# St. Sebastian's C of E Primary School

# School Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy 2026-2027

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| **Approved by:** | **Full Governing Board** | **Date:** | **Sept 2026** |
| **Last reviewed on:** | **August 2026** | | |
| **Next review due by:** | **Sept 2027** | | |

# School Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy September 2026

Named personnel with responsibility for Safeguarding in our school-

Head Teacher: Elaine Bedford

Chair of Governors: Lucy Jones

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Elaine Bedford

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/s: Amy Parnham, Nicola Woolerton

Safeguarding Governor: Emma Jameson

Designated teacher for Children in care and Children previously in care: Amy Richardson

SENDCO: Kelly Matthews/Amy Richardson

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) have responsibility for ensuring that the safeguarding of children is central to the ethos of our school. They are suitably trained and experienced and carry out the duties of their roles as outlined in the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education and summarised in this policy.

This policy is reviewed annually or following national or local safeguarding changes to policy and procedure throughout the academic year.

Next Review Date: September 2027

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## Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to all children at the school, defined as any individual under the age of 18 years who is enrolled as a pupil.

Any individual who comes into contact with children within the school environment or whilst undertaking activities on behalf of the school must abide by this policy. This includes, but is not limited to, members of staff, volunteers, governors, agency staff, contractors, and visitors.

All staff and volunteers have a statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. They are required to read and adhere to this policy and confirm that they understand and will comply with its requirements. Visitors to the school site, including contractors, are expected to follow the school's safeguarding procedures and read the safeguarding information that we provide for them.

For the purposes of this policy, the terms 'child' and 'children' refer to anyone under the age of 18.

## What is the purpose of this policy?

- to define and clarify the roles and responsibilities of all staff, governors and volunteers within our school in relation to child protection and safeguarding
- to provide clear guidance on the wide range of safeguarding and child protection concerns that may arise
- to set out robust procedures to be followed when a child is identified as being at risk of harm or in need of additional support beyond universal services

## Our Commitment to Safeguarding

We work in partnership with other agencies and recognise our statutory responsibility within local multi -agency safeguarding arrangements as set out by the most recent version of Working Together to Safeguard Children and the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

KCSIE applies to all school, colleges and providers who educate children up to the age of 18. As a school with Early years pupils, we follow the most recent version of Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework - GOV.UK for group and school-based providers. Everyone working in or on behalf of the school shares a collective responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and contributes to:

- providing a safe, secure and supportive environment in which children can learn and develop, ensuring that safeguarding underpins all aspects of school life.

- identifying children who are suffering, or may be at risk of suffering, significant harm, and taking timely, proportionate and appropriate action to ensure they are safeguarded effectively. This includes ensuring that all children are protected and supported to be safe both within the school environment and beyond.
- promoting a whole-school approach to safeguarding, underpinned by a culture of vigilance and care, in which children are actively listened to and taken seriously. Our school ensures that all pupils feel confident that their views, concerns and disclosures will be responded to appropriately, and that swift action will be taken where safeguarding concerns are identified.

Our school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. The welfare of every child is paramount.

We recognise that some children may be identified as at increased risk to abuse, including those with limited mobility, communication difficulties, or additional needs. We acknowledge that each child is unique and that a 'one size fits all' approach is not appropriate.'

We understand that children who experience abuse or neglect may face barriers to developing self-worth and forming positive perceptions of the world. As a school, we are committed to ensuring that all children feel heard and valued, and that they never feel that sharing their concerns is a burden or a source of shame.

Safeguarding is at the heart of all school practices and procedures. We recognise that safeguarding concerns can arise both within and beyond the school environment, and that issues occurring at home or in the wider community can have a significant impact on a child's well-being and ability to learn.

We also acknowledge that behaviour may at times be challenging and may affect other children. In such situations, we will adopt a considered, proportionate, and trauma-informed approach to support all children involved.

Safeguarding is fundamental to all aspects of school life and underpins the ethos of our setting. It extends beyond child protection procedures and includes the proactive measures we take to promote the welfare of all pupils and prevent harm.

At our school, safeguarding is embedded in everyday practice and is reflected, for example, in our:

- anti-bullying policies
- staff code of conduct
- school attendance procedures
- online safety policy
- curriculum design
- behaviour policy
- health and safety arrangements
- school transport provision
- safer recruitment practices

## Equality

We recognise our duties under the Equality Act 2010: advice for schools and the Public Sector Equality Duty to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;

- advance equality of opportunity; and

- foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

We do not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, (pregnancy and maternity), or sexual orientation.

In accordance with the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education, we recognise that children with protected characteristics may be at greater risk of harm, discrimination, or barriers to accessing support. Safeguarding practice within the school is therefore inclusive, child-centred and responsive to individual needs.

The governing body and staff will actively consider how best to support pupils with protected characteristics, ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are effective, equitable and accessible to all.

## Our guidance and training

It is essential that all staff and partner agencies understand what to do if they have concerns about the welfare of a child. We follow the national Government guidance for schools (Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children) to ensure a clear and consistent approach. This enables us to set out expectations and provide reassurance to pupils and their parents/carers about how concerns will be managed.

Where additional safeguarding risks are identified, we will refer to other relevant and specific guidance which is detailed in Appendix 2.

Our Governing Body is responsible for ensuring school staff read, understand and comply with the appropriate parts of the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education appropriate to their role within the school. This will be determined by their level of responsibility within the school and the nature and extent of their contact with children. The Local Authority recommends that all staff read sections 1 and 5; we will follow this guidance, and Governors will review regularly to ensure that staff and volunteers are appropriately informed and up to date with safeguarding and child protection requirements.

In our school we follow a safeguarding training framework which ensures that all staff receive suitable training and information to undertake their role. To guide us we look to the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP) framework and guidance and access the expertise from the LSCP and other Local Authority teams. We will also access suitable safeguarding training opportunities from recognised local and national organisations.

The DSL and DDSL will follow a specific safeguarding training framework that provides the skills, knowledge and understanding to undertake their role. This safeguarding training framework is aligned to statutory requirements within KCSIE.

We use the LCC Safeguarding in Schools Self-Assessment Safeguarding Audit Tool to regularly evaluate safeguarding practice within our school, identify areas of strength as well as areas for development. We use this as our evidence to annually respond to the LSCP on the compliance of safeguarding in our school.

## Professional Resolution, Escalation and Whistleblowing

Anyone who is worried about a child must continue to raise their concern until they have a clear reason to believe the child is no longer at risk.

It is essential that our school expects good practice and professional conduct from all staff and those involved in safeguarding children. Staff must be committed to providing a high standard of care. Children cannot be expected to raise concerns if staff do not do so themselves.

All staff have a duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of safeguarding and child protection. This includes concerns about the behaviour or actions of colleagues. Staff must follow the procedures set out in the Staff Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy for reporting low-level concerns.

Concerns must be raised without delay with the Headteacher and, where appropriate, referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

If any member of staff notices anything that causes concern, it is vital that this is acted upon. Responding appropriately to staff concerns is fundamental to ensuring safe practice and supporting staff.

All staff should view the resolution of concerns as a positive and necessary part of safeguarding practice, not as a breach of trust or an attack on colleagues or the school. The school promotes an open and transparent culture and welcomes suggestions, concerns, and feedback, alongside compliments.

Our staff are encouraged to escalate using the Whistleblowing policy where concems are not acted upon or taken seriously.

We will always listen and act upon any safeguarding concerns. All staff are encouraged to raise any concerns internally in line with the school's safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures. However, if a member of staff feels unable to raise concerns about child protection matters internally, or if they believe that concerns are not being addressed appropriately by the school, they have a duty to take further action. This includes contacting external agencies for advice and support.

Staff can contact the NSPCC advice line Whistleblowing Advice Line | NSPCC

If there are concerns from within school about how a safeguarding issue is being managed or about the way in which other agencies are responding, we will follow the Lincolnshire LSCP Professional Resolution and Escalation Protocol. This enables open and constructive dialogue with partner professionals in order to resolve issues effectively, in the best interests of the child.

## Child Protection Procedures

**All** staff follow the school's Child Protection Procedures, which are consistent with:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children,
- Keeping Children Safe in Education; and
- the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Policy and Procedures Manual.

School staff are well placed to identify early indicators and signs of abuse, neglect or exploitation, including physical, emotional and behavioural concerns that may suggest a child is suffering, or is at risk of suffering, significant harm. Appendix 1 outlines the definitions of abuse. Positive and professional relationships between staff, children, parents/carers and the wider community, which are based on trust and respect, can support children to feel safe to disclose concerns and enable staff to recognise and respond appropriately to safeguarding issues.

**All** staff will have an awareness of specific safeguarding issues, as referred to in Appendix 2 of this policy.

All staff recognise that safeguarding concerns can arise through child-on-child abuse. This can include but is not limited to bullying (including online bullying), physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, or shaking, sexual violence and sexual harassment, abuse

within intimate personal relationships between children, and any harmful behaviour involving the sharing of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos.

All staff understand that child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. Staff are familiar with the school's procedures for responding to such concerns and are clear about their responsibilities to record, report, and respond in line with safeguarding policy and statutory guidance.

