



## Child Protection Policy

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|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Applicable to:</b> | ✓                   | Astley Community High School |
|                       | ✓                   | Seaton Sluice Middle School  |
|                       | ✓                   | Whytrig Middle School        |
| <b>Approval body:</b> | Full Governing Body |                              |

**Status:**

|                                     |                     |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Statutory policy or document</b> | Yes                 |
| <b>Review frequency</b>             | Annual              |
| <b>Approval by</b>                  | Full Governing Body |

**Publication:**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>Statutory requirement to publish on school website</b> | Yes |
| <b>Agreed to publish on school website</b>                | Yes |

**Review:**

|                  |                        |
|------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Next Review Due</b> |
| Annually         | Autumn 2024            |

## Version Control:

| Author  | Creation Date        | Version | Status  |
|---|----------------------|---------|---|
| Information and Curriculum Support Manager (NB) | 11 November 2016     | 0.1     | Draft policy for SVF for consultation with SLT based on NCC model policy  |
| <b>Changed by</b>                               | <b>Revision Date</b> |         |   |
| Head of School WMS (JS)                         | 3 December 2016      | 0.2     | Operation Encompass added   |
| Head of School WMS (JS)                         | 6 December 2016      | 0.3     |   |
| Business Manager (SH)                           | 16 January 2017      | 0.4     | Amendments to format etc  |
| Head of School WMS (JS)                         | 18 January 2017      | 1.0     | Final version for publication   |
| Business Manager (BW)                           | 26 January 2018      | 1.1     | Updated in line with NCC model policy (September 2017)  |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead ACHS/WMS (GS)      | 13 February 2018     | 1.2     | Review of proposed changes  |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead SSMS (SL)          | 20 February 2018     | 1.3     | Review of updated draft policy prior to governor approval   |
| Business Manager (BW)                           | 23 February 2018     | 1.4     | DSL comments incorporated and training details updated  |
| Business Manager (BW)                           | 7 March 2018         | 2.0     | Final approved version for publication  |
| Business Manager (BW)                           | 1 November 2018      | 2.1     | Updated to include details of additional DSL at SSMS  |
| Business Manager (BW)                           | 3 January 2019       | 2.2     | Updated in line with NCC model policy (September 2018) to reflect latest <i>Keeping Children Safe in Education</i> guidance |
| Business Manager (BW)                           | 12 January 2019      | 2.3     | Reviewed by DSLs and updated to include Operation Endeavour and latest training   |
| Business Manager (BW)                           | 1 February 2019      | 3.0     | Final approved version for publication, with updated email addresses for SVF staff  |
| Business Manager (BW)                           | 8 November 2019      | 3.1     | Updated in line with latest <i>Keeping Children Safe in Education</i> and NCC model policy (September 2019)                 |
| Business Manager (BW)                           | 12 November 2019     | 4.0     | Final approved version for publication  |
| Business Manager (BW)                           | 14 September 2020    | 4.1     | Updated in line with latest <i>Keeping Children Safe in Education</i> and NCC model policy (September 2020)                 |
| Business Manager (BW)                           | 13 October 2020      | 5.0     | Final approved version for publication  |

|                        |                   |     |  |
|------------------------|-------------------|-----|--|
| Business Manager (BW)  | 13 January 2021   | 5.1 | Inclusion of response to COVID-19 at Appendix K based on NCC model appendix (January 2021)   |
| Business Manager (BW)  | 22 April 2021     | 5.2 | Updated with new LADO contact information  |
| Business Manager (BW)  | 28 September 2021 | 5.3 | Updated in line with latest <i>Keeping Children Safe in Education</i> and NCC model policy (September 2021), including removal of COVID-19 Response at Appendix K  |
| Business Manager (BW)  | 14 October 2021   | 6.0 | Final approved version for publication   |
| Business Director (BW) | 11 October 2022   | 6.1 | Updated in line with latest <i>Keeping Children Safe in Education</i> and NCC model policy (September 2022), including addition of hyperlinks to guidance, details of governor training, and dealing with low level concerns |
| Business Director (BW) | 27 October 2022   | 7.0 | Final approved version for publication   |
| Business Director (BW) | 22 September 2023 | 7.1 | Updated for 2023-24  |
| Business Director (BW) | 5 October 2023    | 8.0 | Final approved version for publication   |
|                        |                   |     |  |

## 1 Policy statement and principles

1.1 The Seaton Valley Federation fully recognises its responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

1.2 Early years settings, schools and further education and skills providers should be safe environments where children, learners and vulnerable adults can learn and develop. To ensure our schools meet these requirements, children's and learners' welfare is promoted and, where timely and appropriate, safeguarding action is taken for children or learners who need early help or who may be suffering, or likely to suffer, harm. By achieving this the federation is ensuring we meet the requirements set out by Ofsted who will 'evaluate how well providers fulfil their statutory and other responsibilities and how well staff exercise their professional judgement in keeping children and learners safe.'

1.3 Our policy and practice is also established to meet the requirements set out by our safeguarding partners, Northumberland Children's and Adult's Strategic Safeguarding Partnership (NCASP).

1.4 The following terminology is used throughout this document:

- **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** is defined for the purposes of this policy as:
  - protecting children from maltreatment
  - preventing the 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
  - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- **Child protection** is a term used to describe the activity that is undertaken to protect children who are suffering or likely to suffer from significant harm.
- **Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the federation, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.
- **Child** includes everyone under the age of 18.
- **Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

1.5 This policy is available on the federation's website. A copy is made available to all staff and volunteers and forms part of the staff induction process. Hard copies are available on request for visitors.

1.6 All relevant policies have been updated to reflect the increased use of remote learning and all necessary risk assessments have been completed and refer to safeguarding procedures.

1.7 This policy will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

## 2 Child protection statement

2.1 We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support and protection.

2.2 Our range of strategies to ensure all students remain safe from harm includes the following:

- recognising the importance of pupil welfare and developing a safe environment where students can raise concerns
- creating a culture in which all adults accept “it could happen here” so they can “think the unthinkable” and recognise they are responsible for identifying and acting upon situations where a student may appear to be at risk of abuse or radicalisation
- developing students’ resilience, self-esteem and self-confidence to share and challenge issues, including recognising when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it, and promoting a set of shared values for the whole school community
- ensuring the curriculum enables the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students in a context where respect, dignity, democracy and the rule of law are key features of a modern Britain
- a clear Online Safety Policy to ensure students and staff remain safe online
- an effective approach to dealing with instances of bullying as set out in our Anti-Bullying Policy
- an effective Child Protection Policy which sets out clear procedures for dealing with concerns of potential abuse or radicalisation
- a designated senior lead for child protection in each school
- regular child protection and preventing extremism training for all staff and specialist training for those with lead roles
- ensuring staff and governors are aware of their roles in ensuring children are safe as advised by the Department for Education in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- recruiting staff who actively promote the safeguarding of children and young people as we follow safer recruitment practices including a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks when vacancies arise
- a clear Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers and effective guidance on Safer Working Practice for Adults working with children including Using Force to Control or Restrain Pupils Policy
- an effective Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures if staff believe that concerns that a child may be at risk of harm have not been acted upon

2.3 The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers, visitors and governors and are consistent with those of the local safeguarding partnership (NCASP).

### 3 Policy aims

3.1 The aims of this policy are to:

- demonstrate the federation’s commitment with regard to child protection to pupils, parents and other partners
- contribute to the federation’s safeguarding portfolio
- provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities
- ensure consistent good practice

### 4 Policy principles

4.1 Our core safeguarding principles are:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.
- Our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance.
- We will maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”.
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm.
- We assess the risks and issues in the wider community when considering the wellbeing of our pupils.
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support.
- Safer children make more successful learners.

