptions should not be made based on the gender of perpetrators of domestic abuse.

All staff will be made aware that domestic abuse can be psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional and can impact on children through seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse and/or experiencing it through their own intimate relationships.

Our school is part of an initiative called Operation Encompass, a scheme that will ensure that we can better support any child where a domestic incident has been reported to Police from their home.

Following a domestic incident, the Police will inform a nominated member of staff at the school to notify us that an incident has taken place. This will ensure that we are made aware early enough to support children and young people in a way that means they feel safe, supported and listen to.

For further information consult “Domestic Violence and Abuse” -

<https://www.gov.uk/domestic-violence-and-abuse>

Further Information on On-line-Safety (use of ICT, the internet, mobile technology and social media)

The educational establishment has an On-line-Safety policy which includes guidance for all pupils in relation to On-line-Safety and using the internet and social media. There are appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place. Staff are encouraged to report their concerns if they believe that children are using the internet, mobile technology or social media inappropriately (e.g. sexting). In some extreme cases the Police may become involved if a child is at risk of exploitation due to their use of the internet or social media. Consequently staff must report concerns in a timely way so that advice and support can be sought.

Filtering and monitoring

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The updated guidance in KCSIE 2023 makes it clear that all staff should receive training on the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring. The designated safeguarding lead should take lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place. Information on school child protection policies should include information on appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and school networks. The guidance signposts the Department for Education's new filtering and monitoring standards (DfE, 2023b), which support schools to have effective systems in place. Schools and colleges should consider meeting the DfE's Cyber security standards for schools and colleges (DfE, 2023c).

The DSLs will ensure that they understand the filtering and monitoring systems in place and that all staff receive training on filtering and monitoring.

Further information on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There are a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Staff should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care.

Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found on pages 38-41 of the Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines referred to below. E.learning for all professionals, developed by the Home Office, is available at www.fgmelearning.co.uk

Girls who are threatened with, or who have undergone FGM may withdraw from education, restricting their educational and personal development. They may feel unable to go against the wishes of their parents and consequently may suffer emotionally. Staff may become aware of a student because she appears anxious, depressed and emotionally withdrawn. They may be presented with a sudden decline in her performance, aspirations or motivation. There may be occasions when a student comes to educational establishment or college but then absents herself from lessons, possibly spending prolonged periods in the bathroom.

Students who fear they may be at risk of FGM can often come to the attention of, or turn to, a teacher, lecturer or other member of staff before seeking help.

Link to DfE multi agency practice guidelines for female-genital-mutilation (April 2016) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation>. Staff should be aware of new mandatory reporting requirements with regards to known cases of female genital mutilation (FGM) which require teachers to personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Further details can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2025.

Further Information on Forced Marriage

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A forced marriage is one in which at least one participant does not (or cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is recognised in the UK as a serious abuse of human rights.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats of violence, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (e.g. shame and coercion) Financial abuse can also be a factor.

Whilst it is unlikely that primary-age pupils will be the victims of forced marriage, they may disclose that older siblings or parents are at risk.

Further information on Preventing Radicalisation

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, which received Royal Assent on 12 February 2015, places a duty on specified authorities, including local authorities and childcare, education and other children's services providers, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism ("the Prevent duty"). This came into force on 1 July 2015. The Prevent duty directs inspectors to examine a educational establishment's response to extremist behaviour when considering the behaviour and safety of pupils, as well as the effectiveness of the leadership and management of the educational establishment in preventing extremism.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 also places a duty on local authorities to ensure Channel panels are in place. The panel must include the local authority and chief officer of the local police. Panels will assess the extent to which identified individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, following a referral from the police and where considered appropriate and necessary consent is obtained, arrange for support to be provided to those individuals. The Act will require partners of Channel panels to co-operate with the panel in the carrying out of its functions and with the police in undertaking the initial assessment as to whether a referral is appropriate.

Channel Training

'Channel' is the name for the process of referring a person for early intervention and support, including:

- identifying people at risk of being drawn into terrorism
- assessing the nature and extent of that risk, and
- developing the most appropriate support plan for the people concerned.

The Channel process is about safeguarding children, young people and adults from being drawn into committing terrorist-related activity. It is about early intervention to protect and divert people away from risk before a crime occurs.

