

## Child Protection Policy and Guidance

Policy Title: Child Protection Policy	Effective Date:	November 2021
SMT Member Responsible: John Rumble	Review Date:	December 2022
Governors' Committee Responsible: Staffing, Care & Guidance		

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## 1. Rationale

- 1.1 Sheldon School fully recognises its moral and legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils, to keep them safe and protected from harm.
- 1.2 We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse and neglect. The school will therefore:
  - 1.2.1. Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
  - 1.2.2. Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried and that correct procedures are followed.
  - 1.2.3. Include opportunities in the PSRE and ICT curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.
  - 1.2.4. Act to enable all children to have the best life chances.
  - 1.2.5. Act to prevent impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
  - 1.2.6. Act to protect children from maltreatment.

The term "safeguarding children" covers a range of measures including child protection procedures. It encompasses a whole-school preventative approach to keeping children safe, including online that incorporates pupil health and safety; school behaviour management and preventing peer on peer abuse; supporting pupils with medical conditions; Relationships, Sex and Health (RSHE) Education and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSRE); providing first aid and site security.

## 2. Aims

- 2.1. Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. There are five main elements:
  - 2.1.1. Ensuring we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
  - 2.1.2. Raising awareness of child protection/safeguarding issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep themselves safe.
  - 2.1.3. Developing, and then implementing, procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse and neglect.
  - 2.1.4. Supporting pupils who have been abused/neglected in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
  - 2.1.5. Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop and thrive.

## 3. Procedures

- 3.1 We will fulfil our local & national responsibilities as laid out in the following key documents:
  - Working together to Safeguard children (2018)
  - Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)
  - The Procedures of the Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership
  - Non-statutory interim guidance: COVID-19: Safeguarding in schools/colleges and other providers
  - Information sharing – Advice for Practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (2018)

We will:

- 3.1.1. Ensure we have a Designated Safeguarding Lead who has attended the advanced safeguarding training for DSLs and other training and support for this role – see Child Protection Guidance (Appendix 1).

- 3.1.2. Ensure we have a nominated governor responsible for child protection – see Child Protection Guidance (Appendix 1). As key strategic decision makers and vision setters for the school the governors will ensure that our policies and procedures are in line with the national and local safeguarding requirements.
- 3.1.3. Ensure every member of staff, volunteer and governor knows the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and their role.
- 3.1.4. Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated person responsible for safeguarding. We will also ensure that every member of staff is aware of the indicators which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime.
- 3.1.5. Ensure new staff receive appropriate training from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 3.1.6. Ensure all staff receive child protection training at least every three years as well as a yearly 'update', and that a record is kept. Staff are required annually to acknowledge that they have read the Child Protection policy, the relevant sections of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' – DFE September 2021, relevant items in the staff handbook, including confidentiality and the Code of Conduct for Safe Practice.
- 3.1.7. Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the school prospectus.
- 3.1.8. Notify Social Care if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register.
- 3.1.9. Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters including attending case conferences.
- 3.1.10. Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- 3.1.11. Ensure all records are kept securely; separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations.
- 3.1.12. If a pupil transfers to another school, all CP records should be passed on promptly.
- 3.1.13. All CP records should be retained until the young person reaches the age of 25.
- 3.1.14. Ensure safe recruitment practices, as outlined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' DFE 2021 are always followed.
- 3.1.15. Ensure that any allegations against members of staff concerning child protection are dealt with following local procedures - all such concerns to be dealt with urgently, with concerns about staff to be reported to the Head, but concerns about the Head reported to the Chair of Governors. (See current Wiltshire Council schools' allegations flowchart.)
- 3.1.16. Ensure that other school policies which have a safeguarding element (e.g. health and safety; peer on peer abuse; e-safety; behaviour) are all consistent with this policy and with each other and where appropriate, make cross-reference to this policy.
- 3.1.17. The school will work with the local Channel panels and/or MASH to prevent students from being drawn into extremism and radicalisation according to the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act. This will include providing appropriate training for all staff.
- 3.1.18. Any safeguarding concerns or disclosures of abuse relating to a child at this school, outside of school and online are within the scope of this policy.
- 3.1.19. If it is necessary for the school to change the way provision to children is offered due to exceptional circumstances, such as pandemic lockdown, the school has a separate addendum to the policy. Please refer to this for further information.

#### **4. Support to Pupils**

- 4.1 We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:
  - The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.

- A whole school approach to listening to children and having systems in place which create an environment where children feel safe to share their concerns and worries and know they will be taken seriously. These systems operate with the best interests of the child at heart.
- The school's safeguarding team being clearly identifiable to our pupils.
- The content of the curriculum.
- The school behaviour policy, which is aimed at supporting all pupils in the school.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Social Care, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, Education Welfare Service and Educational Psychology Service, and where appropriate initiate and/or contribute to an ESA (Early Support Assessment) and Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings.
- Ensuring that, where a pupil on the child protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the new school and that the social worker is informed.

## **5. Monitoring & Review**

- Governors ensure that safeguarding is an agenda item for every full governing body meeting. The Designated Safeguarding Lead ensures that safeguarding issues appear on SMT/Staff meeting agendas as appropriate.
- The school will comply with, and complete the Wiltshire Annual Child Protection audit. The results will then be fed back to governors as part of the review process.

This policy is supported by comprehensive Safeguarding / Child Protection Guidance (Appendix 1).

Linked Policies: E-Safety Policy, Peer on Peer Abuse Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Behaviour Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, SEND Policy, Sex Education & Relationships Policy and Substance Misuse Policy, Complaints Policy, Teaching and Learning Policy, Equality Policy

Linked documents: Staff Code of Conduct, Social Media Policy

## Appendix 1

### Child protection guidance

Sheldon School fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection.

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The **child protection policy** should be read alongside the other school policies/procedures listed at the bottom of the CP policy.

In addition all staff will have read Part 1 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2021* and formally acknowledged understanding of this document.