It is ***not*** the responsibility of the school staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the accuracy of any disclosure or allegation. All members of staff, however, have a duty to recognise and respond to concerns, maintaining an open and professional approach at all times. All concerns regarding the welfare of children will be recorded accurately and reported to the DSL (or the DDSL in their absence) prior to any discussion with parents/carers. The DSL or DDSL will seek advice from the LCC Children's Safeguarding Line via the Customer Service Centre where necessary and determine the next steps in line with local procedures. Telephone - 01522 782111

**Concerns that staff must act on immediately and report:**

- any suspicion of injury (including bruising or marks) that is not consistent with the explanation given or the child's developmental stage or usual activities. (We will refer to the LSCP policy on Bruising in babies and children who are not independently mobile for additional guidance).
- any explanation for an injury that appears inconsistent, implausible or changes over time.
- any behaviour or presentation that gives rise to concern that a child may have experienced harm (e.g., worrying drawings, play, language or changes in demeanour)
- any concerns that a child may be experiencing abuse or neglect including inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional harm
- any signs or indicators of abuse or neglect including physical, emotional or behavioural indicators
- any significant changes in a child's presentation, including behaviour, emotional well-being or attendance/non-attendance
- any hint, disclosure or allegation of abuse whether made by the child or another person
- any concerns regarding adults or other individuals who may pose a risk to children, including those living in a household with children present or who may have access to them
- any indicators or concerns relating to Child Exploitation, including criminal exploitation and sexual exploitation

- any indicators or concerns relating to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- any indicators or concerns relating to radicalisation and extremism
- any indicators of experiencing Domestic Abuse

**Responding to disclosure**

**Staff will not investigate or ask any leading questions**. However, staff should listen carefully, remain calm and reassuring, and seek to establish sufficient information to pass on to the DSL or DDSL so that an informed decision can be made about next steps.

The DSL (or DDSL in their absence) will ensure that the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. **All safeguarding and child protection decisions will be made in the best interests of the child.**

Staff will:

- listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information that a child may be at risk of harm or experiencing harm
- try to ensure that the child disclosing does not have to speak to another member of school staff in the first instance
- clarify the information, where necessary, ensuring that any questions are appropriate and proportionate
- keep questions to a minimum and of an 'open' nature e.g., using TED technique – 'Tell me, Explain to me, Describe to me….' ensuring that you do not lead the child
- do not show signs of shock, alarm or disbelief
- do not make judgements about, or express opinions regarding any individual who may be involved
- explain sensitively to the child that you have a responsibility to share the information with the DSL and/or DDSL. Make it clear that you cannot promise confidentiality, as information must be shared where there are concerns about the safety or welfare of the child or others
- reassure the child that they have done the right thing in sharing the information and that they will be supported
- explain that information will be shared on a 'need to know' basis
- inform the child, where appropriate, about what will happen next and who may be involved

- make a clear, accurate and factual written record as soon as possible, including the date, time, and details of what the child has said, using the child's own words wherever possible. Record this on the pupil's Child Protection file via CPOMs and ensure that the DSL/DDSL is informed without delay.
- record any visible signs of injury, including marks, bruises or other physical indicators on a Body Map (see appendix 3). Ensure the description is clear, factual and not interpretative
- on the pupil's Child Protection file (CPOMs), record the context and content of your involvement clearly, distinguishing between fact, observation, professional judgement and any third-party information

**Action by the DSL (or DDSL in their absence)**

Following any information raising concern, the DSL/DDSL will consider:

- any urgent medical needs of the child
- whether the child is subject to a child protection plan
- discussing the matter with other agencies involved with the child/family
- consulting with appropriate persons e.g. LCC Children's Safeguarding via Customer Service Centre
- the child's wishes

Then decide:

- to talk to parents/carers, unless to do so may place a child at risk of significant harm, impede any police investigation and/or place the member of staff or others at risk
- whether to make a referral to the LCC Children's Safeguarding via Customer Service Centre because a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and if this needs to be undertaken immediately

***OR***

- not to make a referral at this stage
- if further monitoring is necessary
- if it would be appropriate to undertake an assessment (e.g., Early Help Assessment - EHA) and/or implement appropriate support and intervention measures to address the child's needs and promote their welfare

All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented on the Child Protection file of the pupil (CPOMs). All referrals to

the LCC Children's Safeguarding Line will be followed up in writing and these referrals will always be kept on file irrespective of the outcome.

### Action following a child protection referral

The DSL/DDSL will:

- Maintain regular contact with the allocated social worker and other relevant professionals to ensure that the school remains informed of any developments and can contribute effectively to safeguarding planning.

- Contribute to strategy discussions, strategy meetings, and other multi-agency safeguarding meetings where appropriate.

- Prepare and submit written reports and attend and contribute to child protection conferences and other relevant safeguarding meetings.

- Where a child becomes the subject of a Child Protection Plan, actively contribute to the planning process and attend Core Group meetings, review conferences, and other meetings as required.

- Share reports with parents/carers in advance of meetings, wherever appropriate and safe to do so, ensuring that they understand the content and purpose of the report. Information will not be shared where this could place a child at increased risk of harm or compromise a safeguarding investigation.

- Where there is professional disagreement regarding decisions about a child's safety or welfare, and concerns remain that the child's needs are not being adequately addressed, follow the LSCP Professional Resolution and Escalation Protocol, ensuring that the child's best interests and welfare remain paramount.

- . Where a child who is subject to a Child Protection Plan leaves the school, transfers to another setting, or is missing from education, the DSL will promptly notify the allocated social worker and any other relevant agencies, in accordance with Lincolnshire safeguarding procedures, and ensure that child protection records are transferred securely and without delay where appropriate.

## Recording and monitoring

Accurate records will be made as soon as possible after a concern arises, via CPOMs, and will clearly distinguish between observation, fact, professional judgement, and

hypothesis. All records must include who is providing the information, the date and time, information will be recorded in the child's words where possible and a note made of the location and description (including size and appearance) of any injuries seen. An example of how this is done can be found in Appendix 3. If this is a paper record than this should be signed and dated by the person making the record and then uploaded to CPOMs. Photographs of injuries will not be taken.

The DSL/DDSL are responsible for ensuring that all staff and volunteers follow the school's procedures for reporting concerns. Consistency in recording and reporting is essential to ensure that no information is overlooked. All safeguarding records will demonstrate clear oversight, including actions taken, decisions made, the rationale for those decisions, and the outcomes for the child.
All documents will be retained in a Child Protection file (CPOMs), separate from the child's school file. Access to Child Protection files is strictly limited to those with a legitimate safeguarding role and need to know, in line with data protection and safeguarding requirements.

## Supporting the child and partnership with parents/carers

Our school recognises that the welfare of the child is paramount. Effective safeguarding and child protection practice relies on a positive, open and transparent working partnership with parents and carers.
Our school is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers wherever possible. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where it is necessary to make a referral to Children's Social Care or other agencies without prior consultation. In such cases, the school will always act in the best interests of the child and in line with statutory guidance. Every effort will be made to maintain a constructive and supportive working relationship with parents and carers whilst fulfilling our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

We are committed to providing a safe, caring and supportive environment in which children feel secure and valued. Children will, wherever appropriate and in accordance with their age and level of understanding, be informed about actions being taken to support and protect them, and the reasons for those actions.
The school will respect the privacy, dignity and confidentiality of children and their families. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only. The DSL or DDSL will determine which members of staff require access to relevant information to effectively safeguard and support the child.

## Child Information

**To keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them, we require accurate and up to date information about**:

- names, contact details and relationship to the child of any persons with whom the child normally lives
- names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above)
- emergency contact details (if different from above). We need to know that if the person(s) with parental responsibility is unable to collect their child, there is someone known to us who can collect the child and keep them safe until either the person(s) with parental responsibility is available or a more suitable arrangement is made. We need more than one emergency contact, so we have additional options for contact with a responsible adult when there is a welfare and/or safeguarding concern
- any relevant court order in place including those which affect any person's access to the child (e.g., Residence Order, Contact Order, Care Order, Injunctions etc.)
- if the child is or has been subject to a Child Protection Plan
- if the child is or has been subject to an Early Help Assessment (EHA) or Child in Need (CIN) processes
- if the child is a Child in care or a child previously in care
- name and contact details of the child's GP
- any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child

The school will collate, store and agree access to this information, ensuring all information held electronically is stored securely with due regard to meeting data protection and safeguarding requirements.. We require parents/carers to keep us informed of any changes to the basic contact information that we hold at any time but in addition to this our school will check information for all pupils at least on an annual basis.

## Transfer of Child Protection files

A child protection file is kept separate to a main child record. When a child leaves the school for another education setting, the child protection file is transferred within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within 5 days after the start of a new term. It is transferred to the next education setting by secure means.

The DSL ensures that a record of transfer is kept and the confirmation receipt of transfer is retained by our school.

This is the information that is added to a record of transfer which we keep until your child reaches their 25th birthday:

- name and DOB of child
- name and address of receiving education setting

- date file(s) transferred with name and role of person who received it
- date our school received confirmation of receipt of files from receiving school
- summary of safeguarding concerns at the time of transfer e.g., Child Protection Plan: Neglect.

In addition to the child protection file, the DSL will consider if it is appropriate to share any information with the new education setting in advance of a child leaving. This will allow the new education setting to have support in place for when a child arrives.

The full child protection file is transferred to the next education setting unless there are any records with a short retention period. It is important that full information is transferred to ensure a vital piece of information is not missing that could contribute at a later stage.

We do not keep any copies of child protection files except where there is an on-going legal action. Once child protection files are transferred, they are the custody and responsibility of the new education setting.