4.2 Due to their day-to-day contact with pupils, school staff are uniquely placed to observe changes in children’s behaviour and the outward signs of abuse. Children may also turn to a trusted adult in school when they are in distress or at risk. It is vital that **all federation staff** are alert to the signs of abuse and understand the procedures for reporting their concerns. The federation will always act on identified concerns.

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

## 5 Roles and responsibilities

### Key personnel

The named DSLs are Mr Dan Gilhooley (ACHS), Mr Jon Souter (WMS) and Mrs Karen McSparron (SSMS)

[dan.gilhooley@svf.org.uk](mailto:dan.gilhooley@svf.org.uk) (0191 2371505)

[jon.souter@svf.org.uk](mailto:jon.souter@svf.org.uk) (0191 2371402)

[karen.mcsparron@svf.org.uk](mailto:karen.mcsparron@svf.org.uk) (0191 2370629)

Mr Gilhooley and Mr Souter will deputise for each other as required; the deputy DSL for SSMS is Mrs Katie Middlemiss

[katie.middlemiss@svf.org.uk](mailto:katie.middlemiss@svf.org.uk) (0191 2370629)

The nominated child protection governor is Mrs Susan Dungworth

[susan.dungworth@svf.org.uk](mailto:susan.dungworth@svf.org.uk)

The Executive Headteacher is Mr John Barnes

[john.barnes@svf.org.uk](mailto:john.barnes@svf.org.uk) (0191 2371505)

### 5.1 The DSLs:

- have the status and authority within each school to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff
- are appropriately trained, receiving annual updates and refresher training provided by the local authority (on behalf of the safeguarding partners) every two years; in Northumberland the expectation is that on the alternate year the DSLs attend safeguarding training relevant to their school and local context, supporting their professional development and delivered by suitably qualified providers
- act as a source of support and expertise to the school community
- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings
- are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers
- have a working knowledge of NCASP procedures  
<https://www.proceduresonline.com/northumberlandcs/index.html>
- make staff aware of NCASP training courses (all available through Learning Together <http://ncc.learningpool.com/>) and the latest policies and procedures on safeguarding
- understand locally agreed processes for providing early help and intervention
- keep detailed written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely but kept separate from, the pupil's general file
- refer cases of suspected abuse to children's social care or police as appropriate
- notify children's social care if a child with a child protection plan has unexplained absences
- ensure that when a pupil leaves the school, their child protection file is sent securely to the new school (separately from the main pupil file and ensuring secure transit) and confirmation of receipt is obtained; the pupil's social worker should also be informed
- attend and/or contribute to child protection conferences
- coordinate the school's contribution to child protection plans
- ensure that all appropriate staff members have a working knowledge and understanding of their role in case conferences, core groups and other multi-agency planning meetings, to ensure that they attend and are able to effectively contribute when required to do so
- develop effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies including the NCASP
- ensure that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood the Child Protection Policy
- ensure that the Child Protection Policy and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated annually, working with governors
- liaise with the nominated governor and Executive Headteacher as appropriate
- ensure a record of staff attendance at child protection and safeguarding training is maintained
- ensure staff are kept up to date with key priorities within the local authority, including learning from serious case reviews
- make the Child Protection Policy available publicly on the federation's website
- ensure parents are aware of the school's role in safeguarding and that referrals about suspected abuse and neglect may be made
- have the lead role for Operation Encompass and Operation Endeavour in each school and ensure the school meets all requirements set out in the local authority procedures
- report concerns that a pupil may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, following the Prevent referral process and referring cases by email to OneCall; if the matter is urgent then the police must be contacted by dialling 999, or in cases where further advice from the Police is sought dial 101; the

Department for Education has also set up a dedicated telephone helpline for staff and governors to raise concerns around Prevent (0207 340 7264)

- work with others to ensure that the federation's filtering and monitoring systems are functional and effective
- meet all other responsibilities as set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*

5.2 Whilst the activities of the DSL can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection, as set out above, remains with the DSL; this lead responsibility should not be delegated.

5.3 The **Deputy DSLs** are appropriately trained and, in the absence of the designated person, carry out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the designated person, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

5.4 **If the DSLs (or deputies) are not available, staff should contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team to seek advice. Advice can also be sought from colleagues in One Call, the local authority's single point of access, by calling 01670 536400.**

5.5 The **governing body** ensures that the federation:

- appoints a DSL who is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and who has undertaken training in inter-agency working, in addition to basic child protection training
- ensures that the DSL role is explicit in the role holder's job description
- has a Child Protection Policy and procedures
- has a Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers, which is reviewed annually and made available publicly on the federation's website
- has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the Executive Headteacher and allegations against other children
- follows safer recruitment procedures that include statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children and disqualification by association regulations
- develops a training strategy that ensures all staff, including the Executive Headteacher, receive information about the school's safeguarding arrangements, Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers and the role of the DSL on induction, and appropriate child protection training, which is updated at least annually and will receive regular updates. The DSL receives face to face refresher training at two-yearly intervals and accesses an annual update in line with the NCASP requirements
- ensures that all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers are provided with the school's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers
- contributes to early help arrangements and inter agency working and plans
- provides a coordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified
- considers how pupils may be taught about safeguarding, including online as part of a broad and balanced curriculum
- has an annual monitoring visit by the governor with child protection responsibility to review safeguarding practices.

5.6 The governing body nominates a member (normally the Chair) to be responsible for liaising with the local authority and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the Executive Headteacher.



5.7 It is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure that the federation's safeguarding, recruitment and managing allegations procedures take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority and NCASP and national guidance.

5.8 An annual audit will be submitted, as required, to the local authority, including an action plan. The governing body should have oversight of the audit and the lead governor will work in conjunction with the DSL to ensure any gaps or areas of concern are addressed and rectified without delay.

#### 5.9 The Executive Headteacher:

- ensures that the Child Protection Policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff
- allocates sufficient time, training, support and resources, including cover arrangements when necessary, to enable the DSL and deputy to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings
- ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle blowing procedures
- ensures that pupils are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online
- makes sure that school leaders and governors ensure that the child's wishes are taken into account when determining action to be taken or services to be provided
- contacts the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) immediately an allegation is made against a member of staff, seeks advice and then works with the LADO to follow the advice received
- ensures that anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service

## 6 Good practice guidelines and staff code of conduct

6.1 To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards pupils we need to agree standards of good practice which form a code of conduct for all staff. Good practice includes:

- treating all pupils with respect
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- involving pupils in decisions that affect them
- encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils
- being a good listener
- being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- reading and understanding the Federation's Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers, and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, physical contact, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, extremism, e-safety and information-sharing
- asking the pupil's permission before initiating physical contact, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during PE or administering first aid
- maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between pupils and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse

- applying the use of reasonable force only as a last resort and in compliance with school and NCASP procedures
- referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the DSL, or, if necessary directly to police or children's social care
- following the federation's rules with regard to relationships with pupils and communication with pupils, including on social media

## **7 Abuse of position of trust**

- 7.1 All federation staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.
- 7.2 In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of federation staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that pupil is over the age of consent.
- 7.3 The federation's Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers sets out our expectations of staff and is made available to and acknowledged by all members of staff.