Sheldon staff are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' as far as safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interest of the child.

Schools do not operate in isolation. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all adults and especially those working or volunteering with children. The school aims to help protect the children in its care by working consistently and appropriately with all agencies to reduce risk and promote the welfare of children. All professionals work within the same safeguarding procedures.

## 1. Purpose of the policy

- To raise the awareness of all school staff of the importance of safeguarding pupils and of their responsibilities for identifying and reporting actual or suspected abuse
- To ensure pupils and parents are aware that the school takes the safeguarding agenda seriously and will follow the appropriate procedures for identifying and reporting abuse and for dealing with allegations against staff
- To promote effective liaison with other agencies in order to work together for the protection of all pupils
- To support pupils' development in ways which will foster security, confidence and independence
- To integrate a safeguarding curriculum within the existing curriculum allowing for continuity and progress through all key stages
- To take account of and inform policy in related areas such as behaviour, peer on peer abuse and e-safety

There are three main elements to the school's safeguarding policy:

1. **PREVENTION** (positive and safe school environment, careful and vigilant teaching, accessible pastoral care, support to pupils, good adult role models).
2. **PROTECTION** (agreed procedures are followed, staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to safeguarding concerns).
3. **SUPPORT** (to pupils, who may have been at risk of significant harm and the way staff respond to their concerns and any work that may be required).

## 2. Child Protection procedures and guidelines

### **What is Child Protection?**

Child Protection is one very important aspect of safeguarding. It refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm. Safeguarding, in addition to child protection, encompasses issues such as pupil health and safety, peer on peer abuse, bullying/cyber-bullying, appropriate medical provision, drugs and substance misuse.

These areas have specific policies and guidance which should be read in conjunction with this document.

### **What is significant harm?**

The Children's Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention by statutory agencies in family life in the best interests of children. There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Sometimes it might be a single traumatic event but more often it is a compilation of significant events which damage the child's physical and psychological development. Decisions about significant harm are complex and require discussion with the statutory agencies.

### **Responsibilities**

The responsibility for child safeguarding falls on everybody who is employed at the school. All adults who work at Sheldon School are expected to support the school's Child Protection Policy, with overall responsibility falling upon the headteacher. All staff, including volunteers, have a statutory obligation to report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if there is suspicion of abuse/neglect of a pupil or if a pupil discloses abuse or allegations of abuse.

We will follow the child protection procedures set out by the Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership and will have regard to statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education *Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2021*.

Governing bodies should ensure a member of the governing body, usually the chair, is nominated to liaise with the local authority and/or partner agencies on issues of child protection.

### **The Nominated Governor is: Carol Cradock**

Governing bodies should appoint a senior member of staff to the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for child protection and safeguarding.

### **The role of the Nominated Governor is outlined in Appendix 1.**

The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** is a senior member of staff designated to take lead responsibility for:

- Managing all child protection issues (headteacher leads on allegations against staff)
- Keep secure child protection plans, write records and reports
- Child protection policy and procedures: lead in evaluation, review and revision, ensure available to staff and parents
- Induction of staff and volunteers/staff training/ensure staff are aware of safeguarding policy and procedure
- Providing advice, information and support to other staff/adults in the school and with other pastoral staff to pupils on safeguarding issues
- Understand (and participate in) early help assessments and process for early help
- Liaising with the local authority and local Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership
- Working in partnership with other agencies; referrals and support; information sharing
- Ensure a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings.

### **The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: John Rumble**

### **3. Safeguarding information for pupils**

- All pupils in the school are aware of staff who they can talk to. The names of the DSL/deputy/pastoral care leaders/support staff etc. are available in planners and on noticeboards.
- Children will be taught how to keep themselves safe through the safeguarding elements of the PSRE, tutorial and e-safety programmes.
- Our pupils access a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development, and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.
- We provide opportunities for pupils to develop skills, concepts, attitudes and knowledge that promote their safety and well-being. The PSHE and citizenship curriculum specifically includes the following objectives:
  - Developing a pupil self-esteem and communications skills
  - Developing strategies for self-protection including online safety
  - Developing a sense of the boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in adults and within peer relationships (positive relationships and consent).

### **4. Safer Recruitment**

- All recruitment procedures will be compliant with the guidance in 'Keeping Children safe in Education' (2021) and a comprehensive and accurate single central record will be maintained for all staff and Governors.
- We scrutinise all applications for paid or voluntary posts.
- We undertake interviews and make appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- We maintain a single central record of the essential checks as set out in KCSiE, that have been carried out and certificates obtained. The SCR applies to all staff (including supply staff, and teacher trainees on salaried routes) who work at the school. It also applies to all governors

### **5. Staff training and induction**

- The DSL/DDSL will attend advanced safeguarding training at least once every two years, attend safeguarding forums and keep up to date with recommendations from serious case reviews, changes to national and SVPP policy and guidance.
- The whole school staff group will receive safeguarding training at least every three years with annual up-dates and notifications of any necessary changes, reminders being made available as required.
- All new staff, volunteers and governors will receive Safeguarding induction to ensure understanding of the safeguarding policy.
- The CP policy and Code of Conduct will be provided to all staff –including temporary staff and volunteers- on induction.

### **6. Safer working practice**

- Safe working practice ensures that pupils are safe and that all staff, volunteers and governors:
  - Are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions



- Work in an open and transparent way
- Work with other colleagues where possible in situations open to question
- Discuss and/or take advice from school management over any incident which may give rise to concern
- Record any incident of decisions made
- Apply the same professional standards regardless of gender, race, disability or sexuality
- Are aware of confidentiality policy
- Are aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

## **7. Staff behaviour**

Sheldon School is committed to positive academic, social and emotional outcomes for our pupils, underpinned by a strong safeguarding ethos. We are equally committed to the protection and welfare of our staff, who are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professional behaviour.