A child's last education setting is responsible for retaining the main child protection file until they reach the age of 25 years. These files are stored securely.

We refer to relevant and most up to date national and local guidance regarding information retention and information sharing in relation to child protection. We will contact the relevant Local Authority Education teams for guidance on child protection records where a child is electively home educated.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### The Governing Body

It is the responsibility of our Governing Body to ensure that everyone in the setting understands their role in safeguarding children. It is accountable for the strategic overview and to make sure that safeguarding runs through every policy and procedure that operates within the school. The Governing Body will ensure that the safeguarding measures reflect the specific needs of the children in our school and consider any additional risks related to this.

They will do this by ensuring that:

- there is a named Safeguarding Governor who is appropriately trained
- a senior member of the school's leadership team is appointed to the role of DSL who will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. The governing body will work with the Headteacher to ensure that sufficient time and resources are available to the DSL to carry out their role.

- the school has one or more deputy DSL's who are trained to the same standard as the lead DSL.
- the school has an effective Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and procedures in place that are in accordance with local authority guidance and locally agreed inter-agency procedures.
- the policy is available publicly via the school website or other means and that the policy is reviewed and updated on an annual basis or sooner if there are national or local changes to procedures or guidance.
- our school staff know who are required to read at least Part one in full, of the most recent version of the Department for Education statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education and that this is recorded for evidence and reviewed regularly.
- the school has a staff behaviour policy/code of conduct and that this is provided to all staff and volunteers on induction. This policy includes acceptable use of technology, staff/pupil relationships and communications including the use of social media.
- the school operates safer recruitment procedures and makes sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff and volunteers who work with children; and that any panel involved in the recruitment of staff has at least one member who has undertaken the Safer Recruitment Training.
- the school has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers that comply with guidance from the local authority and locally agreed inter-agency procedures.
- the school has procedures for dealing with low level concerns in relation to staff behaviour and that there is a culture of openness in reporting and dealing with these concerns and a process of escalation if any allegation reaches or contributes to a risk of harm to children.
- the school has a whole school approach to online safety which is underpinned with relevant policies and procedures. The school consider online safety during curriculum planning, staff training and parental engagement.
- the school has appropriate electronic filtering and monitoring systems in place which are reviewed regularly to ensure effectiveness and are supported by a recorded, annual risk assessment, that considers and reflects the risks their children face. This is to ensure that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material; whilst recognising that "over blocking" should not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught.
- children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. This may include covering relevant

issues through Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education, and/or where delivered, through Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education.

- staff, including the Head teacher, undertake appropriate safeguarding training and that there is a training plan that reflects the national, local, and school requirements.
- they remedy, without delay, any deficiencies or weaknesses regarding child protection arrangements and reflect on incidents, or near misses, to consider lessons learnt.
- The chair is nominated to be responsible for liaising with the LA LADO team and/or partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Head teacher
- where services or activities are provided on the school premises by another body, the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place regarding safeguarding children and child protection and that they are reviewed annually. There should be arrangements in place to liaise with the school about safeguarding matters where appropriate, and inspections should take place if required. Any transfer of control or lease or hire arrangements will include safeguarding arrangements. Failure to comply with these arrangements will result in termination of the agreement. (see section below on using school premises)
- the school appoints an appropriately trained designated teacher with responsibility for "promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales" in addition to pupils who are looked after.

**The Head Teacher will ensure that**:

- the policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body are fully implemented, and followed by all staff
- sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the DSL, DDSL and other staff to discharge their responsibilities including taking part in strategy discussions and other inter-agency meetings, continued safeguarding training, and contributing to the assessments of children.
- the DSL and DDSL liaise with the Headteacher and relevant strategic leads, to inform of issues, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.

- all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice regarding children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed whistle blowing policies.
- the DSL and DDSL are supported in providing a contact for the school to provide a report and attend Initial Child Protection Case Conferences, Reviews and Children in care Reviews.
- allegations regarding staff or any other adults in the school are referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), as set out in the Managing Allegations procedure.
- low level concerns in relation to staff behaviour are dealt with through disciplinary policy and a culture of openness and transparency is developed
- individuals are referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service or/and the Secretary of State via the Teaching Regulation Agency where a person is dismissed or has left due to a safeguarding concern or serious misconduct.

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) (DDSL) as stated in KCSIE Annex B**

The DSL takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place).

A DSL or DDSL will always be available during school hours for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. This availability may include contact via telephone or other electronic means. Arrangements will be made for appropriate cover for any out of hours/out of term activities.

Their role will include ensuring that the school and staff know who their most in need children are, understand their additional needs, academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort. This will be ensured by supporting teaching staff to identify the challenges that children in this group might face and the additional support and adjustments, both pastoral and academic, that could be made to best support them.

As part of their role, they will:

**Manage referrals by:** referring cases of suspected abuse Lincolnshire Children's Safeguarding

- supporting staff who make referrals to Lincolnshire Children's Safeguarding
- seeking advice from Prevent Team regarding radicalisation concerns and refer cases to the Channel programme when necessary
- supporting teachers to report any cases of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as outlined in the duty
- supporting the Head to refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required
- referring cases to the Police where a crime may have been committed

**Work with others by:**

- acting as a source of support, advice, and expertise for staff
- acting as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners
- liaising with the Head Teacher to inform them of issues especially on-going enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations
- as required, liaising with the "case manager" (as per Part four of KCSIE) and the designated officer (LADO) for child protection concerns (all cases which concern a staff member or volunteer)
- liaising with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies
- liaising with staff (especially teachers, pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT technicians, senior mental health leads and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs), and senior mental health leads) on matters of safety and safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children's needs are considered holistically
- liaising with mental health team or lead where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health

- promoting supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances

- promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances.

- helping promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced.

- Liaising with teachers and school and college leadership staff and working with the headteacher and relevant strategic leads,

- taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school or college, and sharing this with teaching staff.

**Undertake training**

The DSL (and any DDSL's) will undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. In Lincolnshire, our DSL's and DDSL's follow the most up-to-date LSCP and LCC training framework for Education DSLs and DDSLs. The DSL and DDSL will undertake training around their specific role at least every two years. The DSL and DDSL will also undertake Prevent Awareness Training. New DSL's or DDSL's will need to be familiar with the content of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership policy and procedures manual and to keep up to date with bi-annual updates.

The DSL and/or Deputies will attend the LCC Safeguarding in Schools DSL Safeguarding Updates, LCC support forums or drop-ins and appropriate LSCP inter-agency training to ensure that they are sufficiently trained and informed to:

- understand the assessment process for providing Early Help and statutory intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as early help assessments

- have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so

- understand the importance of the role in providing information and support to local authority children social care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

- understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and know what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes

- be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers

- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations, and practitioners and complete this within given timeframes

- ensure each member of staff, especially new and part-time staff, has access to and understands the school's child protection policy and procedures

- understand and support the school with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and can provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation

- be able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety and keep up to date with knowledge to keep children safe whilst they are online at school.

- maintain access to resources and receive information about additional relevant courses

- be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals

- encourage a culture of listening to children, taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, and in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them.

**Raise Awareness by:**

- ensuring each member of staff has access to, and understands, the school child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part-time staff

- ensuring the school's child protection and safeguarding policy is reviewed at least annually and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly and work with governing bodies or proprietors regarding this,

- ensuring that the latest version of the child protection and safeguarding policy is available publicly and parents know that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this

- working with the Governing body in particular, the Safeguarding Governor.

- linking with the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding.

- helping to promote educational outcomes by sharing information about welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children who have or have had a social worker, are experiencing with teachers and school and college leadership staff.

## All staff and volunteers will:

- read and sign to say that they understand and will fully comply with the school's policies and procedures (school staff will do this electronically via National College log in)

- read the appropriate parts of the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education in accordance with the Governors direction and sign to say that they have read and understood them

- identify concerns and report to the DSL as early as possible to prevent concerns from escalating and identify children who may need extra help or who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm

- ensure there is a culture of listening to children and always considering their thoughts and wishes, recognising the difficulties that some children have in approaching and sharing concerns with adults, putting in place measures to build relationships to ensure the voice of the child is heard

- attend annual whole school safeguarding training and other appropriate training identified, covering a range of safeguarding topics, agreed by the school.

- provide a safe environment in which children can learn

- be aware that they may be asked to support a Social Worker to make decisions about individual children

- inform the Head teacher of any safeguarding concerns regarding an adult within school at the earliest opportunity

- inform the Chair of Governors of any concerns regarding the Head teacher at the earliest opportunity
- inform the Head teacher of any behaviour of staff that is deemed as low-level concerns (see section on Allegations against staff)
- act on the concern and make the referral themselves if they feel the concern is not being taken seriously.

## Child Abuse, Neglect and Specific Safeguarding Situations

Abuse or neglect of a child can happen by someone inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, an institutional or community setting by those known to them or by others (e.g., via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. Sometimes they tell us about abuse, sometimes they do not.

Abuse is categorised in the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education into four areas; Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse, and Neglect. Further information can be found in Appendix 1.

Children also face risks within several safeguarding situations; these are detailed in Appendix 2. In our school, we ensure that staff training focuses on the situations that are relevant to the children in our school environment, recognising also that children are part of a wider community and that a 'it may happen here' culture allows early intervention. We also ensure that children themselves develop skills in recognising risks and keeping themselves and others safe within these situations.

## Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

We will create a culture where Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment including online sexual abuse is not tolerated. We will ensure this is a whole school approach assuming that sexual abuse is, to some extent, happening in our school. This will allow us to identify issues and intervene early to better protect our children. We will refer to Part Five of the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education and the LSCP policy, 'Child-on-child Sexual Harassment, Sexual Abuse and Sexually Harmful behaviours.' Further specific details of this type of abuse can be found in Appendix 2.

## Safer Recruitment

Safer recruitment ensures that every new member of staff understands their duties to safeguard children from the outset starting from the advertisement, through the

interview, to their induction, and start at the school. It is essential that no one gets to work with children who cannot keep them safe.

We ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works in the school who is likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult including e.g., volunteers and staff employed by contractors. Safer recruitment practice includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity, seeing academic and vocational qualifications, obtaining professional references, checking previous employment history (and ensuring all gaps in employment are accounted for) and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking interviews and all relevant safer recruitment checks, e.g., Disclosure and Barring Service and Right to Work in the UK checks.

We ensure that the key staff involved in staff recruitment are trained in safer recruitment and vetting as detailed in the LCC Employment Manual. At least one member of the recruitment panel, including appointment of volunteers and contracted services, will have received safer recruitment training in the last 6 years and accessed more regular updates on changes to safer recruitment legislation and procedures.

The school maintains a Single Central Record (SCR) which is a statutory document that holds relevant information including safer recruitment checks on:

- all staff (including teacher trainees on salaried routes, agency and third-party supply staff, even if they work for one day) who work at the school: this means those providing education to children; and

The information that must be recorded in respect of all staff members mentioned above is whether the following checks have been carried out or certificates obtained**, and** the date on which each check was completed/certificate obtained:

- an identity check
- a barred list check
- an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check
- a prohibition from teaching check
- further checks on people who have lived or worked outside the UK: this would include recording checks for those European Economic Area (EEA) teacher sanctions and restrictions

- a section 128 check (for management positions as set out in KCSIE for independent schools, including free schools and academies) and governors in maintained schools
- a check of professional qualifications; and
- a check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom.

The details of an individual should be removed from the single central record once they no longer work at our school.

## Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK **must** undergo the same checks as all other staff in school. This includes obtaining (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity) even if the individual has never been to the UK. In addition, the school **must** make any further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. These checks might include, where available:

- criminal records checks for overseas applicants or Home Office guidance for teaching positions obtaining a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country (or countries) in which the applicant has worked using the UK European Information Centre UK ENIC for advice about which regulatory or professional body applicants could be contacted to confirm that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions, and or that they are aware of any reason why they may be unsuitable to teach.

Where available, such evidence will be considered together with information obtained through other pre-appointment checks to help assess suitability. Where this information is not available, we will seek alternative methods of checking suitability or undertake a risk assessment that supports informed decision making on whether to proceed with the appointment. Although sanctions and restrictions imposed by another regulating authority do not prevent a person from taking up teaching positions in England, we will consider the circumstances that led to the restriction or sanction being imposed when considering a candidate's suitability for employment.

We use further information from the DfE Guidance: Recruit Teachers from Overseas and will contact our senior HR advisor within Lincolnshire County Council for further guidance on visas and immigration.

### Third Party/Agency Staff (supply staff), trainee teachers and all contracted staff

We obtain information in writing from our supply staff agencies that they have carried out the same checks as the school would perform on any individual who will be working at the school. We also seek written confirmation that an enhanced DBS check certificate has been provided and the date that confirmation was received. Where the agency or organisation has obtained an enhanced DBS certificate before the person is due to begin work at the school or college, which has disclosed any matter or information, or any information was provided to the employment business, the school must obtain a copy of the certificate from the agency.

Where appropriate, we will recognise the safer recruitment process within an organisation as proof that all staff who work for the organisation have been recruited safely e.g. for Lincolnshire County Council staff and other specific partner organisations that have been assessed by the LSCP as being section 11 compliant.

We will check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

If at any point we are concerned about whether safer recruitment procedures have been implemented to employ a member of staff who is intending to work in our school, we will immediately contact the organisation to check. We will also feedback any concerns we have about the staff and expect the agency to action this.

## Volunteers

Volunteers play an important role in our school and we value the work they do. We will ensure that appropriate checks as laid out in Keeping Children Safe in Education will be carried out and recorded and that no volunteer will be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity with a child without checks.

In accordance with The Crime and Policing Act 2026, any person involved in teaching, training, instructing or supervising children frequently or on more than 3 days in a 30-day period or overnight is now in regulated activity. Where an individual meets the period condition (more than 3 days in a 30-day period) by volunteering at multiple settings, we will work with the other settings to decide who should apply for the enhanced DBS check with barred list information, and that information should then be supplied by the individual to each setting. We will encourage the volunteer to join the DBS Update Service to allow portability of a DBS check across different education settings.

If required, we will carry out a risk assessment based on the nature of the work with children, what we know about the volunteer, whether the volunteer has other

employment or volunteering where referees can be acquired and if the role is eligible for a DBS check and at what level. Details of any risk assessments will be recorded.

## External use of school premises

We will ensure that adequate checks are carried out when the school premises are used by others not employed by the school. In line with national legislation and guidance, we will have completed these checks prior to a contractual agreement being finalised with an organisation or individual.

If there are any concerns relating to completed checks for initial contractual agreements or reviews of existing agreements, then actions will be taken to ensure these further assurances from the external provider or individual are received prior to an agreement beginning or resuming.

If the school receive an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using the school premises for the purposes of running activities for children, we will follow our safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO. Where an agreement has been made and matters come to light which call into doubt the suitability of any person/provider, then the agreement can be terminated without notice.

## Children staying with host families (homestay) and suitability of adults in host families abroad

Where children from overseas are staying with UK parents as part of an exchange organised by our school, those parents will be deemed to be in 'Regulated Activity' for the duration of the stay and as such will be required to submit an enhanced DBS check including barring check. As a volunteer, all checks will be processed free of charge by the DBS. Where additional people in the host family are aged over 16 (i.e., elder siblings) our school will consider on a case-by-case risk assessment basis whether such checks are necessary.

Where children would be provided homestays abroad, our school would not be able to obtain criminality information from the DBS about adults providing the arrangements. We would establish a shared understanding and agreement of arrangements with the partner school and make parents aware of these agreed arrangements.

## Safer Working Practice

Parents need to be confident that the environment they send their children to daily is safe and secure. Children also need to know that school is a protective environment where their health and wellbeing is a priority.

Following the Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those Adults who work with children and young people all staff in our school:

- are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- work in an open and transparent way, including self-reporting if required.
- 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 incidents or decisions made
- apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation
- comply and are aware of the confidentiality policy
- are aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct prohibition from teaching by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).

If our staff have any concerns about the conduct of another member of staff, they will report these to the head teacher. If staff members have concerns about the head teacher, these will be reported to the chair of governors. The Head teacher/Chair of Governors will then consider if the concerns need to be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Where the Head teacher/principal is the proprietor then the concern should be reported to the LADO.

## Risk Assessments

We will carry out risk assessments to help us promote safety in our school. They can be carried out for all aspects of schoolwork including use of equipment, off site activities, transport as well as for individual or groups of children, or adults. An action

plan will be produced out of the assessment to help us manage any of the risks identified.

We also use individual risk assessments when deciding a response to a child demonstrating potentially harmful behaviour such as harmful sexual behaviour or when identifying whether a child may have increased vulnerability factors, such as a child with concerns for child sexual exploitation.

## Teaching about Safeguarding

All children in our school are regularly reminded that they can approach any member of staff if they have a concern. The school is committed to ensuring that children are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe. All children know that we have a senior member of staff (DSL) with responsibility for child protection and safeguarding and know who this is. We inform children of whom they might talk to, both in and out of school, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm. We use a wide range of organisations and resources as part of our PSHE and Relationships Education to help children learn how to keep safe. In addition to this, we make use of opportunities in other curriculum areas to discuss safeguarding topics, so pupils are constantly reminded.

We recognise that some children may find it difficult to talk about abuse that is happening within the school especially sexual abuse, misogyny and harassment. We will ensure all children feel confident that their concerns will be taken seriously, and any disclosure will not be judged or seen to be minor. We will not wait until incidents occur but will be proactive in ensuring our children understand behaviours that are unacceptable and feel confident to report and be part of the solution to eradicate the behaviour within the school. We have a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, and it should never be downplayed without a consideration of the impact.

## Partnership with Parents

The school shares a purpose with parents to educate and keep children safe from harm.

**If you are visiting our school and you are worried about the safety of a child, you need to do something about it: -**

1. If the child is in immediate danger, make sure the child is safe, inform a member of staff and if necessary, call the Police on 999 or Lincolnshire Children's Safeguarding on 01522 782111

2. If you are worried about the behaviour in the school, talk to the DSL or the Head teacher
3. If you have other worries, talk to your child's class teacher who will share these with the DSL/Head teacher.
4. We will contact you as soon as possible but at least by the next school day to discuss your concerns. We may not be able to give you details if it is concerning another child/family, but we will assure you that your concerns have been heard and dealt with.
5. If you do not hear from us, then speak to the Head teacher.