## **8 Children who may be particularly vulnerable**

- 8.1 Some children may have an increased risk of abuse. It is important to understand that this increase in risk is due more to societal attitudes and assumptions or child protection procedures that fail to acknowledge children's diverse circumstances, rather than the individual child's personality, impairment or circumstances. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and a reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.
- 8.2 To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:
- displaying early signs of abuse and/or neglect
  - looked after or returned home after a period of care
  - disabled or have special educational needs
  - young carers
  - affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental health needs or misusing substances themselves
  - asylum seekers
  - living away from home or living in temporary accommodation
  - vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
  - living transient lifestyles
  - living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
  - vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
  - at risk of sexual exploitation
  - do not have English as a first language
  - at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
  - at risk of forced marriage
  - at risk of being drawn into extremism or being radicalised
  - showing signs of being drawn in to antisocial or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups

- frequently missing or goes missing from care or from home
- at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation (including County Lines)
- absent from education
- privately fostered

8.3 It is also worth noting that The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 came into force in February 2023, which means that 16 and 17 year olds are no longer allowed to marry or enter a civil partnership, even if they have parental consent. Any concerns that students may be getting married should be referred to the DSL.

8.4 Children can be at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, and radicalisation. This is sometimes referred to as contextual safeguarding.

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

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

9.2 Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. The federation's Anti-Bullying Policy sets out how we endeavour to reduce the additional barriers LGBT children may face.

9.3 **The list above provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive.**

## 10 Helping children to keep themselves safe

10.1 We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult helps prevention. We will therefore raise awareness of child protection issues and equip children with the skills to keep them safe. Children are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.

10.2 The federation will therefore:

- establish and maintain an environment and positive ethos where children feel secure and supported, and are encouraged to talk, are listened to, can learn, develop and feel valued
- ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
- include in the curriculum, activities and opportunities for PSHE/SMSC which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse, develop resilience and that they know to whom to turn for help; overviews of the PSHE/SMSC curriculum for each school can be found on the federation's website

10.3 Children are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it. All children and young people are encouraged to speak to a member of staff when they are worried about any issues.

## **11 Support for those involved in a child protection issue**

11.1 Child abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved.

11.2 We will support pupils, their families, and staff by:

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- responding sympathetically to any request from pupils or staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety
- maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
- storing records securely
- offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support
- where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a pupil, ensure that lines of communication are maintained
- following the procedures laid down in our child protection, whistleblowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures
- cooperating fully with relevant statutory agencies
- providing access to supervision for those staff dealing with child protection issues

## **12 Complaints procedure**

12.1 Our Complaints Procedure will be followed where a pupil or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a pupil that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Complaints are managed by senior staff, the Executive Headteacher and governors. The Complaints Procedure is available in hard copy on request, electronically on the school network or on the federation's website.

12.2 Complaints from staff are dealt with under the federation's Resolving Grievances at Work Policy and Procedures.

12.3 Complaints which escalate into a child protection concern will automatically be managed under the federation's Child Protection Policy.

## **13 Whistle blowing if you have concerns about a colleague**

13.1 Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague (including supply staff) towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. The federation's Whistleblowing Policy, available on the Policies and Documents Google Shared Drive, enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

13.2 All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the Executive Headteacher. Complaints about the Executive Headteacher should be reported to the Chair of Governors.

13.3 Staff may also report their concerns directly to children's social care or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure immediate action.

## **14 Allegations or concerns about an adult working in the school whether as a teacher, member of support staff, agency staff, governor, volunteer or contractor**

14.1 The federation recognises the possibility that adults working in our schools may harm children. Any concerns about the conduct of other adults in the school should be passed to the Executive Headteacher without delay; any concerns about the Executive Headteacher should be passed to the Chair of Governors who can be contacted via email (see contact details above).

14.2 Concerns may come from various sources:

- a suspicion
- a complaint
- a disclosure made by a child, parent/carer or other adult within or outside of the federation
- as a result of vetting checks undertaken

14.3 The Executive Headteacher will decide whether the concern is an allegation or low-level concern (see Appendix I for further information regarding low level concerns).

14.4 When an allegation is made against a member of staff, including supply staff, governors, volunteers and agency staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen.

14.5 A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some professionals do pose a serious risk to pupils and we must act on every allegation.

14.6 Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not the default option and alternatives to suspension will always be considered. In some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected. In the event of suspension the school will provide support and a named contact for the member of staff.

14.7 The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

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

14.9 Allegations concerning staff who no longer work within the federation, or historical allegations, will be reported to the police.

## **15 Staff training**

15.1 It is important that all staff receive training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and know what to do if they have a concern.

- 15.2 New staff and governors will receive a briefing during their induction, which includes the federation's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers, reporting/recording arrangements, and details for the DSL (and deputy).
- 15.3 All staff, including the Executive Headteacher (unless the Executive Headteacher is the DSL) and governors, will receive training that is regularly updated. The NCASP recommends staff receive annual updates and a detailed programme (either online or face to face) at least every three years.
- 15.4 The DSL (and deputies) will receive annual safeguarding training with subjects to reflect local and national priorities, and a refresher session on their roles and responsibilities every two years.
- 15.5 All staff sign to confirm they have received a copy of the Child Protection Policy and the Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers and have read *Keeping Children Safe in Education* Part One and Annex A.
- 15.6 Members of the governing body take part in mandatory safeguarding training to ensure that they can "assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective". This is regularly updated.
- 15.7 Supply staff, other visiting staff and all visitors will be given the school's Information for Visitors leaflet, which will be made available to them on their arrival.

## **16 Safer recruitment**

- 16.1 Our federation endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ safe staff by following the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and the federation's staff recruitment procedures.
- 16.2 At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training, details of which are held on the single central record.
- 16.3 The federation obtains written confirmation from supply agencies or third party organisations that agency staff or other individuals who may work in the school have been appropriately checked. The federation advises all agencies of their procedures for dealing with allegations, ensuring agencies are fully aware of the guidance set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* in relation to the federation having a lead role in the management of any allegations and working with the LADO.
- 16.4 Trainee teachers will be checked either by the federation or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained.
- 16.5 The federation maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken.

## **17 Regulated activity**

- 17.1 Schools are 'specified places' which means that the majority of staff and volunteers will be engaged in regulated activity. A fuller explanation of regulated activity can be found in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* Annex E.

## **18 Volunteers**

- 18.1 Volunteers, including governors, will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the federation and contact with pupils. Under no circumstances will a volunteer

who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised or be allowed to engage in regulated activity.

## **19 Supervised volunteers**

- 19.1 Volunteers who work only in a supervised capacity and are not in regulated activity will undergo the safe recruitment checks appropriate to their role, in accordance with the federation's risk assessment process and statutory guidance.

## **20 Contractors**

- 20.1 The federation checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests confirmation that DBS checks and barred list checks have been undertaken by the contractor where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity.