All staff and visitors are expected to adhere to the **Code of Conduct**:

This states that:

- The child's welfare is paramount (Children Act 1989)
- Adults working in Sheldon School are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which could question their motivation or intentions.
- Staff must never promise a pupil absolute confidentiality.
- All staff working in school must work and be seen to work in an open and transparent way.
- Adults should discuss and/or take advice promptly from the Designated Safeguarding Lead about any incident which could give rise for concern. In the event of the Designated Safeguarding Lead being absent, a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead should be consulted.
- An accurate record must also be made of any incident/issue staff are involved in on the CPOMS system as soon as possible after the incident for action/secure storage.
- Staff should apply the same professional standards to all pupils and young people and give full regards to the schools Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in legal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

### **Staff, volunteers\* and visitors\* to Sheldon School must:**

- Be familiar with and work in accordance with the policies at Sheldon School.
- Always act and be seen to act in the child's best interest.
- Treat information they receive about children and young people in a discreet manner.
- Show a good example to students and be a positive role model.
- Behave in a mature, respectful, fair and considerate manner.
- Not discriminate favourably or unfavourably towards any student.
- Ensure that relationships with all students remain on a professional footing.
- Work safely in one to one situations with pupils.
- Consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role.
- Ensure they are properly insured if transporting pupils in their own vehicle.
- Always gain permission from a pupil before taking photographs or videos. Check with a senior member of staff before using photographs or videos of pupils outside of the school context.

### **\* Who will be working with children**

All visitors are expected to sign in and out, wear a school ID badge and are asked to read and agree to key safeguarding information, including contact details of safeguarding personnel in school.

## **8. Managing concerns and allegations against staff and volunteers**

**The Allegation Management SVPP flowchart has been included in Appendix 2.**

Any report of concern about the behaviour of a member of staff (including supply staff), contractor, volunteer, or allegation of abuse against a member of staff must immediately be reported to the headteacher who will refer to the appropriate designated officer(s) from the local authority:

**Wiltshire Designated Officer: 01225 713945**

Any concern or allegation against the headteacher will be reported to the Chair of Governors without informing the headteacher.

Any allegation of abuse will be dealt with in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

In some circumstances the member of staff will, without prejudice, be asked to take a period of paid leave pending the results of the investigation.

In addition to the concern/allegation management process, the school's DSL will also refer suspected abuse to the MASH as described in "responding to a concern"

Concerns and allegations reported relating to supply staff and contractors will be notified to their employers for investigation and potential refer to the DOFA.

Sheldon School will appoint a "case manager" to lead any investigation where the reported allegation does not meet the allegations threshold to consider referral to the DOFA. This is the headteacher, or where the headteacher is the subject of an allegation, the chair of governors

Sheldon School will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

Malicious allegations against staff will be investigated and dealt with by the headteacher and, if appropriate, a committee of governors.

### **If you have concerns about a colleague**

If staff members have concerns about another staff member or volunteer than this should be referred to the headteacher.

Where there are concerns about the headteacher this should be referred to the Chair of Governors.

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of a child is paramount. The school's whistle blowing code enables staff to raise concerns or allegations in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

## **Managing low-level concerns about adults**

Sheldon School operates a 'low-level' concerns policy in accordance with KCSIE. 'Low-level' refers to behaviour that is: inconsistent with expectations set out in the Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and/or does not meet the allegations threshold, or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the DOfA.

All low-level concerns will be reported to the headteacher; low-level concerns about the headteacher will be reported to the chair of governors.

The school will:

- ensure all staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is (as set out in the Staff Code of Conduct), and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others;
- empower staff to share any low-level safeguarding concerns;
- provide a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised, for both the child/ren and the adult; and,
- respond to reports of low-level concerns in accordance with our HR conduct procedures by addressing unprofessional behaviour and support the individual to correct it at an early stage. If the concern has been raised via a third party, the headteacher will collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:
  - directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously;
  - to the individual involved and any witnesses.

Reporting low-level concerns helps to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the school's values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff.

Staff are encouraged to self-refer where they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing, retained and reviewed to help recognise any weakness in the school safeguarding system so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

*See also: Whistleblowing policy*

## **9. What constitutes child abuse and neglect?**

All staff know how to recognise and are alert to the signs of neglect and abuse and wider safeguarding issues, including but not limited to child on child sexual violence and harassment, peer on peer abuse and exploitation. Advice for practitioners (2015), Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and Sexual harassment between children in schools (2021), along with notes from safeguarding training are important reference documents for all staff.

The four types of abuse, described in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021* are:

**Physical abuse**

**Emotional abuse**

**Sexual abuse**

**Neglect**

**Specific safeguarding issues:** Sheldon School recognises other safeguarding issues:

Child Criminal Exploitation, child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, peer on peer abuse, bullying (including cyber-bullying), domestic violence, drugs, fabricated or induced illnesses, faith abuse, forced marriage, gangs and youth violence initiation/hazing type violence and rituals, gender-based violence/violence against women and girls, mental health, radicalisation, sending nude or semi nude images, teenage relationship abuse, trafficking.

The school will endeavour to identify and act upon any forms of abuse according to our procedures. All staff should be aware of the indicators which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime.

**For more information, including definitions, indicators and other safeguarding issues, please refer to Appendix 3.**

## **10. Early Help**

At Sheldon, all our staff can identify children who may benefit from early help as a problem emerges and discuss this with the D/DSL

The *Revised Multi-Agency Thresholds for Safeguarding Children (December 2018)* document aims to inform schools and other agencies about the suitable action to take when a child has been identified as making inadequate progress or having an unmet need. At Sheldon School, whenever possible, we will ensure that early intervention is actioned via a referral to Early Help as soon as the criteria are met, to prevent situations to escalate into larger problems. The document can be found on the Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership website.