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 unless we have permission, or it is necessary to do so to protect a child. We make safeguarding information available in a variety of formats, e.g., for families with English as an additional language (EAL) etc.

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. If parents have any concerns about their child's welfare, they can raise this with the child's teachers or with the Head teacher. If a parent feels that their concerns are not being addressed, they can follow the school complaints procedure which is outlined in the school complaints policy found on the school website. Any serious safeguarding concerns can be reported to Lincolnshire Children's Safeguarding by calling 01522 782111.

## Partnerships with others

It is essential that we establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies who are partners in Lincolnshire's Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) for us to effectively safeguarding our children. We have a joint responsibility to share information when it will help a child or several children to stay safe. Key partners include Lincolnshire County Council, Police and Health but we also engage with a wide network of local and national organisations in our mission to protect the children in our school.

## Children placed in Alternative Provision

Some of our children may be placed in alternative provision for a period of time. During this time, we are still responsible for the safeguarding of the child. To fulfil our duty to keep all our children safe, we will seek written reassurance from the provider that they

have acceptable safeguarding practices in place. This includes their response to concerns about a child, safer recruitment processes, attendance and child missing education procedures, appropriate information sharing procedures and an educational safeguarding programme for children.

When organising work placements, the school will ensure that the placement provider has policies and procedures in place to safeguard children. This will be reviewed frequently (at least half termly) to provide assurance that the child is regularly attending, and the placement continues to be safe and meets the child's needs. Where safeguarding concerns arise, the placement will be immediately reviewed, and terminated, if necessary.

## Allegations regarding Person(s) Working in or on behalf of School (including Volunteers)

As per the guidance in Part 4 of the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education, our school recognises two levels of concerns:

1. Allegations that **may** meet the harms threshold – further details outlined in our Managing Allegations statement.
2. Allegation/concerns that **do not** meet the harms threshold referred to as 'low-level concerns'. Our staff Code of Conduct policy outlines our expectations of staff and how they should behave.

Any concerns may impact on a staff member's employment; therefore, we also refer to the LCC School Employment Manual/Disciplinary policy

### Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

- 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
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children. This is to take account of situations where a person's behaviour outside school may suggest 'transferable risk'. For example, where a member of staff or volunteer is involved in an incident outside of school which did not involve children but could have an impact on their suitability to work with children'

We will apply the same principles as in the rest of this document and we will always follow the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures that can be

accessed at Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Policy and Procedures Manual.

The Head teacher will be the case manager who will take the lead in any investigation. If the Head teacher is the subject of the allegation, then the chair of governors will manage the case. If there is any doubt as to the procedure to follow, we will contact the Lincolnshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for advice.

The priority in any allegation is the safety of the child. The DSL will follow normal safeguarding procedures if there is risk of harm to a child.

Following our procedures, the case manager will undertake basic enquiries to obtain facts being careful not to jeopardise any potential police investigation. All investigations will be carried out by:

- applying common sense and judgement
- dealing with the allegation quickly, fairly, and consistently
- providing protection for the child and support for the person subject to the allegation

We will inform the person subject to the allegation when it is right to do so based on advice from LADO and if appropriate Lincolnshire FAST social care teams and the Police.

Following the initial investigation and discussions with LADO there may be an outcome of:

- no further action – record of decision and rationale is made as well as decision of information to be shared with the individual
- further enquiries – following discussion with LADO, these are carried out by a senior member of staff or an independent investigator depending on the nature of the investigation. The case manager will monitor the progress of this, following the timescales and reviews outlined in the Managing Allegations Policy

If the allegation is in relation to a third-party staff member (supply staff), the school will seek guidance from the LADO and the employment agency as to the appropriate actions in relation to employment or deployment of the individual with in the school and across other schools. The agency should then fully cooperate with the school in any investigations that need to take place. The allegations management meeting arranged by LADO will take into consideration any previous concerns in relation to the individual.

If the allegation is in relation to a governor, we will follow our local procedures; removing the person from office should the allegation be substantiated.

Suspension is not an automatic response when an allegation is reported. The case manager will make a decision on this and review regularly throughout any investigation. The case manager will consider all possibilities to avoid suspension including temporary redeployment. Suspension will be implemented if there is cause to suspect a child is at risk of any harm or if the case is so serious that it is most likely to result in dismissal. The governing body will seek guidance from LADO as well as social care and the Police to decide whether suspension is the most appropriate action.

We recognise that this process can be very stressful for all involved; the school are committed to provide support as outlined in our Managing Allegations policy.

Information sharing is crucial in this process. This includes all relevant information about the person subject to the allegation to aid investigations as well as information about the child involved to determine the level of protection required. Our policy outlines conditions related to the confidentiality of this information.

The outcomes from an allegation are:

**Substantiated**: there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.

**Malicious**: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm to the person subject of the allegation.

**False**: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.

**Unsubstantiated**: there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence; or,

**Unfounded**: to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

Following the decision, the case manager, with support from LADO will determine the next actions. If an allegation was found to be malicious, the school must consider whether the person/child who made the allegation is in need of help themselves and whether a referral to customer services is required.

Details of the allegations will be kept on the file of the person accused, except those resulting in a malicious outcome where the choice to retain is that of the individual.

**Non-recent allegations**

If an adult wishes to raise an allegation to the school that they were abused as a child, the adult will be strongly advised to contact the police. Any non-recent allegation made by a child must be reported to the LADO who will follow the local authority procedures for dealing with historic reporting of incidents.

### Allegations that do not reach the harm threshold

Our school fosters a culture in which all allegations and concerns about adults are taken seriously and responded to promptly and appropriately. By being open and transparent about addressing 'low level concerns' we can respond early and reduce the escalation of situations and potential risk of harm to children.

Further details can be found in our Low-Level Concerns Policy.

A low-level concern is defined as behaviour that:

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

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are 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 secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, or offensive language.

Our school will ensure that staff are very clear about what appropriate behaviour is and are confident to share any low-level concerns with the Head teacher. All unprofessional behaviour will be address at early stage with sensitivity and proportionality. Any weakness in the school safeguarding system that has allowed this behaviour to exist will be addressed.

All low-level concerns will be reported to the Head teacher who will follow the procedures in the policy to address these. Low level concerns will be recorded and kept in a password-protected electronic file. They will be reviewed regularly to see if there are any emerging patterns in relation to an individual so that a decision can be made as to whether to escalate to an allegation that meets the harm threshold.

## Appendix 1: Definitions of abuse and neglect

(Most recent versions of ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ and ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’)

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

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

**Development** means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

**Health** includes physical and mental health; maltreatment includes sexual abuse and other forms of ill-treatment which are not physical.

**Abuse:** A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional and psychological abuse, coercive and controlling behaviour and economic or financial abuse, where they see, hear, or experience its effects.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or extra-familial context by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. This includes in teenage relationships, or under the guise of 'honour' based abuse including forced marriage and female genital mutilation, or abuse related to faith or belief such as allegations of demonic possession.

**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.

**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 from 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.

**Child Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving 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 penetration with an object) 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.

Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it

**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 caregivers)
• ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
• provide suitable education
It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

## Appendix 2: Definitions and procedures for specific safeguarding situations

**In addition to the situations below, the LSCP policy and procedures manual maintains an extensive section on 'Children in Specific Circumstances' –**

**(section 5) that a DSL and any deputy DSLs should be familiar with. This section is in alphabetical order.**

## Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images, AI images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

## Carrying knives/offensive weapons and links to criminal exploitation

Bringing and carrying a knife/offensive weapon onto school/college premises is a criminal Offence and immediate action will be taken by calling the police and informing all relevant personnel. The DfE guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation for schools will be consulted and the school will consider and may apply the disciplinary procedure. If a member of staff suspects a child of being involved in organised crime groups through criminal exploitation, this is a safeguarding concern and will require a discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will seek advice from agencies and professionals including reference to the Safeguarding procedures as outlined by the local authority. The child may be an exploited child and victim to which the school will offer support.

There is further guidance from the LSCP that Headteachers should refer to regarding assessment of concerns and risk to identify next steps for a child following an incident: Banned Items in Lincolnshire Schools, Academies and Colleges

All staff are aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime as. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in attainment, signs of self-harm, 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 linked with, individuals associated with criminal network or gangs, most commonly through coercion, or force. All staff are aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to manage these. We refer to the Home Office publication for advice and guidance. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-to-schools-and-colleges-on-gangs-and-youth-violence and https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines

## Carrying prohibited or banned items

The 2022 DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice identifies what can constitute a prohibited, banned or unauthorised item, and the extensive but non-exhaustive list can be found here: Banned Items in Lincolnshire Schools, Academies and Colleges. As per LSCP guidance, The Headteacher will thoroughly assess the response to any such breaches in light of these commitments and give balanced consideration to safeguarding all staff and pupils, including the pupil involved. The impact of the incident on other pupils, members of staff and the wider community as well as the impact on the pupil will be carefully considered before any decision is made.

## Children

The term 'child' or 'children' is used within our policy to identify any person from birth to eighteen years old. Whether a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection. There is still an emphasis on a 'child-first' approach to safeguarding.

## Child Exploitation

A child can be groomed or coerced into an exploitative situation. This could be in the form of sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation. Exploitative relationships are characterised by an imbalance of power. The use of controlling behaviours are used to keep the child or young person in a dependent position.