You can complete a short general awareness course online here:

http://course.ncalt.com/Channel_General_Awareness/01/index.html

Educational establishments' role in the Prevent agenda is:

Sharing with colleagues

- Promote awareness of the PREVENT strategy within your organisation and partners, including the local risks, roles and responsibilities involved in its delivery
- Ensure colleagues and partners are aware of how to report any potentially relevant information or concerns
- Promote an understanding amongst colleagues and partners of how to identify indicators of terrorism
- Promote an understanding amongst colleagues and partners of how to identify potential signs of individual vulnerability to radicalisation.

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- Indicators of terrorist activity

The Department for education has published The Prevent duty Departmental advice for educational establishments and childcare providers at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty>

Further Information on Self-harm and suicidal behaviour

Definition - Self harm, self mutilation, eating disorders, suicide threats and gestures by a child must always be taken seriously and may be indicative of a serious mental or emotional disturbance.

Further Information on Sexting/Youth Produced Imagery

Sexting among children and young people can be a common occurrence, where they often describe these incidents as 'mundane'. Children involved in sexting incidents will be dealt with by the police as victims as opposed to perpetrators, unless there are mitigating circumstances. The DSL should record all incidents of sexting. This should include both the actions taken and the actions not taken, together with justifications. In applying judgement to the sexting incident consider the following:

- Significant age difference between the sender/receiver involved
- If there is any external coercion involved or encouragement beyond the sender/receiver.
- If you recognise the child as more vulnerable than is usual.
- If the image is of a severe or extreme nature.
- If the situation is not isolated and the image has been more widely distributed.
- If this is not the first time children have been involved in a sexting act
- If other knowledge of either the sender or recipient may add cause for concern..

If these characteristics present cause for concern then escalate or refer the incident. If not, manage the situation accordingly, recording details of the incident, action and resolution. See CEOP website for further information.

Further information on Private Fostering

Parents and carers often fail to notify schools about private fostering arrangements even though they are legally required to notify Children's Services. Often this is because they are unaware of the requirements. They believe that this is a private family arrangement which does not concern anybody else.

This lack of awareness means that many privately fostered children remain hidden and can be vulnerable, as in the case of Victoria Climbié who was a privately fostered child.

Private Fostering definition

Private fostering occurs when a child under 16 (or 18 if the child is disabled) is cared for and lives with an adult who is **not** a relative for 28 days or more. This could be a step parent (by marriage or civil partnership), grandparent, step grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt.

Private fostering is a private arrangement made by the parent(s), (or those with parental responsibility) for someone to care for their child because they are unable to do so

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(permanently or temporarily). This may be due to a number reasons such as parental ill health, a parent going abroad or in to prison, a child being brought to the UK to study English or the relationship between the child and parent has broken down.

School staff play an essential role in identifying privately fostered children. If you know a child is being privately fostered you should advise the parent/carer that they have a legal obligation to report the arrangement to Children Social Care at least six weeks before it happens or within 48 hours if the arrangement is current having been made in an emergency.

Alert your Designated Safeguarding Lead who will ensure this is followed up with Children Social Care and the arrangement is assessed, approved and monitored

RECOGNITION – WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Staff members should refer to the detailed information about the categories of abuse and risk indicators in the Tameside Children's Needs Framework and Thresholds guidance for further guidance.

In an abusive relationship, the child may:

- appear frightened of their parent(s)
- act in a way that is inappropriate to their age and development, although full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups

In an abusive relationship, the parent or carer may:

- persistently avoid child health services and treatment of the child's illnesses
- have unrealistic expectations of the child
- frequently complain about or to the child and fail to provide attention or praise
- be absent
- be misusing substances
- persistently refuse to allow access on home visits by professionals
- be involved in domestic violence and abuse
- be socially isolated

Staff should be aware that children with special educational needs and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges including:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability
- children with special educational needs and disabilities are particularly vulnerable to bullying and often show no outward signs
- communication issues can be a barrier to effective safeguarding

5 ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE MADE AGAINST OTHER CHILDREN- CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE

At our educational establishment we believe that all children have a right to attend educational establishment and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the educational establishment and other students.

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We recognise that some pupils will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the educational establishment's Behaviour Policy. Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as child on child abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals.

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child on child abuse). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- upskirting, 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; which
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Serious violence

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

Safeguarding allegations

It is important to remember that Child-on-Child Abuse does not occur in a vacuum. It occurs in a society where there are structures and norms that shape young people's views, experiences and behaviours, as well as responses to them. Consequently there are different issues of gender that will need to be considered when responding to allegations made against pupils by others in the educational establishment, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

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

Examples of safeguarding issues against a pupil could include:

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Physical Abuse

- violence, particularly pre-planned
- forcing others to use drugs or alcohol

Emotional Abuse

- blackmail or extortion
- threats and intimidation

Sexual Abuse

- indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults
- forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting

Sexual Exploitation

- encouraging other children to attend inappropriate parties
- photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts

In areas where gangs are prevalent, older pupils may attempt to recruit younger pupils using any or all of the above methods. Young people suffering from sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people under threat of violence.