**Early Help Integrated Frontdoor: 0300 456 0108**

Therefore the school will consider the following:

- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help
- Provide early help services e.g. school nurse, pastoral worker, SENCO, family outreach worker, targeted youth, breakfast club
- Use of the Digital Assessment and Referral Tool as appropriate, as part of the holistic assessment of the child's needs.
- Refer to appropriate services e.g. CAMHS etc.
- Liaison with Wiltshire SEND Service (via the SENDCO)
- Various resources to identify and respond to harmful sexual behaviour

## **11. Responding to disclosures: guidance for staff**

If a child wishes to confide in you the following guidelines should be adhered to:

- **Create a safe environment**
  - Take the child to a private and safe place if possible
  - Stay calm
  - Reassure the child and stress that he/she is not to blame
  - Tell the child that you know how difficult it must have been to confide in you
  - Listen to the child and tell them that you believe them and are taking what is being said seriously
  - Tell the child what you are going to do next after the disclosure

- **Be honest**
  - Do not make promises that you cannot keep
  - Explain that you will have to tell other people in order to keep them safe
- **Record on CPOMS exactly what the child has said to you as soon as possible and include the following into the form:**
  - Date and time of any incident
  - What the child said and what you said
  - Your observations e.g. child's behaviour and emotional state

Every member of staff has a log in to CPOMS and this can be accessed through the staff portal or at sheldonschool.CPOMS.net

- **Be clear about what the child says and what you say**
  - Do not interview the child and keep questions to a minimum. Be particularly careful not to ask leading questions
  - Encourage the child to use his/her own words and do not try to lead them into giving particular answers
- **Maintain confidentiality**
  - Only tell those people that it is necessary to inform
- **Do not take sole responsibility**
  - Immediately consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead so that any appropriate action can be taken to protect the pupil if necessary
  - The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider the information and decide on the next steps.
- **Ensure that appropriate support is maintained**, once a child has disclosed (i.e. should they return to class or take time out with support)
- **Do not take photographs of any injuries or ask to see them if they are underneath clothing**

## **12. Reporting concerns**

**The 'What to do' WSVPP flowchart has been included in Appendix 5.**

Where any adult in the school has concerns about a child they should discuss these in the first instance with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or in their absence, the deputy. In exceptional circumstances, staff members can speak directly to Children's Social Care.

### **Children's Social Care referrals:**

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): **0300 456 0108**

Out of hours: **0300 456 0100**

If you believe the child is at immediate risk of significant harm or injury, then you must call the police on **999**.

## **Sharing Concerns with Parents**

There is a commitment to work in partnership with parents or carers and in most situations it may be appropriate to discuss initial concerns with them.

However, there will be some circumstances where the Designated Safeguarding Lead will not seek consent from the individual or their family, or inform them that the information will be shared. For example, if doing so would:

- place a child at increased risk of significant harm;
- place an adult at increased risk of serious harm;
- prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime;
- lead to unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm to a child, or serious harm to an adult.

In some circumstances, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will seek advice from Children's Social Care by ringing the MASH to obtain advice about the recommended course of action.

The school shares a purpose with parents to educate, keep children safe from harm and have their welfare promoted.

We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information until we have permission or it is necessary to do so to protect a child.

Sheldon School will share with parents any concerns we may have about their child unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm.

We encourage parents to disclose any concerns they may have with Sheldon School. We make parents aware of our Child Protection Policy and parents are aware that these are on the school website.

## **Recording concerns**

When a child discloses abuse to an adult in the school, that person is responsible for making a written record of the disclosure on the CPOMS system as soon as possible after reporting it urgently to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or a deputy.

Discussions should be recorded on the CPOMS system, with details of the concern and any agreed action that is to be taken.

The Deputy/Designated Safeguarding Leads will liaise with safeguarding partners and work with other agencies in line with Working Together (2018) and will refer to National Police Council Guidance for Schools to understand when they should consider calling the police.

The D/DSL will provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm.

## **Record keeping of child protection concerns**

The school will:

- Keep clear and comprehensive records of all child welfare and child protection concerns using the CPOMS system, with a body map where injuries need to be noted, including how the concern was followed up and resolved as well as a note of any actions taken, decisions reached and the outcome.
- Ensure all child welfare and child protection records are kept securely, and in a locked location. The record must be signed and dated and kept securely in a file under the child name, away from the other records (medical forms, academic records etc.) The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that concerns and discussions are written up properly and acted on appropriately.
- Ensure that all child protection records relating to a child who moves to another school or college are passed on to the new school securely, promptly and separate from the main pupil file. Confirmation of receipt should be obtained. Child welfare records below the child protection threshold but with continuing relevance to the child's wellbeing should also be transferred.

### **Information sharing – internal process**

Information concerning students at risk of harm will be shared with all members of staff on a “need to know” basis. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will make a judgement in each individual case about who needs and has a right to access particular information.

For any child dual-registered with another school/setting/organisation, the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of the placed pupil, thus the DSL will regularly liaise with the DSL at that base to ensure information is shared in the child's best interests. This includes contextual safeguarding information about relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online to enable assessment and intervention to happen within these extra-familial contexts.

### **13. Monitoring of children subjected to a CP Plan**

Pupils who are the subject of a Child Protection Conference will have either an agreed multi-disciplinary action plan or child protection plan. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will attend planning meetings and core group specified in the plan and contribute to assessments and plans.

The school recognises that pupils who are the subjects of abuse or who live in situations of domestic violence may exhibit distressed or challenging behaviour and may not be reaching their full academic potential. The school will ensure that teachers are aware of these barriers and that the appropriate support mechanisms are in place in school.

### **14. Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities**

Governors recognise that for a variety of reasons, children with additional needs face an increased risk of abuse and neglect; therefore adults are expected to take extra care to interpret correctly apparent signs of abuse or neglect. Indications of abuse will be reported as for other pupils.

Governors will provide a school environment in which pupils with special educational needs or disabilities feel confident and able to discuss their concerns. Whenever possible, pupils will be given the chance to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate communication skills.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will work with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator to identify pupils with particular communication needs.