## Criminal Exploitation: County Lines and Cyber Crime

School recognises that criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that can affect children both in a physical and virtual environment. We recognise that experienced of boys and girls being exploited may be very different; appropriate support will be given to address the individual needs of our children.

**County Lines Criminal Activity:** Gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children with vulnerability factors to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons. This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK; no specified distance of travel is required.

A key indicator to identifying potential involvement in county lines is missing school episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs. School will consider whether a referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and ICTG service referral form | Barnardo's should be undertaken in order to safeguard that child and/or other children. First responders' organisations e.g., the local authority can complete the referral, on the school's behalf, online. If school feels that the threshold is not met for an NRM referral then any relevant information will still be shared locally using a Partnership information report (Operation Insignia) and Child Exploitation Screening Tool as per local policies found within the LSCP's Policies and Procedures Manual

**Cybercrime Involvement:** Organised criminal groups or individuals exploit children due to their computer skills and ability, to access networks/data for criminal and financial gain.
There are a number of signs that may indicate a child is a victim or there are increasing concerns for a child which include;

- missing from school
- showing signs of other types of abuse/aggression towards others
- having low self-esteem, and feelings of isolation, stress, or fear
- lacking trust in adults and appearing fearful of authorities
- having poor concentration or excessively tired
- becoming anti-social
- displaying symptoms of substance dependence
- excessive time online computer/gaming forums
- social Isolation in school with peers
- high functioning with an interest in computing.

This is not an exhaustive list, and our school are aware of other factors which may also impact on the child. Like with all other safeguarding concerns, if our children are in this situation, support will be provided through the school or partner agency. Further advice and support regarding concerns of this nature can be found in the contact's section. We will follow relevant local policies and procedures found within the LSCP Policies and Procedures Manual.

### Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if sexual

activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

School staff are trained in recognising the key indicators of all forms of Child Exploitation and understand their role in the prevention and disruption of Child Exploitation including the importance of awareness within the curriculum.

If staff identify children for whom Child Exploitation may be a concern, they will apply the usual referral process and Child Protection procedures and pass this information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL will make referrals to Lincolnshire Children's Safeguarding as appropriate and following local policies and procedures found within the LSCP Policies and Procedures Manual to ensure relevant services are made aware. The school also appreciates that they have a role to play in sharing any information or intelligence in relation to people and places of concern linked to Child Exploitation. Therefore, if such information should come to light within school, the DSL will share these concerns appropriately through the same local procedures identified within the LSCP Policies and Procedures Manual.

**Child on Child Abuse**

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

- bullying (including online bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- abuse in intimate relationships
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, distress or alarm. Upskirting: Know your rights.
- nudes/semi-nude images including AI generated images
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

## Children and the court system

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts. There are two age-appropriate guides to support children **Going to Court** 5-11-year-olds and 12-17-year-olds.

## Children in care

All staff recognise that Children in care and Children previously in care are more likely to have increased vulnerability factors than other children, often impacting on educational outcomes. Therefore, it is important to ensure their wellbeing, safety and welfare is supported as well as work towards helping them to reach their potential. This includes children in care who are transitioning out of care. The school will also ensure that Children previously in care are supported with pathways including liaison with the local authority where a personal advisor will be appointed and that a full working relationship is maintained with the Lincolnshire Virtual School.

We have a member of staff who is dedicated to supporting Children in care. This member of staff liaises with the Lincolnshire Virtual School in respect of all children at the school who have 'in care' status. virtualschool@lincolnshire.gov.uk. A personal leaving care advisor will usually be allocated to a child on their sixteenth birthday to get to know the child, and identify what help is needed. Schools address any queries directly to the child's social worker until they are 18 years old, and after which they are fully transferred to Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service.
Leaving care service - our core offer – Lincolnshire County Council

## Children who are absent from Education

Children who are absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, can be a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns or unmet needs. This may include abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may also indicate mental health concerns, substance misuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, or risk of forced marriage.

Our school will ensure there is early identification for children who are absent from education and will be monitored closely. Children whose whereabouts are unknown, who have left a school roll without a confirmed destination, or who cannot be located at their known place of residence will be considered Children Missing Education (CME). We will notify the Local Authority of children who are absent from education in accordance with local procedures and statutory requirements, including where a child is believed to be a Child Missing Education (CME) and work with parents/carers and relevant agencies to support attendance and safeguard our pupils.

## Children who may require Early Help

All Staff (Governors and Volunteers) working within the school are aware safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm, neglect, and failure to act. Early Help is defined as anything that supports children, and their families to achieve their potential and improve their resilience and outcomes, by either preventing difficulties, or reducing the chances of them getting worse.

Early Help is about providing the right help, at the right time, in the right place. Our belief is that children are best supported by people they know and trust. All children may need extra help and support at some point in their lives. All of us are committed to continuing to identify and provide support to children where there are emerging concerns for their welfare.

The school will identify who those most in need children are, ensuring all staff and volunteers know the processes to secure advice, help and support where needed. We refer to the Lincolnshire guidance for Early Help. The Family Services Directory is a useful tool when discussing early help, it can be accessed here, Lincolnshire Family Services Directory (lincsfamilydirectory.org.uk)

## Children with family members in prison

Schools understand that children with a parent(s) in prison are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation, and poor mental health. They may require specific services and support. Families and children of people in prison will be seen as families first and school will work to ensure their needs are appropriately met with a trauma-informed and sensitive approach to encourage stability. This will include providing support to ensure the voice of the child is considered when seeking contact with a family member in prison. Support is available from the National Information Centre of children of offenders NICCO who provide information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

## Children with special educational needs and disabilities or physical health issues

Lincolnshire SEND Offer is available for every child and family in Lincolnshire. Special consideration should be given to safeguarding and protecting children who may have additional vulnerability factors. Additional barriers can exist to the recognition of abuse and neglect which can include assumptions that indicators of abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration. It is common to see a disability first and abuse second which may delay support required. These children can be disproportionately impacted by bullying and abuse, without outwardly showing any signs. There may also be communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

These additional challenges are addressed through a high level of pastoral care and communication and interaction with our children. These communication tools may include Makaton, communication in print and Colourful Semantics to ensure the child's voice is heard despite their additional needs. Our communication with parents will be frequent and informative allowing on-going risk assessments to be carried out to avoid

any assumptions being made in relation to any change in behaviour or physical appearance.

## CSAM- Child Sexual Abuse Material (nude and semi-nude images including AI Generated)

As referenced in KCSIE 2026 ‘’the term ‘making or sharing nudes and semi nudes’ refers to the creation, sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images by children under the age of 18. The term ‘images’ includes all visual content, such as photographs, videos and livestreams. We use the term ‘nudes’ because it is the most widely understood by children and best captures the full range of image-sharing behaviours covered in this guidance. Images may be taken by the child themselves (sometimes referred to as ‘self-generated imagery’) or taken or created by another person. They may also be digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence, including what are sometimes described as ‘deepfakes’ or ‘deep nudes’.’’

Our school recognises that incidents involving nudes and semi-nudes images can occur among children. These incidents may be consensual or non-consensual and can have serious safeguarding implications.

Where there is a disclosure or the school becomes aware that a child may have been involved in the sharing of such content, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will refer to the guidance in: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (updated March 2024) - GOV.UK

This guidance outlines how to respond to incidents, including:

- Risk assessment and safeguarding considerations.
- Managing disclosures and recording concerns.
- Searching, screening, and confiscation protocols.
- Working with parents, carers, and external agencies.
- Supporting the child or young person involved.

All incidents will be handled sensitively, in line with the school’s safeguarding procedures, and with a focus on the best interests of the child.

## Contextual Safeguarding

Our school recognises that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with risk of or actual harm attached to not only home and family, but to peer groups, school, online and the community. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead will consider the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessing the concerns for a child with a wider contextual focus and identifying in

which sphere(s) the risk is attached to and where harm may or has taken place in order to best support the child and decrease the risk of further harm to them and/or others.

https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/

## Domestic Abuse and Operation Encompass

The Home Office 2021 definition of domestic violence and abuse states:

Behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") is "domestic abuse" if A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected* to each other, and the behaviour is abusive.

Behaviour is "abusive" if it consists of any of the following:

a) physical or sexual abuse;

b) violent or threatening behaviour;

c) controlling or coercive behaviour;

d) economic abuse;

e) psychological, emotional or other abuse; 'honour' abuse, faith- or belief-based abuse, forced marriage, female genital mutilation or reproductive coercion, harassment and stalking

It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

**Personally connected**: They are, or have been, married; civil partners; have agreed to marry one another; have entered into a civil partnership agreement; are or have been in an intimate personal relationship; they have or have had a parental relationship in relation to the same child; or are relatives.

**Controlling behaviour**: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

**Coercive behaviour**: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

If staff identify children for whom Domestic Abuse may be a concern, they will apply the usual referral process and Child Protection procedures and pass this information

to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL can then refer cases where relevant, to Lincolnshire Customer Services. Where domestic abuse notifications are received from the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), this information will be added to a child's chronology and child protection record to ensure that appropriate support can be provided where necessary. A coding system will be in place.

All children can experience and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members, including where those being abusive do not live with the child. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a significant impact on children. Section 3 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children (0 to 18), as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse.