## **21 Site security**

- 21.1 Visitors to the school, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given a badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in. All visitors are expected to observe the school's safeguarding and health and safety regulations to ensure children in school are kept safe. The Executive Headteacher will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

## **22 Extended school, out-of-school providers and off-site arrangements**

- 22.1 All extended and off site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the federation, this policy and procedures apply.
- 22.2 When we host out-of-school providers on the premises, it should be noted that whilst the provider is responsible for their own safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, the school may refer any concerns they have about the provider to the local authority. We follow the DfE's [Using after-school clubs, tuition and community activities](#) guidance.
- 22.3 When our pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work related activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

## **23 Photography and images**

- 23.1 The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent and legitimate reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or distributing images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place.
- 23.2 To protect pupils we will:
- seek parental consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)

- avoid using pupils' names with an image except where the identity of the pupil is integral to the story, in which case only the first name of the pupil will be used
- ensure pupils are appropriately dressed
- encourage pupils to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them

## 24 Online safety

- 24.1 Our pupils use electronic equipment on a daily basis to access the internet and share content and images via social networking sites.
- 24.2 Unfortunately some adults and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to grooming and enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings.
- 24.3 Pupils may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate websites that promote unhealthy lifestyles, extremist behaviour and criminal activity.
- 24.4 The federation's Online Safety Policy, available in hard copy on request, electronically on the Policies and Documents Google Shared Drive or on the federation's website, explains how we try to keep pupils safe in school (and whilst they are accessing online learning whilst out of school) and protect and educate pupils in the safe use of technology. This includes reference to the four Cs (Content, Contact, Conduct and Commerce) at relevant, age appropriate opportunities in the curriculum. Cyberbullying and sexting by pupils will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. Serious incidents may be managed in line with our child protection procedures.
- 24.5 The Online Safety Policy states that the federation will "maintain a current record of all staff and pupils who are granted access to the federation's devices and systems":
- All staff, pupils and visitors will read and sign the ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy before using any federation resources.
  - Parents will be informed that pupils will be provided with supervised internet access which is appropriate to their age and ability.
  - Parents will be asked to read the ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy for pupil access and discuss it with their child, where appropriate.
  - When considering access for vulnerable members of the community (such as with children with special education needs) the federation will make decisions based on the specific needs and understanding of the pupil(s).
- 24.6 All staff receive online safety training and regular updates. The federation's online safety coordinator is Mr Alan Dennis (Business Manager - ICT and Infrastructure).
- 24.7 The federation considers online safety to be a priority and included in this is how we manage pupils' use of their own electronic devices on the school sites - and in particular mobile phones. When pupils use the federation's network to access the internet, they are protected from inappropriate content by our filtering and monitoring systems, which are regularly reviewed for their effectiveness.
- 24.8 'Filtering' refers to the technology preventing access to harmful or inappropriate content, whilst 'monitoring' refers to the practical steps staff take to ensure harmful or inappropriate access is not made. Monitoring can include:



- physical monitoring
- live software monitoring
- monitoring of user logs
- monitoring of individual devices

24.9 Any school devices used away from the school sites are also subject to filtering and monitoring procedures.

24.10 However, many pupils are also able to access the internet using their own data plan. The Online Safety Policy outlines the steps the federation takes to minimise inappropriate use.

24.11 Our filtering and monitoring procedures are reviewed by the ICT team, DSLs and the child protection governor on at least an annual basis, to ensure that they effectively prevent access to harmful or inappropriate content. We also ensure that the systems we have in place to report any difficulties with the system are understood by all staff and reports are effectively managed.

24.12 All staff undertake training to understand the risks of poor filtering and monitoring, and know how to share their concerns.

24.13 Staff and governors take part in annual cybersecurity training.

## **25 Staff/pupil relationships**

25.1 The federation provides advice to staff regarding their personal online activity and has strict rules regarding online contact and electronic communication with pupils. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action or child protection investigation.

25.2 The Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers refers to expectations around internet use and social networking.

## **Child Protection Procedures**

### **26 Recognising abuse**

26.1 To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

26.2 Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people. 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.

26.3 Details of the definitions of the four types of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional and neglect) are included at Appendix A.

26.4 Other key areas where staff may need to take additional advice or action are described below. There are a number of specific categories where there is evidence of increased vulnerability, and all school staff should understand the need to be particularly vigilant and take advice from the DSL if they believe they identify a child who may need extra support or to be referred to an external agency.

## 27 Children who are absent from education

27.1 Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly 'County Lines' (see below). It is important the school's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

27.2 The schools will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day. The school will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not in school. This means we need to have at least two up to date contact numbers for parents/carers. Parents should remember to update school as soon as possible if any details change.

27.3 In response to the latest DfE guidance the federation has:

- staff who understand fully what to do when children do not attend regularly
- appropriate procedures/policies for pupils who go missing from school
- staff who are trained to recognise signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage
- procedures in relation to taking pupils off roll when they:
  - leave school to be home educated
  - move away from the school's location
  - remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
  - are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards)
  - are permanently excluded

27.4 We will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend school, but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.

27.5 When a pupil leaves the school we will maintain a record of their new school and the expected start date.

27.6 Each school's attendance lead will submit a monthly return to the local authority indicating children missing education, and the DSL must review this submission before it is sent to ensure they are aware of any concerns and can add additional information if required.

27.7 Our procedures reflect the latest DfE and local authority guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education> and <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Looked-after/Virtual.aspx#childrennotin-school>

## 28 Children missing from home

28.1 Operation Endeavour is an innovative project in which schools and colleges in Northumberland are participating, and which is run in partnership with

Northumberland County Council and Northumbria Police. The project commenced in November 2018, and aims to support children and young people who go missing from home. Children who go missing from home are at risk of significant harm and they may be vulnerable to sexual exploitation, violent crime, gang exploitation, or to drug and alcohol misuse.

28.2 As a result, following any report of a child going missing to the Police, the Police will make contact with Children's Social Care who will then communicate relevant and necessary information to nominated school staff. Each school has members of staff (key adults) who have been fully trained in liaising with the Police and children's social care when required, and will ensure that the necessary support is made available to the child or young person following their return.

## **29 Children with special educational needs and disabilities**

29.1 Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges because:

- there may be assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying without outwardly showing any signs
- difficulties may arise in overcoming communication barriers

## **30 Bullying**

30.1 While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's wellbeing and in very rare cases has been a feature in the suicide of some young people.

30.2 All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through the federation's Anti-bullying Policy. All pupils and parents receive a copy of the policy and procedures on joining the school and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in PSHE/SMSC education and through the work of the pastoral teams. If the bullying is particularly serious, or the procedures for tackling bullying are deemed to be ineffective, the Executive Headteacher and the DSL will consider implementing child protection procedures.

## **31 Looked after and previously looked after children**

31.1 The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The designated teacher for looked after children and the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head for children in care.

## **32 Children with sexually harmful behaviour**

32.1 Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's anti-bullying procedures where

necessary. However, there will be occasions when a pupil's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures.

- 32.2 The management of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the school will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community. Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator. Staff who become concerned about a pupil's sexual behaviour, including any known online sexual behaviour, should speak to the DSL as soon as possible.

### **33 Sexual exploitation of children**

- 33.1 Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.
- 33.2 The federation includes the risks of sexual exploitation in each PSHE/SMSC and Relationship and Sex Education curriculum. A common feature of sexual exploitation is that the child often doesn't recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and doesn't see themselves as a victim. The child may initially resent what they perceive as interference by staff, but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse.
- 33.3 All staff are made aware of the indicators of child sexual exploitation by undertaking the Child Sexual Exploitation (Adapt e-learning) module on the NCC Learning Together platform and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSL.

[https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p\\_ch\\_sexual\\_exploit.html](https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p_ch_sexual_exploit.html)

### **34 Criminal exploitation of children (County Lines)**

- 34.1 Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of 'County Lines' criminal activity, and includes drug networks or gangs who groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. See Appendix A for further details.

[https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p\\_ch\\_affected\\_gang\\_act.html](https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p_ch_affected_gang_act.html)

### **35 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

- 35.1 In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. Any person found guilty of an offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 is liable to a maximum penalty of 14 years' imprisonment, or a fine, or both.
- 35.2 Whilst all staff should speak to the DSL with regard to any concerns about FGM, there is a specific legal duty on teachers. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.

35.3 All teaching and pastoral staff are made aware of the indicators of FGM by undertaking the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) (Adapt e-learning) module on the NCC Learning Together platform and all concerns are reported immediately to the Police and the DSL. See Appendix A for further details.

[https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p\\_fem\\_gen\\_mutil.html](https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p_fem_gen_mutil.html)

### **36 Forced marriage**

36.1 A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

36.2 Since June 2014 forcing someone to marry has become a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. See Appendix A for further details.