Wiltshire Council provides targeted support services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability who need additional support with:

- Communication
- Learning and processing information
- Experiencing the world around them, including sensory difficulties
- Physical or medical conditions that affect their life and learning
- Coping with social and emotional challenges

**The SEND service can be contacted on 01225 757 985.**



## **15. Follow-up support of vulnerable children**

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the pupils through:

- Pastoral support
- The content of the curriculum
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued
- The school behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred
- Liaison with other agencies supporting the pupil such as Children's Social Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, education welfare service and educational psychology service, and where appropriate initiate and/or contribute to an Early Support Assessment (formerly a CAF) and Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings.

## **16. Allegations of Peer on Peer abuse**

All children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

In addition, we have a zero-tolerance approach and will respond to all reports and concerns of child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside school, and/or online.

At Sheldon School we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. Staff recognise that while both boys and girls can abuse their peers, it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators of such abuse. Peer on peer abuse should not be tolerated, passed off as "banter" or seen as "part of growing up". It is likely to include, but not limited to:

- Bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- Physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children, as defined by Sexual offences act 2013 which considers rape, assault by penetration, and sexual assault, all types of sexual violence. Sexual violence and sexual harassment can be between two children, or a group of children and can occur online and offline.
- 'Upskirting' or any picture taken under a persons clothing without their permission or them knowing to obtain sexual gratification or cause humiliation or distress.
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Sheldon has a separate 'Peer on peer' abuse policy which details

- How we minimize the risk of peer on peer abuse
- Our procedures for dealing with such allegations
- How victims and perpetrators will be supported

- How records will be made/kept

Any pupil who may have been victimised and/or displayed such harmful behaviours, along with any other child affected by peer on peer abuse, will be supported through the school's pastoral system and the support will be regularly monitored and reviewed.

We will address inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) as this can be an important intervention that may help prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. We acknowledge that even if there are no reported cases of peer on peer abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported. Staff maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.

The DSL will follow local and national guidance when there has been a report of sexual violence and harassment between children. This will include liaising with other professionals to develop robust risk assessments and multi-agency safety planning with appropriate specialist targeted work for pupils who are identified as posing a potential risk to other children. This is done using a Contextual Safeguarding approach to ensure assessments consider risks posed by any wider environmental factors present in a child's life.

The NSPCC has a dedicated helpline 0800 136 663 to provide children who are victims of sexual abuse in schools with appropriate support and advice. The helpline also provides support to parents and professionals.

## **Sexual violence and Sexual harassment**

### **This must always be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The DSL will follow the DfE Guidance: Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges 2021 and in Appendix A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-school-and-colleges>

with consideration of

- Managing internally
- Early Help
- MASH referral
- Reporting to the Police

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.

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

- Inappropriate sexual language
- Inappropriate role play
- Sexual touching
- Sexual assault/abuse

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

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

### **17. Welcoming other professionals**

Visitors with a professional role, such as the school nurse, social worker, educational psychologist or members of the Police will have had the appropriate vetting checks undertaken by their own organisation. Any professionals visiting the school should provide evidence of their professional role and employment details (an identity badge for example). If felt necessary, the school will contact the relevant organisation to verify the individual’s identity.

Professionals will complete signing in/out forms and wear a school visitors’ I.D. badge.

### **18. Off-site visits**

Appropriate risk assessments must be in place prior to any off-site visit taking place.

Any overnight visit will explicitly set out sleeping arrangements; the role and responsibility of each adult, whether employed or volunteers; on/off duty arrangements; clear expectations about boundaries and interactions with children/young people; and expectations around smoking/drinking by adults.

Safeguarding concerns or allegations will be responded to following the SVPP procedures (as above). The member of staff in charge of the visit will report any safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher, who will pass to Social Care if appropriate. In emergency, the staff member in charge will contact the police and/or social care.

## **19. Exchange visits**

As a school we will satisfy ourselves that parents/carers who will act as host families for pupils are suitable to host pupils and are aware who in the school they should raise any concerns with. Any adult over 18 in a host family will be subject to DBS checks.

We will work with our partner schools abroad to ensure that similar assurances are undertaken prior to any overseas visit by our pupils.

## **20. Photography and images**

To protect children we will:

- Seek parental consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- Only use school equipment
- Only take photos and videos of children to celebrate achievement
- Use only the child's first name with an image
- Ensure that children are appropriately dressed
- Encourage children to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

## **21. Missing children**

A child going missing is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. After reasonable attempts have been made to contact the family, we will follow the SVPP procedure and refer to the MASH team.

If a looked after child or a child subjected to a CP plan goes missing, we will refer them to the MASH team within 48 hours.

## **22. Missing from education**

Children missing education procedures will be followed where a child or young person has 10 days or more continuous absence from school without an explanation and/or has left school suddenly and the destination is unknown and/or has not taken up an allocated school place as expected. Any such concern will be reported to the Local Authority through the Education Welfare Service.

The school will also refer to the MASH any child being withdrawn from school with the intent to be electively home educated where there are safeguarding concerns.

The Governing Body will undertake an annual review of the school's Child Protection Policy and procedures and remedy any deficiencies and weakness found without delay.

## **23. Online Safety**

Sheldon School has an e-safety policy. This should be read in conjunction with this policy.

Online safety is a running and interrelated theme which is reflected in our policies and procedures. Children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety. Online safety is considered as part of our whole school safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning. A

personalised or contextualised approach is taken for more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some children with SEND.

Sheldon School acknowledges the fact many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks, the school will follow its policy on the use of mobile and smart technology in school to safeguard children and will follow peer on peer abuse procedures when mobile phones are used by a child whilst in school to sexually harass their peers via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images: consensually and non-consensually (often via large chat groups), and view and share pornography and other harmful content.