**Operation Encompass**

Operation Encompass is a national police-led initiative to notify schools when a child or young person has experienced any domestic abuse. The police officer attending a domestic abuse incident will request to record at the scene the names and school of any children in the household. When details are given, this will result in an email notification to the two named contacts in our school (generally the DSL and a Deputy DSL). We will not discuss the domestic abuse notification with the parent(s)/carer(s)/other family members. Notifications are intended to provide information about the child to school for the following contact/day so additional consideration/support can be given as required. The information is limited and therefore does not safely allow any such discussion, and we could increase the risk by discussing with the child, or parents/carers of the child. We will however talk to parents/carers about the situation should they wish to raise this with the school.

Staff who receive Operation Encompass notifications and other identified staff will receive training on the Operation Encompass process. If we are unsure whether our concerns need to be reported via the Customer Service Centre, we will contact them on 01522 782111. If we notify the parent(s)/carer(s) that we wish to discuss the situation with Children's Services, the consultation can be recorded on the child's record, and the social worker can review any relevant history beforehand. If we do not notify the parent(s)/carer(s), a hypothetical consultation will be held, and the social worker will only have the information available during the discussion.

If the child referred to in the email does not attend our school and we have been sent a notification in error, we will report this to the relevant Operation Encompass team to ensure the correct education setting can be sought to be sent the referral.

## Extra Familial Harm (Harm outside the home)

Children may be at risk of or experiencing physical, sexual, or emotional abuse and exploitation in contexts outside their families or the home they live 239 Domestic Abuse Act 2021: statutory guidance 240 SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK 162 in, such as a children's home or foster home (see glossary definition of extra-familial contexts). While there is no legal definition for the term extra-familial harm, it is widely used to describe different forms of harm that occur outside the home. Children can present increased vulnerability factors to multiple forms of extra-familial harm from both adults and/or other children, and harm may be perpetrated or facilitated by individuals or groups. Examples of extra-familial harm may include (but are not limited to): criminal exploitation (such as county lines and financial exploitation), serious violence, modern slavery and human trafficking, online harm, sexual exploitation (including group-based child sexual exploitation), child-on-child (non- familial) sexual abuse and other forms of harmful behaviour displayed by children towards their peers, abuse, and/or coercive control, children may experience in their own intimate relationships (sometimes called teenage relationship abuse), and the influences of extremism which could lead to radicalisation.

## Female Genital Mutilation/FGM

Our school understands that Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. Staff know that FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

**The reporting of FGM is a mandatory duty for teachers.**

Our teachers are aware that Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon **them (and those employed or engaged to carry out teaching work)** to report to the police where they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18 years of age. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should **not** be examining children. We refer to the DfE guidance Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information and LSCP policy Female Genital Mutilation.

Teachers **must** personally report to the police, cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the DSL and involve Lincolnshire Children's Social Care Teams as appropriate. The duty does not apply

in relation to at risk or suspected cases. In these cases, teachers will follow usual safeguarding procedures reporting to DSL.

## Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is one in which one or both individuals do not consent to the marriage, or where they are unable to consent due to lacking the mental capacity to do so, and where coercion, pressure, or abuse is used. This includes physical, emotional, psychological, financial, or sexual abuse.

Forced marriage is a criminal offence in the UK and is recognised as a form of domestic abuse, child abuse, and a serious violation of human rights. Since February 2023, it is also an offence to cause a child to marry before their 18th birthday, whether or not the conduct amounts to violence, threats, any other form of coercion or deception.

All staff understand that forced marriage is a safeguarding concern and must be treated as such. Any concerns must be reported immediately using the school's usual referral process and Child Protection procedures and passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay.

We refer to the following national statutory guidance and local policy-

Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with Forced marriage and multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of Forced marriage.

LSCP- Forced Marriage

## Homelessness

Being homeless or at risk of homelessness presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The DSL (and DDSL) is aware of contact details and referral routes into the Lincolnshire Housing Authority so they can raise /progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. We refer to the Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets which summarises the new duties that focus on early intervention and encourage those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.

We will follow local guidance from the Lincolnshire Youth Homelessness joint protocol, if supporting any case of youth homelessness: yth-homelessness.pdf.

## 'Honour-based' Abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)

Honour-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community,

including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of HBA are abusive and should be handled and escalated as such. Our staff are alert to the possibility of a child being at risk from HBA or have already suffered HBA and understand the duty on them to protect the welfare of these children. We will follow relevant local policies and procedures found within the LSCP Policies and Procedures Manual and Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse partnership.

## Online safety

Children are growing up in a digital world where online activity is a seamless part of their lives. While technology offers many benefits, it also presents risks such as exposure to harmful content, online abuse, grooming, and misinformation. Our school is committed to embedding a whole-school approach to online safety, in line with the Online Safety Act 2023 and the Department for Education's guidance on teaching online safety in schools. More information about online safety can be found in our school's Online Safety policy.

Online safety is taught as part of statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) and Computing. We use the UKCIS Education for a Connected World framework to ensure age-appropriate progression in digital literacy and online safety skills. Online safety is addressed across the curriculum and reinforced through assemblies, PSHE, and themed events. Through our curriculum pupils are taught; how to recognise and report harmful or inappropriate content and contact, what respectful and healthy online relationships look like, and how to critically evaluate online information and manage their digital footprint.

All staff receive annual training on online safety, including their roles in filtering and monitoring. Staff follow the school Staff Code of Conduct regarding digital communication and social media use. Staff report concerns about online harm immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Our school understand safety considerations and legal responsibilities if we choose to use Generative AI (either teacher-facing or pupil-facing) and will refer to guidance provided at Generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education - GOV.UK

Our school uses appropriate filtering and monitoring systems to protect pupils from harmful and inappropriate content, while avoiding over-blocking. Systems are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain effective and proportionate.

We support families with guidance on home filtering, parental controls, and safe use of devices. We signpost families to trusted resources such as Internet Matters.

We work with external agencies, including Lincolnshire Stay Safe Partnership, to stay informed of emerging risks and best practices.

## Photography and Images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable, and acceptable reasons. However, we know some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that the following safeguards are in place.

While parents may be permitted to bring a device with a camera function to some events as communicated by the school, no staff member should use their personal equipment to take photographs of children. The school provides equipment for this purpose.

Where a staff member has concerns someone is taking photographs in breach of this policy, they should contact the Head teacher.

To protect children, we need to:

a) seek parental consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website, social media, in the newspapers or other publications).

b) ensure that the child is appropriately dressed.

c) encourage children to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

Staff should be aware that many nude or semi-nude images in current circulation were taken by the child themselves or peers. Sex, sexuality, and relationships should be an age-appropriate topic in the home and include what to do if children are worried about an image they see. At school, children will be taught about healthy relationships and the dangers of nude and semi-nude images and the sharing of these.

Our school will consider the use of photography and images of children on our website, social media profiles and the public domain. Our school recognise and take seriously the risk of any images posted by the school potentially being used by individuals who wish to create AI generated malicious or abuse images of children. Images will be carefully selected to ensure that the risk of this is decreased and will follow our own policies to monitor and review this throughout the academic year.

## Pre-Birth Protocol

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 requires agencies to have in place mechanisms to ensure that they are able to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

All practitioners whether adult or children services, have a responsibility to protect and safeguard children and work collaboratively with Children's Services and other key professionals in contributing to assessments and interventions. Therefore, the professional who is first made aware of the pregnancy should initiate the pre-birth protocol and complete an Early Help Assessment or make a referral for unborn to Social Care.

A child of statutory education age is entitled to 18 weeks of maternity leave. Either side of this period there is an expectation that the young person continues to attend school or alternative provision. The educational establishment is required to make all reasonable adjustments to allow the child to have appropriate access to the curriculum whilst they attend the establishment including timetable and learning environment adjustments. It is important that the provision participate in the Team Around the Family, in order for them to fully support the continued education of the young parent.

Education establishments should have a clear strategy for engaging with the child while they are away from the provision to limit the disruption to their education and make appropriate arrangements that work for the child and educational establishment. Where there is robust medical evidence that indicates that the child is unfit to attend, the educational establishment can make a referral to the pupil reintegration team who will assess and consider alternative arrangements if appropriate.

The Lincolnshire Pre-Birth Protocol link to the full document is below;

Pre-Birth Protocol

## Preventing Radicalisation, The Prevent Duty and Channel

Children are susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alerted to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection and report concerns to the DSL. Under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, our school is aware that we must have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism, and that this is known as the Prevent Duty.
To fulfil the Prevent Duty, staff have received information/training to help them to identify children who may be more susceptible through vulnerability factors to radicalisation, and the school is committed to accessing further training to ensure that all staff are up to date and aware of this duty.

If a staff member identifies children for whom this may be a concern, they should apply the usual referral process and Child Protection procedures and pass this information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If the individual is at immediate risk of harm or immediate risk of terrorist related activity, then the Police should be contacted on 999. If there is no immediate risk, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact the Lincolnshire Prevent team (Lincolnshire County Council and/or Lincolnshire Police) to seek further guidance. The Prevent team may be able to support the school or may decide that a referral into the Channel process is required, Channel guidance. It may be decided that there are no Prevent related concerns but a referral into Lincolnshire Customer Services is required.

Our School will also incorporate the promotion of fundamental British Values into the Safeguarding Curriculum and/or PSHE to help build children's resilience and enable them to challenge extremist views. School will provide a safe space in which children

and staff can understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments.

Radicalisation will also be considered within current Online Safety policies, procedures and curriculum in terms of having suitable filtering and monitoring in place and raising awareness with staff, parents and children about the increased risk of online radicalisation, using the internet, social media and Gaming.