[https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p\\_force\\_marriage.html](https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p_force_marriage.html)

### **37 Radicalisation and extremism**

37.1 The government defines extremism as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

37.2 Some children are at risk of being radicalised: adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. Nationally, Islamic extremism is the most widely publicised form - however, schools should also remain alert to the risk of radicalisation into white supremacy and extreme right wing factions.

37.3 All teaching and pastoral staff receive training to help to identify signs of extremism. Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable pupils to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the school follows the DfE advice *Promoting fundamental British Values as part of SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools (2014)*:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/380595/SMSC\\_Guidance\\_Maintained\\_Schools.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380595/SMSC_Guidance_Maintained_Schools.pdf)

37.4 See Appendix A for further details.

[https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p\\_sg\\_ch\\_extremism.html](https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p_sg_ch_extremism.html)

### **38 Private fostering arrangements**

38.1 A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16, or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. Children looked after by the local authority or who are placed in a residential school, children's home or hospital are not considered to be privately fostered.

38.2 Private fostering occurs in all cultures, including British culture and children may be privately fostered at any age.

38.3 By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify Children's Services as soon as possible.

38.4 Where a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement they will raise this with the DSL and the federation should notify the local authority of the circumstances:

[https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p\\_ch\\_living\\_away.html](https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p_ch_living_away.html)

## 39 Child on child abuse

39.1 Staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves as child on child abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

39.2 Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or part of growing up. Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse and this must always be considered when cases are reviewed.

39.3 The federation maintains a zero tolerance approach to any forms of sexual violence or sexual harassment. We believe that all children have the right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm from adults and other children. We recognise that some students will negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under each school's Behaviour Policy.

39.4 Occasionally, allegations may be made against students by others in the school which are of a safeguarding nature. This could include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation, some of the following features will be found:

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

39.5 To support young people in this situation we will follow our usual safeguarding procedures ensuring all information is recorded and reported to the DSL, with particular reference being made to NCASP guidance on abuse by children and young people:

[https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p\\_ch\\_sexual\\_exploit.html](https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p_ch_sexual_exploit.html)

39.6 In cases of 'sexting' we will follow guidance given to schools and colleges by the DfE: Sharing Nudes and Semi Nudes: how to respond to a incident, published December 2020:

#### **40 Domestic violence and abuse**

- 40.1 Our federation is fully engaged in Operation Encompass, and we recognise the importance of all staff having a basic understanding in relation to domestic violence and the impact it can have on children. The federation notifies all parents that we are partners with the local authority and police in relation to Operation Encompass and new staff receive a briefing as part of their induction.
- 40.2 Staff understand that Child to Parent Violence and Abuse (CPVA) i.e. violence perpetrated by a child on their parent is also a form of domestic violence and as such will seek advice from the DSL when they are made aware of such incidents:  
[https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p\\_dom\\_viol\\_abuse.html](https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p_dom_viol_abuse.html)

#### **41 Serious violence**

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

#### **42 Mental health**

- 42.1 All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff are not expected, or trained, to diagnose mental health conditions or issues, but may notice behaviours that may be of concern.
- 42.2 If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL or deputy.

#### **43 Contextual safeguarding**

- 43.1 Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside the school. All staff, but especially the DSL (and deputies) should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Children's social care assessments should consider such factors so it is important that schools provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse. See Appendix A for further details.

#### **44 Impact of abuse**

- 44.1 The impact of child abuse, neglect and exploitation should not be underestimated. Many children do recover well and go on to lead healthy, happy and productive lives, although most adult survivors agree that the emotional scars remain, however well

buried. For some children, full recovery is beyond their reach, and the rest of their childhood and their adulthood may be characterised by anxiety or depression, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, unequal and destructive relationships and long-term medical or psychiatric difficulties.

## 45 Taking action

45.1 Any child, in any family, in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”.

45.2 Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- In an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, if necessary call 999.
- Report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL (or their deputy), definitely by the end of the day.
- Do not start your own investigation.
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only - do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family.
- Complete a written record of any action you take using the school’s recording procedure.
- Seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

## 46 If you are concerned about a pupil’s welfare

46.1 There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk, but have no ‘real’ evidence. The pupil’s behaviour may have changed or their patterns of attendance may have altered. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the pupil the opportunity to talk. The signs they have noticed may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill or an accident has occurred. It is fine for staff to ask the pupil if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

46.2 Staff should use the **Safeguarding Concern Form** to record these early concerns. If the pupil does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL.

46.3 Concerns which do not meet the threshold for child protection intervention will be managed through the Early Help process:

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Family/Support.aspx>

## 47 If a pupil discloses to you

47.1 It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive.

47.2 If a pupil talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, **the staff member will need to let the pupil know that they must pass the information on** - staff are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which they tell the pupil this is a matter for professional judgement. If they jump in immediately the pupil may think that they do not want to listen, if left until the very end of the conversation,



the pupil may feel that they have been misled into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

#### 47.3 During their conversations with the pupil, staff will:

- allow them to speak freely
- remain calm and not overreact - the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting their listener
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort - 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'
- not be afraid of silences - staff must remember how hard this must be for the pupil
- **under no circumstances** ask investigative questions - such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what does the pupil's mother think about all this
- at an appropriate time tell the pupil that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on and explain to whom and why
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' or 'I can't believe what I'm hearing' may be the staff member's way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong
- tell the pupil what will happen next. The pupil may agree to go to see the designated senior person. Otherwise let them know that someone will come to see them before the end of the day.
- report verbally to the DSL even if the child has promised to do it by themselves
- write up their conversation as soon as possible on the **Record of Discussion with Young Person Form** and hand it to the DSL
- seek support if they feel distressed

### 48 Sexual violence or sexual harassment

48.1 The federation recognises that in cases related to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment there may be situations where the young person asks the school not to tell anyone about the incident and all staff are aware of their duty to report concerns to the DSL.

48.2 Report of sexual violence or sexual harassment will include the time and location of the incident and subsequent risk assessments will include any actions required to make the location safer.

48.3 The federation recognises the importance of understanding intra-familial harms and will identify any necessary support for siblings following incidents of sexual violence or sexual harassment.

### 49 Notifying parents

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

49.2 However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care.

## 50 Referral to children's social care

50.1 The DSL will make a referral to children's social care if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. In the absence of the DSL, their deputy will make the referral. Other staff may also make referrals to children's social care under the direction of the DSL.

50.2 The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

50.3 Any member of staff may make a direct referral to children's social care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child.

50.4 The DSL should keep relevant staff informed about actions taken, they do not need to share all information but staff must be confident their concerns have been actioned.

## 51 Confidentiality and sharing information

51.1 All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the pupil and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

51.2 Staff should only discuss concerns with the designated senior person, head teacher or chair of governors (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

51.3 However, following a number of cases where senior leaders in school had failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, *Keeping Children Safe in Education* emphasises that **any** member of staff can contact children's social care if they are concerned about a child.

51.4 Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

51.5 Information sharing is guided by the following principles. The information is:

- necessary and proportionate
- relevant
- adequate
- accurate
- timely
- secure

51.6 Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share.

- 51.7 Records of safeguarding concern forms, discussion with young person forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.
- 51.8 Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access, and sensitive information should not routinely be stored on laptop computers, which, by the nature of their portability, could be lost or stolen. Child protection information, including Operation Encompass and Operation Endeavour notifications, will be stored separately from the pupil's school file and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held.
- 51.9 The DSL will normally obtain consent from the pupil and/or parents to share sensitive information within the school or with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSL may share information *without* consent, and will record the reason for not obtaining consent.
- 51.10 Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Executive Headteacher or DSL.
- 51.11 The Data Protection Act 2018 does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.
- 51.12 The federation's Data Protection Policy is available to parents and pupils on request, and is available on the federation's website.