Minimising the risk of safeguarding concerns towards children from other children

We will provide a developmentally appropriate PSHE syllabus which develops pupils' understanding of acceptable behaviour and keeping themselves safe.

Have systems in place for any pupil to raise concerns with staff, knowing they will be listened to, believed and valued.

Deliver targeted work on assertiveness and keeping safe to those pupils identified as being at risk.

On occasion, some pupils will present a safeguarding risk to other pupils. The educational establishment should be informed that the young person raises safeguarding concerns, for example, they are coming back into educational establishment following a period in custody or they have experienced serious abuse themselves.

These pupils will need an individual risk management plan to ensure that other pupils are kept safe and they themselves are not laid open to malicious allegations. There is a need to balance the tension between privacy and safeguarding.

What to do

When an allegation is made by a pupil against another pupil, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern the DSL should be informed.

A factual record should be made of the allegation, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances.

The DSL should contact the Children's Hub or EHA Advisor to discuss the case. It is possible that Children's Social Care are already aware of safeguarding concerns around this young person. The DSL will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a statement of referral where appropriate.

The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in the files of both pupils' files.

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If the allegation indicates a potential criminal offence has taken place, the police should be contacted at the earliest opportunity and parents informed (of both the pupil being complained about and the alleged victim).

Where neither Children's Social Care nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough educational establishment investigation should take place into the matter using the educational establishment's usual disciplinary procedures.

In situations where the educational establishment considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan.

The plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT BETWEEN CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of **any** age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that **all** victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Staff will be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"; and
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

LGBTQ pupils

Guidance now emphasises the importance of providing LGBTQ+ children with a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff. DSLs will ensure that a safe space is available.

EARLY HELP FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Most parents can look after their children without the need of help other than from their family or friends. However, some parents may need additional help from our educational establishment or other services such as the NHS. Providing help early is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later.

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Our educational establishment will work together with other agencies to provide a coordinated offer of early help, in line with *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015* and local guidance, to any child who needs it.

We will pool our knowledge within the educational establishment and with other agencies about which families or children need additional support in a range of ways so that we can work out how best to help them.

We will work closely with targeted early help services and Children's Social Care if we feel families need more support and input, or children are at risk of harm, and we will continue to provide support if other services are also needed.

INFORMATION SHARING AND CONSENT

It is essential that people working with children can confidently share information as part of their day-to-day work. This is necessary not only to safeguard and protect children from harm but also to work together to support families to improve outcomes for all.

The educational establishment may have to share information about parents or carers, such as their medical history, disability or substance misuse issues, for investigations of child abuse carried out by Children's Social Care.

We will proactively seek out information as well as sharing it. This means checking with other professionals whether they have information that helps us to be as well informed as possible when working to support children.

The Data Protection Act 1998 is not a barrier to sharing information. It is there to ensure that personal information is managed in a sensible way and that a balance is struck between a person's privacy and public protection.

We should be sharing any concerns we have with parents at an early stage, unless this would put a child at greater risk or compromise an investigation. Parents need to know what our responsibilities are for safeguarding and protecting children and that this involves sharing information about them with other professionals.

Be clear about the purpose of sharing confidential information and only share as much as you need to achieve your purpose.

Try to get consent from parents (or the child, if they have sufficient understanding¹) to share information, if possible. However, **you do not need consent if you have serious concerns about a child's safety and well-being. If you decide to share information without consent, you should record this with a full explanation of your decision.**

Consent should not be sought from parents or carers (or the child, if they have sufficient understanding), if:

- it would place a child at increased risk of harm; or
- it would place an adult at risk of serious harm; or
- it would prejudice a criminal investigation; or
- it would lead to unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm to a child; or
- required by law or a court order to share information.

¹ Children aged 12 or over may generally be expected to have sufficient understanding. Younger children may also have sufficient understanding. All people aged 16 and over are presumed, in law, to have the capacity to give or withhold their consent, unless there is evidence to the contrary.

Consent is not necessary in cases where Children's Social Care are making child protection enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. Information needs to be shared with Children's Social Care; staff members must make sure to record what information has been shared.