We refer to the Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales which contains information for schools. For further local guidance we refer to the Lincolnshire LSCP document, Supporting Children and Young People Vulnerable to Violent Extremism.

## Private Fostering

Private fostering is defined as:

-when a child under the age of 16 is cared for by someone other than a close relative for 28 days or more. If they have a disability, this is under the age of 18

-when a child lives with someone from their extended family, such as a great aunt or uncle

-when a child lives with a friend of the family or of the child

It is not private fostering when a child is living with a close relative. This includes grandparents, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles or stepparents.

We will inform the local authority about all private fostering situations. The child's parents, private foster carer, and anyone else (including the school) involved in the arrangement are legally required to inform the local authority.

It is then the local authority's legal duty to make sure all private fostering arrangements are safe for the child or young person. Once informed of the arrangement the local authority will check the suitability of private foster carers, make regular visits to the child and ensure advice, help and support is available when needed.
Private fostering – When you must tell us - Lincolnshire County Council

## Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

Staff are aware of sexual violence and sexual harassment and that children can, and sometimes do, abuse other children in this way. Sexual violence refers to Rape, Assault by Penetration and Sexual Assault as described in the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Sexual harassment means 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. Staff understand that when we reference sexual harassment, we do so in a context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded, or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Neither is acceptable nor will not be tolerated by the school. School takes all such reports seriously and they will receive the same high standard of care that any other safeguarding concern receives. A multi-agency approach will be undertaken when responding to all such complaints; however, the school will always take immediate action to protect children despite the actions of any other agency. These actions may include an immediate risk assessment in respect of the needs of the child victim and will address any risks identified to any child in respect of an individual who has been reported for sexual violence or sexual harassment to ensure children are protected from harm. Any risk assessment will be fluid and may change to reflect any developments during the management of the case.

All such reports will be managed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. There are several options the school may consider in respect of the management of a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment between children and each case will receive an appropriate bespoke response once all the facts are known. Irrespective of any potential criminal outcome, the school have a duty to safeguard all children and may deal with any such report on a balance of probability basis when considering the outcomes for children involved.

Any report of sexual violence will trigger the school to do a risk assessment to consider

- the needs of the victim and their support and protection
- any other potential victims
- the individual reported and,
- all other children, and if appropriate, students and staff if protection is required against the perpetrator.

This risk assessment does not replace those assessments carried out by professionals but helps the school decide on the next course of action particularly in relation to keeping the victim and other potential victims safe from harm or distress. The assessment may result in reorganisation of classes or transport arrangements, for example to ensure that the victim and perpetrator are not in close proximity of each other. It may be necessary to consider a move to an alternative school or educational setting based on the risk assessment or the decision of the court. Where a school move is being considered, we may contact the local authority Pupil Reintegration

Team for further advice. Any decisions will be made based on the wishes of the victim, the nature of the incident and the safety of others. Actions will be taken immediately to reduce risk and undue distress, and assessments will be reviewed regularly.

The outcome of a report of sexual violence may be that we will manage the situation within our own processes, request support from the local authority, report the incident to social care or report to the Police. All reports will be reviewed and potential lessons to be learnt by the school will be considered.
We recognise in our school that reporting of the above can be difficult for children and therefore we provide a range of ways in which children can let us know of their concerns and we will promote these regularly. We will adopt an understanding that it could and is most likely happening in our school and not depend on reporting to dictate actions. We will develop a 'zero tolerance' approach and not judge any disclosure as 'low level' or acceptable. We understand that child- on -child abuse does not only happen in school but also outside of the setting and online.

The way we respond to a concern is likely to have a long-lasting impact on how others react if they wish to disclose therefore, we are very aware of ensuring appropriate support is in place. We will continue to reflect on our approaches using the experiences of children and families to guide this. If we find the information to be false, unfounded or malicious, we will also reflect and act on, if necessary, why this disclosure was made and any potential unmet need that could escalate into a safeguarding concern. Support will also be considered for the individual reported to reduce harmful behaviour and potential risk to others.

All staff have received the appropriate level of training to be able to respond to sexual abuse and harassment incidents.

Our behaviour policy provides further information on the process followed by the school and **all** staff have read and understood this policy.

## Substance use

The school takes a serious view of substance use while recognising that children may begin using substances through additional contributing vulnerability factors or exploitation. All cases of substance use should be brought to the attention of the Head teacher who will consider both the student behaviour policy and any factors that may indicate a child is in need of support or protection.

## Trafficking and exploitation

The two most common terms for the illegal movement of people – ‘trafficking’ and ‘smuggling’, are very different. In human smuggling, immigrants and asylum seekers pay people to help them enter the country illegally; after which there is no longer a

relationship. Trafficked victims are coerced or deceived by the person arranging their relocation. On arrival in the country of destination, the trafficked child or person is denied their human rights and is forced into exploitation by the trafficker or person into whose control they are delivered.

Child trafficking is when children are tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Child trafficking and exploitation are types of child abuse.
Children can be trafficked into the UK from other countries, and within the UK. They could be moved to a different country, county or even within the same town or village. Traffickers could work alone, be part of a small group or a large organised crime group.

Any concerns about trafficking and exploitation will be reported by the school to Police if there is immediate danger for a child, to Lincolnshire Children's Safeguarding Tel-01522 782111 alongside following the LSCP Protocol on reporting concerns for child exploitation. Further referrals will be completed to NRM (National Referral Mechanism) and NSPCC ICTG (Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship) service and follow the national guidelines for these referrals.

## Young Carers

We recognise that there may be children within our school who act as young carers for someone they are related to or know. To provide support to them with this we will contact and work with the Lincolnshire Young Carers Service to ensure that the young carer is recognised, valued and supported to have good health and wellbeing and to achieve their full potential. youngcarers@lincolnshire.gov.uk

## Appendix 3: Body Map Guidance

Body Maps should be used to document and illustrate visible signs of harm and physical injuries.

Always use a black pen (never a pencil) and do not use correction fluid or any other eraser.

Do not remove clothing for the purpose of the examination unless the injury site is freely available because of treatment.

***At no time should an individual teacher/member of staff or school take photographic evidence of any injuries or marks to a child's person, the body map below should be used. Any concerns should be reported and recorded without delay to Lincolnshire Children's Safeguarding or the child's allocated social worker if already an open case.**

**When you notice an injury to a child, try to record the following information in respect of each mark identified e.g., red areas, swelling, bruising, cuts, lacerations and wounds, scalds, and burns:**

- Exact site of injury on the body, e.g., upper outer arm/left cheek.
- Size of injury - in appropriate centimetres or inches.
- Approximate shape of injury, e.g., round/square or straight line.
- Colour of injury - if more than one colour, say so.
- Is the skin broken?
- Is there any swelling at the site of the injury, or elsewhere?
- Is there a scab/any blistering/any bleeding?
- Is the injury clean or is there grit/fluff etc.?
- Is mobility restricted as a result of the injury?
- Does the site of the injury feel hot?
- Does the child feel hot?
- Does the child feel pain?
- Has the child's body shape changed/are they holding themselves differently?

Importantly the date and time of the recording must be stated as well as the name and designation of the person making the record. Add any further comments as required.

**Ensure First Aid is provided where required and then recorded appropriately.**

A copy of the body map should be kept on the child's concern/confidential file.

**Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility-**
Lincolnshire Children's safeguarding via Customer Service Centre for referrals and advice Tel: 01522 782111

## Appendix 4: Guidance

- Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Multi-Agency Procedures
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Information Sharing advice for Safeguarding Practitioners
- Child abuse concerns: Guidance for practitioners
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002
- Teaching Standards
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those Adults who work with Children and Young People
  https://c-cluster-110.uploads.documents.cimpress.io/v1/uploads/13ecce28-e8f2-49e9-83c6-c29337cd8071~110/original?tenant=vbu-digital
- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people
- AI Child Sexual Abuse Imagery: Parent Safety Guide
- The Domestic Abuse Act (2021)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation
- Behaviour in Schools: advice for Headteachers and school staff
- The Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools

# Safeguarding Contacts

**Advice on any aspect of Child Protection and Safeguarding may be sought from the Safeguarding Team;**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** | **Elaine Bedford** |
| **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)** | **Amy Parnham, Nicola Woolerton** |
| **Our local contact numbers are:** | |
| **Safeguarding of children concerns** *(Children living in Lincolnshire)* | **01522 782111**<br>***Lincolnshire Children's Safeguarding for reporting concerns.***<br>***Emergency Duty Team***<br>**01522 782333** (6pm-8am and weekends and Bank Holidays) |
| **Safeguarding of children concerns** *(Children living in other Authorities)* | **Nottinghamshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**<br>**0300 500 80 90** |
| **Allegations against /concerns about adult(s) working with children**<br>**Staff must report concerns to the Head teacher or in the event of concerns about the Head teacher concerns must be reported to the Chair of Governors.** | **Lincolnshire Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO)**<br>**LSCP_LADO@lincolnshire.gov.uk**<br>**The Head/Chair must contact LADO to discuss concerns and course of action.** |
| **Police** *(Emergency)*<br>**Police** *(non-emergency)* | **999**<br>**101** |
| **LCC Safeguarding in Schools** *for advice around safeguarding policy, audits, training etc.* | **safeguardinginschool@lincolnshire.gov.uk** |