## **52 The child's wishes**

- 52.1 Where there is a safeguarding concern, governing bodies, proprietors and school or college leaders should ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place for children to express their views and give feedback. Ultimately, all systems and processes should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

## **53 Reporting directly to child protection agencies**

- 53.1 Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC if:
- the situation is an emergency and the designated senior person, their deputy, the head teacher and the chair of governors are all unavailable
  - they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety
  - for any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child
- 53.2 If the student is over 18, and is not a danger to themselves, permission must be obtained from the student to share the information they have disclosed with outside agencies.

53.3 We recognise that some procedures are different for those young people and adults over the age of 18 years. Once the student has reached the age of 18, he/she may be classed as a vulnerable adult. The definition of this is in accordance with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 i.e. a person who has reached the age of 18 and:

- is in residential accommodation or sheltered housing
- receives domiciliary care or any form of health care
- is detained in lawful custody
- is by virtue of an order of the court under supervision by a person exercising functions for the purposes of part one of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
- receives the welfare service of an agency outside the school
- receives any service or participates in any activity provided specifically for persons who fall within subsection 9 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2009
- payments are made to him/her (or to another on his/her behalf) in pursuance of arrangements under section 57 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001
- requires assistance in the conduct of his/her own affairs (i.e. a pupil at school who has not yet reached their 18th birthday)

53.4 In general, adult safeguarding procedures should be implemented for 18 year olds and in these situations Children's Safeguarding should remain equal partners throughout the process so any issues that impact on the service can be addressed.

53.5 These situations may be complicated by the different procedures, timescales and processes. The federation may make reference to the adult services guidelines 'Safeguarding Adults Procedural Framework Ten Step Summary'.  
<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Health-and-social-care/Care%20support%20for%20adults/safeguarding%20adults/10-Step-Framework-Chart-Updated-Oct-2018-15-02-19.pdf>

## **54 Work experience**

54.1 The federation has detailed procedures to safeguard pupils undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervise pupils on work experience which are in accordance with the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

## **55 Children staying with host families**

55.1 The school may make arrangements for pupils to stay with a host family during a foreign exchange trip or sports tour. In such circumstances the school follows the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, to ensure that hosting arrangements are as safe as possible.

55.2 Some overseas pupils may reside with host families during school terms and we will work with the local authority to check that such arrangements are safe and suitable.

Our designated members of staff with responsibility for Child Protection issues are:

| School                       | Name                | Role designation      | Last CP trained |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Astley Community High School | Mr Dan Gilhooley    | Assistant Headteacher | 08.07.22        |
| Whytrig Middle School        | Mr Jonathan Souter  | Head of School WMS    | 08.03.22        |
| Seaton Sluice Middle School  | Mrs Karen McSparron | Head of School SSMS   | 11.01.22        |

Deputising arrangements:

| School                       | Name                 | Role designation             | Last CP trained |
|------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Astley Community High School | Mr Jonathan Souter   | Head of School WMS           | 08.03.22        |
| Whytrig Middle School        | Mr Dan Gilhooley     | Assistant Headteacher        | 08.07.22        |
| Seaton Sluice Middle School  | Mrs Katie Middlemiss | Student Progress Leader SSMS | 13.10.21        |

**Lead Governor for Safeguarding:** Mrs Susan Dungworth

**Online Safety Coordinator:** Mr Alan Dennis (Business Manager - ICT and Infrastructure)

### Safer Recruitment and Selection training

One member of the selection panel for staff appointments must have completed either online or face-to-face safer recruitment training. Currently the following people are trained:

- Mrs Susan Dungworth (Chair of Governors) - 20.01.16
- Mr John Barnes (Executive Headteacher) - 20.01.16
- Mrs Karen McSparron (Head of School SSMS) - 21.09.20
- Mr Jonathan Souter (Head of School WMS) - 20.01.16
- Mr Ben Watson (Business Director) - 05.10.22
- Mrs Kath Lennon (Assistant Headteacher) - 08.02.23
- Mrs Janet Das (Business Manager - HR, Admin and Partnerships) - 22.11.21
- Mr Gary Taylor (Business Manager - Data and Curriculum Support) - 12.10.22
- Mr Steve Henderson (Student Progress Leader) - 08.07.22
- Mrs Katie Middlemiss (Teacher) - 19.10.22
- Mrs Angela Vintis (Senior Leadership Support Officer) - 20.01.16
- Mrs Bev Telfer (Pastoral Support Worker) - 08.02.23
- Miss Arielle Prior (Attendance Officer SSMS/WMS) - 30.10.21

## **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A: Definitions of abuse and other harmful behaviour

APPENDIX B: Local Authority and NCASP contacts

APPENDIX C: School paperwork for recording and reporting concerns

APPENDIX D: Raising safeguarding concerns about a child

APPENDIX E: Dealing with sexual violence and sexual harassment

APPENDIX F: Standards for effective child protection practice in schools

APPENDIX G: Frequently asked questions

APPENDIX H: E-safety and children exposed to abuse through the digital media

APPENDIX I: Dealing with allegations against people who work with children

APPENDIX J: School Child Protection Files - a guide to good practice

## Four categories of abuse

### Physical abuse

- Physical abuse is 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. (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy, but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

### Emotional abuse

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

### Sexual abuse

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

### Neglect

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

- o ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### **Indicators of abuse**

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the DSL.

**It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.**

A child who is being abused, neglected or exploited may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- frequently miss school, arrive late or leave the school for part of the day
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour - from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their school work
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.

**It is very important that staff report their concerns - they do not need 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk.**

### **Upskirting**

'Upskirting' typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is now a criminal offence.



## Domestic Abuse

In April 2022, the Domestic Abuse Act 2022 received Royal Assent and introduced a statutory definition for the first time. The Domestic Abuse Act 2022 (Part 1) defines [domestic abuse](#) as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services)
- psychological, emotional or other abuse

People are 'personally connected' when they are, or have been married to each other or civil partners; or have agreed to marry or become civil partners. If the two people have been in an intimate relationship with each other, have shared parental responsibility for the same child, or they are relatives.

The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

## Human Trafficking

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking and ensuring they receive appropriate care. A trafficking case may involve a range of agencies such as the police, local authorities and charities and the NRM makes it easier for these agencies to work together.

If you think a child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999. If you receive information on a potential trafficker or you think a child is a victim of trafficking:

- Professionals: [contact the Child Trafficking Advice Centre \(CTAC\)](#)
- General public: [contact the NSPCC](#) to discuss concerns with one of our counsellors, or you can contact your local police or children's services (01670 534000)

## Honour based abuse

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses 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 so-called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubt, staff should speak to the DSL. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

## Indicators

There are a range of potential indicators that a child may be at risk of HBA. Guidance on the warning signs that FGM or forced marriage may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found in the Multi agency statutory guidance on FGM:

## **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. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon **teachers** along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils, but the same definition of what is meant by “to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out” is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. Information on when and how to make a report can be found at [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information](#).

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 also still consider and discuss any such case with the school or college’s DSL and involve children’s social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures.

## **Symptoms of FGM**

FGM may be likely if there is a visiting female elder, there is talk of a special procedure or celebration to become a woman, or parents wish to take their daughter out-of-school to visit an ‘at-risk’ country (especially before the summer holidays), or parents who wish to withdraw their children from learning about FGM. Staff should not assume that FGM only happens outside the UK.