Consent is necessary, for:

- Children's Social Care investigations or assessments of concerns under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Children's Social Care will assume that we have obtained consent from the parents to share information unless we make them aware that there is a specific issue about consent. This must be discussed with a social worker in the Single Point of Advice.
- early help assessments. Assessments are undertaken with the agreement of the child and their parents or carers.

If you are in any doubt about the need for seeking consent, get advice from the DSL or from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Keep a record of your decision to share information, with or without consent, and the reasons for it. Remember also that it is just as important to keep a record of why you decided not to share information as why you did so.

RECORD KEEPING

Good record keeping is an important part of the educational establishment's accountability to children and their families and will help us in meeting our key responsibility to respond appropriately to welfare concerns about children.

Records should be factual, accurate, relevant, up to date and auditable. They should support monitoring, risk assessment and planning for children and enable informed and timely decisions about appropriate action to take.

The DSL will ensure that records are maintained appropriately for children with safeguarding concerns and that stand-alone files are created and maintained in line with requirements of the above guidance.

At St Raphael's we use MyConcern to record safeguarding concerns and incidents. Staff training will be undertaken regularly and will be part of the induction process for new staff. The DSLs will review all inputs on MyConcern as they are logged and will respond in accordance with this policy.

SAFER RECRUITMENT

Our educational establishment has robust recruitment and vetting procedures to help prevent unsuitable people from working with children.

Our job advertisements and application packs make explicit reference to the educational establishment's commitment to safeguarding children, including compliance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) process and clear statements in the job description and person specification about the staff member's safeguarding responsibilities.

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All staff members who have contact with children, young people and families will have appropriate pre-employment checks in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Educational establishments and colleges, September 2025*

A curriculum vitae (CV) will only be accepted alongside a full application form and is not sufficient on its own to support safer recruitment.

Updated guidance on recruitment in KCSIE 2023 stated that schools and colleges should inform shortlisted candidates that online searches may be done as part of pre-recruitment checks..

At least one member on every short listing and interview panel will have completed safer recruitment training. The head teacher is responsible for ensuring that safer recruitment training is kept up to date.

The head teacher and the nominated governor for child protection are responsible for ensuring that our **single central record** is accurate and up to date.

PROCEDURE FOR MANAGING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE MADE AGAINST EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT STAFF MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well being and very best outcomes for the children at our educational establishment. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.

We will take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults in our educational establishment are safe to work with children. We will always ensure that the procedures outlined in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Educational establishments and Colleges September 2025 are adhered to.

If an allegation is made or information is received about an adult who works in our setting which indicates that they may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the information should inform the Headteacher immediately. Should an allegation be made against the Headteacher, this will be reported to the Chair of Governors. In the event that neither the Headteacher nor Chair of Governors are not contactable on that day, the information must be passed to and dealt with by either the member of staff acting as Headteacher or the Vice Chair of Governors.

The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will follow the flow chart in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025. No member of staff or the governing body will undertake further investigations before receiving advice from the LADO.

Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors should call the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on 0800 028 0285.

Supporting people:

- The educational establishment together with Children's Social Care and the police, if they are involved, will consider the impact on the child concerned and provide support as appropriate.

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- The head teacher will ensure that the child and family are kept informed of the progress of the investigation.
- The Human Resource Team will be contacted at the earliest opportunity for advice in relation to the investigation of any allegation in line with the Councils' Disciplinary Policy, where appropriate.
- The staff member who is the subject of the allegation will be advised to contact their union, professional association or a colleague for support, (depending on the outcome of the safeguarding strategy meeting which is normally chaired by the LADO).
- Human Resource Team will ensure that the staff member is provided with appropriate support, if necessary, through occupational health or welfare arrangements.
- The head teacher will appoint a named representative to keep the staff member updated on the progress of the investigation; this will continue during any police or section 47 investigation or disciplinary investigation.

The educational establishment has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our educational establishment, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the LADO and/or The Personnel Advisory Team.

Referrals to Children's Social Care need to be considered when a child is at risk of significant harm and an individual who is working or volunteering with children **has:-**

1. Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
2. Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
3. Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

When considering the definitions of harm and whether threshold is met for a LADO consultation or referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), the following guidance provides information about the criteria and process. The examples provided are not exhaustive as the nature of allegations can sometimes be complex, depending on the history of those who are involved.

Organisations or Individuals using school premises

Updated guidance in KCSIE 2024 included information on responding to allegations relating to incidents occurring when an individual or organisation uses a school's premises. As with all safeguarding allegations, schools should follow their safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). At St Raphael's all letting policies and agreements will include information on safeguarding procedures and will state that the provider will ensure all staff have current DBS checks in place.