#### **24. The use of 'reasonable force' in school**

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

All staff will follow our behaviour policy and all pupils are encouraged to follow these expectations to reduce the need for the need for 'use of reasonable force.' Staff will work in collaboration with pupils and parents/carers to plan positive, proactive behaviour support which may include support plans, referral to specialist agencies and agreeing actions to reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour.

October 2021

## APPENDIX 1: The role of the Nominated Governor

Ensure safeguarding is always a priority by:

- Championing child protection issues within the school and liaising with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the headteacher and offering challenge if necessary
- Ensuring the Child Protection policy is checked for impact and reviewed yearly accordingly
- Auditing safeguarding measures annually alongside the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the headteacher using the Wiltshire Council annual School Safeguarding Audit return and reporting back to Full Governing Body
- Ensuring that all governors understand and comply with their statutory duty to provide the services of the school in a way that safeguards and promotes the welfare of pupils
- Our governors monitor the school's safer recruitment practice, including the Single Central Record.
- The nominated governor meets the DSL every term (six times per year) to monitor the effectiveness of the policy
- As key strategic decision makers and vision setters for the school, the governors will make sure that our policies and procedures are in line with national and local safeguarding requirements. Governors will work with the senior leaders to make sure the following safeguarding essentials are in place:

Training/Teaching	Policy/Procedures	Staffing
<p>Whole school approach to broad and balanced curriculum embedding safeguarding teaching</p> <p>Children taught about online safety</p> <p>Staff Behaviour Policy (for safer working practice)</p> <p>D/DSL training</p> <p>KCSiE Part 1 (and Annex B and part 5 for staff working directly with children)</p> <p>Designated teacher training (LAC)</p> <p>Online safety training for Staff</p> <p>Teacher confidence to deliver tutor programme to all pupils</p> <p>Annual review of online safety arrangements</p> <p>Preventing Radicalisation</p> <p>Staff training, including regular safeguarding updates</p>	<p>Child voice</p> <p>Children Missing out on education and Children Missing Education (CME)</p> <p>Concerns about staff conduct</p> <p>Dealing with a child at immediate risk</p> <p>Early help</p> <p>Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)</p> <p>Honour based abuse (HBA)</p> <p>Peer on Peer abuse</p> <p>Mental Health</p> <p>Reporting abuse /SVPP procedures</p> <p>Children with SEND and a physical health issue</p> <p>Staff contribution to policy</p> <p>Safeguarding policy review</p> <p>Pupil Voice</p> <p>Behaviour Policy</p> <p>Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy</p> <p>Online Safety</p> <p>Whistleblowing</p> <p>Multi-Agency working</p>	<p>Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is a member of the Senior Leadership Team</p> <p>Deputy Designated Safeguarding lead (DDSL)</p> <p>Designated LAC teacher (even if there are no LAC on roll)</p> <p>Senior Mental Health Lead</p> <p>Well Being Lead</p>

## **Concerns and Allegations management**

Our chair of governors is responsible for liaising with the local authority Designated Officer for Allegations (DOFA) and other partner agencies in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against the Headteacher.

## APPENDIX 2: 'Allegations against adults' flowchart



### Allegations against adults who work with children

If you become aware that a member of staff/volunteer may have:

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

Where a young person discloses abuse or neglect

- Listen; take their allegation seriously; reassure that you will take action to keep them safe.
- Inform them what you are going to do next
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Do not question further or approach/inform the alleged abuser

**Report** immediately to your /a senior manager/safeguarding lead.

Unless there is clear evidence to prove that the allegation is incorrect the manager/safeguarding lead **must**:

**Report the allegation within one working day** to the Designated Officer for Allegations or DOFA (formerly known as LADO):

- Contact the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): **0300 456 0108** and Select Option 3 then Option 4
- Or email [dofaservice@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:dofaservice@wiltshire.gov.uk)
- Out of Hours Emergency Duty Service (5.00pm to 9.00am Weekdays, 4:00pm Friday to 9:00am Monday): **0300 456 0100**

The Designated Officer will:

1. Consider the relevant facts and concerns regarding the adult and child or children, including any previous history.
2. Decide on next course of action – usually straight away, sometimes after further consultation with other multi-agency parties such as the Police and HR.

If the allegation threshold is **NOT** met, the Designated Officer will agree with you an appropriate response (e.g. for the agency to undertake further enquiries or undertake an internal investigation).

If the allegation threshold is met a strategy meeting will normally be held either by phone or in person. Normally a senior manager/safeguarding lead, the Designated Officer, HR, Police and social care are invited to attend. Relevant information is shared, risks to children are considered and appropriate action agreed – e.g. child protection and other enquiries, disciplinary measures or criminal proceedings. A record of the meeting will be made, and regular reviews will take place until a conclusion is reached.



**Allegation/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold – ‘low level’ concerns.**  
(KCSiE 2021, para 407)

The term ‘low-level’ concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the harms threshold. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the DOFA.

**Examples of such behaviour could include, but is not limited to:**

- Being over friendly with children;
- Having favourites;
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a scheduled area or behind a closed door; or,
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, or offensive language
- Low-level concerns as set out within settings staff behaviour/code of conduct and safeguarding policy.



**All staff have a responsibility to share any low-level concerns about a member of staff, supply staff, volunteer, or contractor immediately to the person in charge:**

Neil Spurdell (Headteacher) .....

**Any concern or allegation against the person in charge will be reported to:**

... Louise Carver (Chair of Governors) .....

Staff should self-refer to their line manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead where they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.



**The Headteacher will take the following actions:**

- Reports about supply staff and contractors will be notified to their employers.
- The (insert role) will collect information to help them categorise the type of behaviour and determine what further action may need to be taken. Actions will be responsive, sensitive and proportionate.
- All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing and will include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose along with the rationale for decisions and action taken.
- Records will be kept confidential and held securely and will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.
- The headteacher will seek advice from HR adviser and/or DOFA consultation as appropriate.