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:

- difficulty walking, sitting or standing and even looking uncomfortable
- spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
- spending long periods of time away from the classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems
- frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
- prolonged or repeated absences from school or college, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (e.g. withdrawal or depression) on the girl’s return
- reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations
- confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear
- talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

## **Forced marriage**

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can

be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage. School and college staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact 020 7008 0151 or email [fmufco.gov.uk](mailto:fmufco.gov.uk) and more information can be accessed using the following link: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/322307/HMG\\_MULTI\\_AGENCY\\_PRACTICE\\_GUIDELINES\\_v1\\_180614\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/322307/HMG_MULTI_AGENCY_PRACTICE_GUIDELINES_v1_180614_FINAL.pdf)

### Recognising extremism

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- showing sympathy for extremist causes
- glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures
- making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school
- evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent.)
- secretive behaviour
- online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes
- attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views
- advocating violence towards others

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

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education

### Child criminal exploitation: county lines

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

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

### **Contextual Safeguarding**

Contextual Safeguarding has been developed by Carlene Firmin at the University of Bedfordshire in recent years to inform policy and practice approaches to safeguarding adolescents. Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.

Therefore children's social care practitioners need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts. See <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/about/what-is-contextual-safeguarding>

**APPENDIX B: Local Authority and NCASP contacts**

| Advice Area   | Contact  |
|---|--|
| For advice on making a referral or to make a referral for Children's Social Care or Early Help                                      | <p><b>OneCall: 01670 536400</b></p> <p>Please note you may call to raise/discuss your initial concerns; however they must then be submitted in writing.</p> <p>If you are submitting a referral, please use <a href="http://northumberland.gov.uk">Forms (northumberland.gov.uk)</a></p>   |
| For further discussion about an open case or advice on the operation of child protection/safeguarding procedures of a specific case | If known, contact the allocated social worker or early help worker or OneCall 01670 536400   |
| For generic advice on the operation of child protection/safeguarding procedures   | <p>Justine Clephane - 07879 874168</p> <p>Vicky Kinneavy - 07966 325300</p> <p>Carol Leckie - 07584 313178</p>   |
| Allegations against people working with children  | <p>07500 606174</p> <p><a href="mailto:LADO@northumberland.gov.uk">LADO@northumberland.gov.uk</a></p> <p>The Northumberland LADO is Louise Prudhoe, but please use the generic contact information to ensure you get a response</p>  |
| Queries in relation to the model policy for schools or related guidance   | Carol Leckie - 07584 313178  |
| HR advice for schools   | <a href="mailto:SchoolsHR@northumberland.gov.uk">SchoolsHR@northumberland.gov.uk</a>   |
| MAPPA - Risk Management re individuals who may pose a risk to children  | <p>Sharron Pearson</p> <p>Senior Manager Specialist Services</p> <p><a href="mailto:sharron.pearson@northumberland.gov.uk">sharron.pearson@northumberland.gov.uk</a></p>   |
| MARAC - Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference   | <p>Sarah Wintringham</p> <p>Principal Education Welfare Officer</p> <p><a href="mailto:sarah.wintringham@northumberland.gov.uk">sarah.wintringham@northumberland.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Jenny Mollon</p> <p>Lead Education Welfare Officer</p> <p><a href="mailto:jenny.mollon@northumberland.gov.uk">jenny.mollon@northumberland.gov.uk</a></p>    |
| Attendance, children missing education, and elective home education   | <p>Sarah Wintringham</p> <p>Principal Education Welfare Officer</p> <p><a href="mailto:sarah.wintringham@northumberland.gov.uk">sarah.wintringham@northumberland.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Dawn Westerby</p> <p>Lead Education Welfare Officer</p> <p><a href="mailto:dawn.westerby@northumberland.gov.uk">dawn.westerby@northumberland.gov.uk</a></p> |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Education Support for Looked After Children  | Tara Prescott<br>Deputy Virtual School Head Teacher<br><a href="mailto:tara.prescott@northumberland.gov.uk">tara.prescott@northumberland.gov.uk</a>   |
| Early Help   | Emma Walker<br>Early Help Team Manager<br><a href="mailto:emma.walker@northumberland.gov.uk">emma.walker@northumberland.gov.uk</a><br><br>Emma Foote<br>Early Help Education Team<br><a href="mailto:emma.foote@northumberland.gov.uk">emma.foote@northumberland.gov.uk</a> |
| Child to Parent Violence and Abuse (CPVA)  | Emma Walker<br>Early Help Team Manager<br><a href="mailto:emma.walker@northumberland.gov.uk">emma.walker@northumberland.gov.uk</a>  |
| Monitoring and quality assurance of the operation of child protection and safeguarding procedures of a specific case | Jane Walker - 07752 782649<br>Carol Leckie - 07584 313178   |
| NCASP Business Managers  | Saira Park (Children)<br><a href="mailto:saira.park@northumberland.gov.uk">saira.park@northumberland.gov.uk</a><br><br>Emma Beniams (Adults)<br><a href="mailto:emma.beniams@northumberland.gov.uk">emma.beniams@northumberland.gov.uk</a>                                  |

Safeguarding Concern Reporting Form

Name of young person:

Form Class:

Date of birth:

Concern:

Reported by:

Reported to and when:

Action taken, by whom and when:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Discussion with Young Person

Name of young person:

Form Class:

Date of birth:

Date:

Time : am/pm

Place:

Present:

What young person revealed:

Circumstances leading up to the disclosure:

Questions asked of young person:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX D: Raising safeguarding concerns about a child

Safeguarding concerns arise from information which indicates that a child has or may have been:

- affected by behaviour that has (or may have) harmed a child or children
- been exposed to criminal activities that have (or could have) caused harm to a child or children

If a child discloses an incident to you:

- Explain to the child that you will share this information with a senior member of staff in order to help them.
- Listen carefully to - and take seriously - what the child is saying.
- Reassure the child who has made the disclosure to you that they have done the right thing and that you believe them.
- Give the child time to talk.
- Do not probe or ask leading questions.
- Do not promise to keep secrets.
- Record what has been said as soon as possible after the conversation and ensure that a DSL is notified immediately.

All allegations of harm or potential harm must be acted upon, but remember that investigation is not your responsibility. Do **not** confront the person subject to the allegation.

As soon as you can, complete a Safeguarding Concern Reporting Form. Remember to include:

- clear and factual information about what it is that you have seen/heard/noticed which concerns you; if you have noticed a mark on the child, it is really important to complete an attached body map, giving an indication of the shape, size and location of the mark; if you include your opinion in your report, make it clear that this is your opinion
- full names of those involved and where possible, reference to staff roles
- why what you have seen/heard/noticed concerns you; what are you worried will happen if this concern/incident is not responded to?
- any actions you have already taken
- whether you have spoken to parents/carers about the concern/incident; remember, you may need to seek advice from the DSL if you are unsure about whether speaking to the parent/carer may increase the risk to the child, and if the parent/carer is the alleged perpetrator you must **always** seek advice from the DSL first

Ensure your referral has been received (either verbal acknowledgement or electronic confirmation).

The DSL will proceed with the matter and should inform you of any appropriate next steps. If you do not hear from the DSL within 24 hours, please make contact with them.

## APPENDIX E: Sexual Violence and Sexual Harrassment

In line with latest guidance the governing body will ensure that each school has:

- procedures to minimise the risk of child on child abuse
- well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible systems in place for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously
- procedures for how allegations of child on child abuse will be recorded, investigated and dealt with
- clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any other children affected by child on child abuse will be supported
- a recognition that even if there are no reported cases of child on child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported

Child on child abuse is also clearly referenced in each school's Behaviour Policy.

## APPENDIX F: Standards for Effective Child Protection Practice in Schools

A school should measure its standards with regard to safeguarding against the expectations of the Ofsted Framework and the arrangements of the NCASP.

In best practice, schools:

- operate safe recruitment practices including ensuring appropriate DBS and reference checks are undertaken according to DfE guidance on safer recruitment, including the maintenance of a single central register of all staff (including volunteers) with DBS numbers and training record
- have an ethos in which children feel secure, their viewpoints are valued, and they are encouraged to talk and are listened to
- provide suitable support and guidance so that pupils have a range of appropriate adults to whom they can turn if they are worried or in difficulties
- work with parents/carers to build an understanding of the school's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children and a recognition that this may occasionally require children to be referred to investigative agencies as a constructive and helpful measure
- are vigilant in cases of suspected child abuse, recognising the signs and indicators, have clear procedures whereby teachers report such cases to senior staff and are aware of local procedures so that information is effectively passed on to the relevant professionals
- monitor children who have been identified as at risk, keeping, in a secure place, clear records of pupils' progress, maintaining sound policies on confidentiality, providing information to other professionals, submitting reports to case conferences and attending case conferences
- provide and support child protection updates regularly to school staff and in particular to designated teachers every two years to ensure their skills and expertise are up to date
- contribute to an inter-agency approach to child protection by developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies
- use the curriculum to raise pupils' awareness and build confidence so that pupils have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and

understand the importance of protecting others, taking into account sex and relationships guidance

- provide clear policy statements for parents/carers, staff and children and young people on this and on both positive behaviour policies and the school's approach to bullying;
- have a clear understanding of the various types of bullying - physical, verbal and indirect, and act promptly and firmly to combat it, making sure that pupils are aware of the school's position on this issue and who they can contact for support
- take particular care that pupils with additional needs in mainstream and special schools, who may be especially vulnerable to abuse, are supported effectively with particular attention paid to ensuring that those with communication difficulties are supported to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate communicative skills
- have a clear policy about the handling of allegations of abuse by members of staff, ensuring that all staff are fully aware of the procedures and that they are followed correctly at all times, using the guidance
- have a written whole school policy, produced, owned and regularly reviewed by school staff and which clearly outlines the school's position and positive action in respect of the aforementioned standards

## APPENDIX G: Frequently Asked Questions

### **What do I do if I hear or see something that worries me?**

- *Report it to the DSL or Executive Headteacher - please remember all reports must be recorded; reporting verbally is not enough*
- *If that is not possible, telephone Children's Services (OneCall 01670 536400) as quickly as possible. (In an emergency call 999 for the police)*

### **What are my responsibilities for child protection?**

- *To know the name of your DSL and who to contact if they are not available*
- *To respond appropriately to a child and ensure the child knows you are taking their concerns seriously*
- *To report to the DSL or directly to Social Care if that is not possible*
- *To record your concerns, using the federation's agreed paperwork*
- *Don't do nothing*

### **Can I go to find someone else to listen?**

- *No, you should never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events; however, you may want to have a colleague with you who is recording the child's disclosure while you actively listen, giving them 100% of your attention*

### **Can I promise to keep a secret?**

- *No, the information becomes your responsibility to share in order to protect*
- *As an adult, you have a duty of care towards a child or young person*

### **Can I ask the child questions?**

- *You should never ask probing questions, and do not make judgements or say anything about the alleged abuser; it may be construed as contriving responses*
- *However, you can ask a child to repeat a statement*

### **Do I need to write down what was said?**

- *Yes, as soon as possible, exactly what was said*
- *Use the federation's agreed paperwork and make sure you date and sign the record*
- *Make sure you record facts and not opinions*

## Appendix H: E-Safety Social Media Guidance

Northumberland Safeguarding Board Procedures can be found at the following link

[http://northumberlandscb.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/esafety\\_social\\_media.pdf](http://northumberlandscb.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/esafety_social_media.pdf)

## Appendix I: Dealing with allegations against people who work with children

**Allegations or concerns about an adult working in the school whether as a teacher, supply teacher, other staff, volunteers or contractors**

We recognise the possibility that adults working in the school may harm children, including governors, volunteers, supply teachers and agency staff. Any concerns about the conduct of other adults in the school should be taken to the Executive Headteacher without delay; any concerns about the Executive Headteacher should go to the Chair of Governors.

Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff, supply teachers, volunteers or contractors should be reported to the Executive Headteacher.

Concerns may come from various sources, for example, a suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

The Executive Headteacher has to decide whether the concern is an allegation or low-level concern. The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (see below).

### **Allegations**

It is an allegation if the person<sup>1</sup> has:

- 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 may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (also includes behaviour outside the school)

Allegations should be reported to the LADO without delay.

Before contacting the LADO, schools and colleges should conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help them determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation.

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<sup>1</sup> Person could be anyone working in the school or a college that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors

The LADO's role is not to investigate the allegation, but to ensure that an appropriate investigation is carried out, whether that is by the police, children's social care, the school or college, or a combination of these.

### Low-level concerns

Concerns may be graded low-level if the concern does not meet the criteria for an allegation; and the person has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers, including inappropriate conduct outside of work. Example behaviours 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
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

If the concern has been raised via a third party, the Executive Headteacher should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

- directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously
- to the individual involved and any witnesses

Reports about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

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

Low-level concerns should be recorded in writing, including:

- name<sup>2</sup> of individual sharing their concerns
- details of the concern
- context in which the concern arose
- action taken

Records must be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018. Schools and colleges should decide how long they retain such information, but it is recommended that it is kept at least until the individual leaves their employment.

Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

If a concerning pattern of behaviour is identified and now meets the criteria for an allegation, then the matter should be referred to the LADO.

The records' review might identify that there are wider cultural issues within the school or college that enabled the behaviour to occur. This might mean that policies or processes could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

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<sup>2</sup> If the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible

## What is a Local Authority Designated Officer or LADO?

The role of the LADO was initially set out in the HM Government guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)* and continues in *Working Together (2015)*.

The LADO works within Children's Services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

This role applies to paid, unpaid, volunteer, casual, agency and self-employed workers and all adults outside the school workforce. They capture concerns, allegations or offences; this can include concerns about their own personal life, e.g incidents of domestic violence or child protection concerns relating to their own family.

If there is an allegation against the Headteacher then concerns should be reported directly to the Chair of Governors and LADO.

The LADO is involved from the initial phase of the allegation through to the conclusion of the case. They will provide advice, guidance and help to determine whether the allegation sits within the scope of the procedures. **Schools should seek advice from the LADO as soon as an allegation is made.**

The LADO coordinates information-sharing with the right people and will also monitor and track any investigation, with the aim to resolve it as quickly as possible.

The LADO for Northumberland is **Louise Prudhoe**.

[LADO@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@northumberland.gov.uk)

**07500 606174**

Child protection files should include:

- copy of referral form
- minutes of strategy meetings
- any written submission to a child protection conference / child protection plan review
- minutes of child protection conference / child protection plan reviews
- log of phone calls / contact with parent/carer and professionals
- all Encompass and Endeavour notifications

All safeguarding concerns raised with the DSL (whether or not they require referral to Children's Social Care) should be recorded. This should include any action taken by the member of staff raising the concern and also any action taken by the designated person (eg talking to child individually, contacting parents, taking advice from other professionals etc). These records should be kept, as with a child protection file, securely, **separate to the child's main school file**.

At the point of transfer to another school, child protection records should be transferred, securely and directly from DSL to DSL, **separate to the child's main school file**. Schools should ensure a record of posting is maintained and that the receiving school records receipt of documents

The main school file should have a 'flag' which shows that additional information is held by the DSL.