### APPENDIX 3: Definitions and indicators of abuse and neglect

*What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015* describes some of the signs that might be indicators of abuse or neglect.

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

Physical abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Babies and disabled children also have a higher risk of suffering physical abuse.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Physical abuse can also occur outside of the family environment.

**Some of the following signs may be indicators of physical abuse:**

- Children with frequent injuries;
- Children with unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones; and
- Children with unexplained:
  - bruises or cuts;
  - burns or scalds; or
  - bite marks.

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

Although the effects of emotional abuse might take a long time to be recognisable, practitioners will be in a position to observe it, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

Emotional abuse may involve serious bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

**Some of the following signs may be indicators of emotional abuse:**

- Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong;
- Parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder';
- Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child; and
- Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons.

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

You should be aware that many children and young people who are victims of sexual abuse do not recognise themselves as such. A child may not understand what is happening and may not even understand that it is wrong. Sexual abuse can have a long-term impact on mental health.

**Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual abuse:**

- Children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age;
- Children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to have;
- Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games; and
- Children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections or underage pregnancy.

**Child sexual exploitation** *is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.*

Like all forms of child sex abuse, child sexual exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex;

- can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual;
- can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and noncontact sexual activity;
- can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media);
- 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; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

**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; and
- Children who regularly miss school or education or don't take part in education.

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

Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse. It is important that practitioners remain alert and do not miss opportunities to take timely action. However, while you may be concerned about a child, neglect is not always straightforward to identify.

Neglect may occur if a parent becomes physically or mentally unable to care for a child. A parent may also have an addiction to alcohol or drugs, which could impair their ability to keep a child safe or result in them prioritising buying drugs, or alcohol, over food, clothing or warmth for the child. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal drug or alcohol abuse.

**Some of the following signs may be indicators of neglect:**

- Children who are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe;
- Children who are left hungry or dirty;
- Children who are left without adequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat;
- Children who are living in dangerous conditions, i.e. around drugs, alcohol or violence;
- Children who are often angry, aggressive or self-harm;
- Children who fail to receive basic health care; and
- Parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured.

**Other specific safeguarding issues**

**Female genital mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage**

There are many different types of abuse but there are some that staff may be initially less aware of. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage fall into this category.

Professionals need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM:

- Knowing that the family belongs to a community in which FGM is practised and is making preparations for the child to take a holiday, arranging vaccinations or planning absence from school;
- The child may also talk about a special procedure/ceremony that is going to take place or a special occasion to 'become a woman'.

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.

Indicators that FGM may already have occurred:

- Prolonged absence from school or other activities with noticeable behaviour change on return, possibly with bladder or menstrual problems;
- Difficulty walking, sitting or standing, and look uncomfortable;
- Spend longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet
- May complain about pain between their legs, or talk of something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about.

**If you have any concerns that a pupil may be at risk of FGM you must report them to the police as well as following normal school CP procedures.**

**Preventing radicalisation**

*Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021* places a duty on schools to prevent students from being drawn into terrorism according to the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act; and for schools to cooperate with local Channel panels and the police as appropriate.

Exposure of children to extremist ideology can hinder their social development and educational attainment alongside posing a very real risk that they could support or partake in an act of violence. Radicalisation of young people can be compared to grooming for sexual exploitation. Extremism can take several forms, including Islamist extremism and far-right extremism.

It appears a decision by a young person to become involved in violent extremism:

- may begin with a search for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging
- may be driven by the desire for 'adventure' and excitement
- may be driven by a desire to enhance the self-esteem of the individual
- is likely to involve identification with a charismatic individual and attraction to a group which can offer identity, social network and support
- is likely to be fuelled by a sense of grievance that can be triggered by personal experiences of racism or discrimination

Recognising Extremism - early indicators may include:

- Showing sympathy for extremist causes
- Glorifying violence
- Evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- Advocating messages similar to illegal organisations
- Out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent.)

### **Private fostering**

Under certain conditions, a child might be cared for, as part of a private arrangement, by someone who is not their parent or a 'close relative'. This constitutes private fostering when the following conditions are met:

- a child is under 16 years of age – 18 if they have a disability
- the arrangement is for 28 days or longer
- the child's new carer does not have parental responsibility for the child and is not a close relative.

Close relatives are defined as step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts (whether of full blood, half blood or marriage/affinity).

By law parents and carers must notify the local authority of private fostering arrangements to safeguard and protect the child's welfare as well as ensuring the child, carer and parent are receiving appropriate support and help.

### **Domestic Abuse**

As a school, if we do become aware that a child or young person is being privately fostered, we will inform the carer/parent of their legal duty to notify Wiltshire Children's Social Care; we will follow this up by contacting Children's Social Care directly.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead liaises with partner agencies as part of 'Encompass' in Wiltshire. When police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have

experienced the domestic incident, the Designated Safeguarding Lead ensures the organisation receives up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and will ensure key staff provide emotional and practical support to the child according to their needs.

## **Mental Health**

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

Staff understand that:

- abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Staff are aware of how these experiences can impact on children's mental health, behaviour and education.
- they have a duty to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

If staff have a mental concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, they will report this concern using the agreed reporting mechanisms.

## **Serious Violence**

We are committed to success in learning for all our pupils, as one of the most powerful indicators in the prevention of youth crime.

Our curriculum includes teaching conflict resolution skills and understanding risky situations to help our children develop the social and emotional skills they need to thrive.

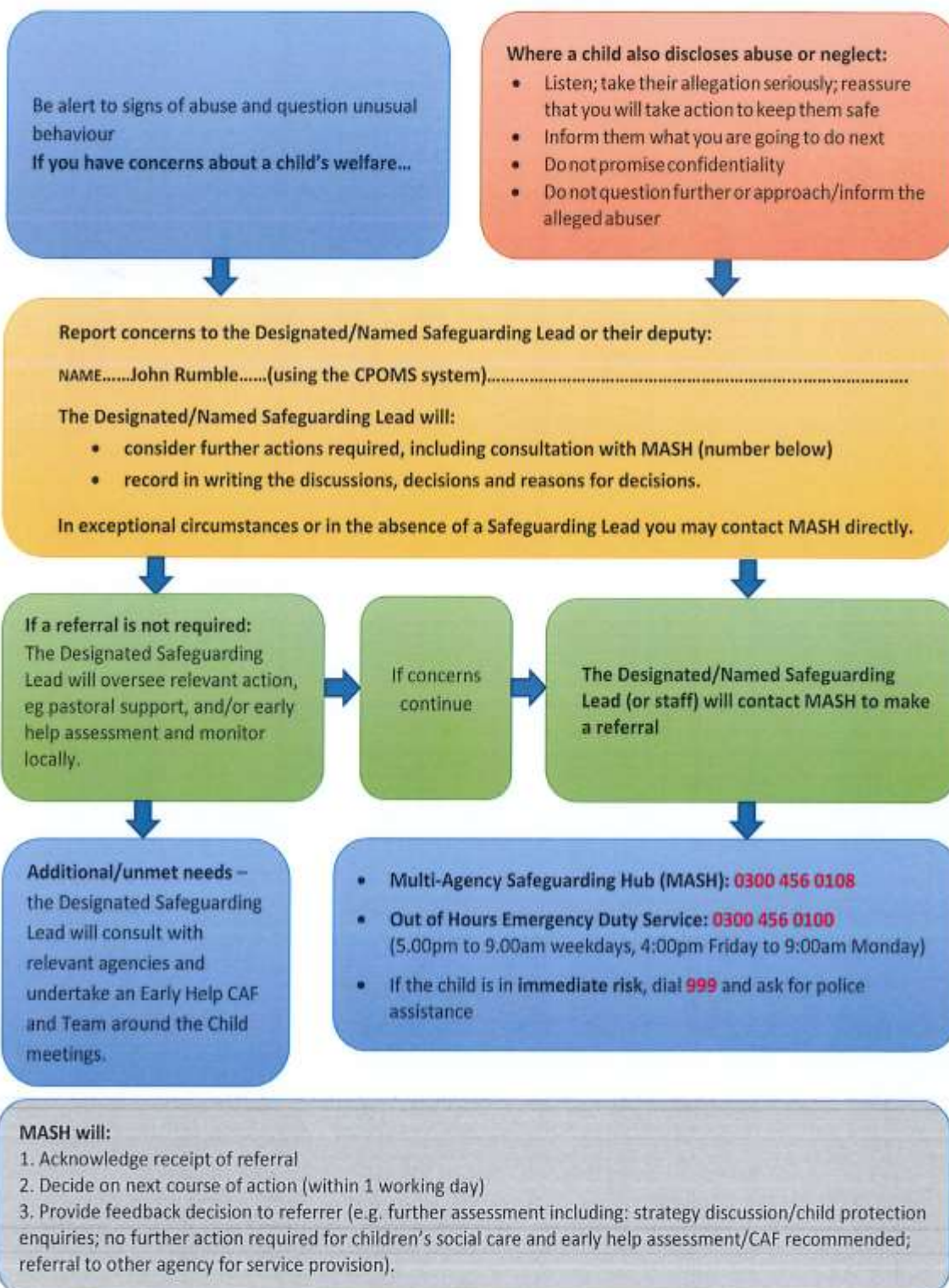
Staff are trained to recognise both the early warning signs of contextual risks and that pupils may be vulnerable to exploitation and getting involved in gangs as well as indicators that a pupil is involved in serious violent crime. They are also aware of the associated risks and know the measures put in place to minimise such risks.



## APPENDIX 4: 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused or neglected' flowchart

### What to do if you are worried a child is being abused or neglected

for staff, volunteers and visitors in all agencies and settings



This flowchart is intended for use as a brief guide. Refer to the DfE Guidance [What to do if you are worried a child is being abused](#) for more information, definitions and possible indicators of abuse (including child sexual exploitation).



## **APPENDIX 5: Related legislation and key documents**

**Children Act 1989** (and 2004 update): The Children Act 1989 gives every child the right to protection from abuse and exploitation and the right to have enquires made to safeguard his or her welfare. The Act place duties on several agencies, including schools, to assist Social Services departments acting on behalf of children and young people in need (s17) or enquiring into allegations of child abuse (s47).

**Education Act 2002** - This requires schools to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education.

**Sexual Offences Act 2003** - This act sets out an offence of 'abuse of trust' - a sexual or otherwise inappropriate relationship between an adult who is responsible for young people and a young person in his/her care.

**Information Sharing – Department for Education (DfE) Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers 2018** This advice is for all frontline practitioners and senior managers working with children, young people, parents and carers who have to make decisions about sharing personal information on a case by case basis.

**Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015)**, section 26 requires all schools, in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

**Mental health and behaviour in schools (2018)** advice to help schools to support pupils whose mental health problems manifest themselves in behaviour. It is also intended to be helpful to staff in alternative provision settings, although some of the legislation mentioned will only apply to those alternative provision settings that are legally classified as schools.

**The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)** Section 53(3) and (4) of this applies to schools if they broker student accommodation with host families for which the host family receives a payment from a third party, such as a language school. At a future date, the regulated activity provider will have a duty to carry out a barred list check on any new carer – section 34ZA Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

**The Teachers’ Standards (2013)** set a clear baseline of expectations for the professional practice and conduct of teachers and define the minimum level of practice expected of teachers in England.

**Children Missing Education (2016)** Statutory guidance for local authorities and advice for other groups on helping children who are missing education get back into it.

**Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (2021)** Advice for schools and colleges on how to prevent and respond to reports of sexual violence and harassment between children.

**Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017)** Advice for schools on effectively preventing and tackling bullying.

**Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (2016)** Advice for headteachers and school staff on developing school behaviour policy, including an overview of their powers and duties.