



CENTRAL LEARNING
PARTNERSHIP TRUST

Safeguarding Policy

School:	WVTC
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Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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School safeguarding statement

“Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. “KCSIE

At Wolverhampton Vocational Training Centre (WVTC) we are committed to safeguarding children and young people and we expect everyone who works in our school to share this commitment. Adults in our Centre take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and young people to talk to us about anything that may worry them.

1) Safeguarding Definition

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

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development.
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Who does safeguarding apply to?

Applies to **ALL** children and young people. Children includes everyone under the age of 18yrs.

Child protection

Is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined as:

Activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside of the home, including online. Effective safeguarding means practitioners should understand and be sensitive to factors, including economic and social circumstances and ethnicity, which can impact children and families’ lives.

At WVTC we are committed to safeguarding children and young people and we expect everyone who works in our school to share this commitment. Adults in our school take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and young people to talk to us about anything that may worry them.

Victims and alleged perpetrator(s)

For the purposes of this policy, we, in places, use the term ‘victim’. It is a widely recognised and understood term. It is important that we recognise that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way. Ultimately, we will be conscious of this when managing any incident and be prepared to use any term with which the individual child is most comfortable.

For the purpose of this policy, we, in places, use the term ‘alleged perpetrator(s)’ and where appropriate ‘perpetrator(s)’. These are widely used and recognised, however, we will think very carefully about terminology, especially when speaking in front of children, not least because in some cases the abusive behaviour will have been harmful to the perpetrator as well. The use of appropriate terminology will be determined as appropriate, on a case-by-case basis.

2) Policy Aims

- To provide Staff with the framework to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children and in so doing ensure they meet their statutory responsibilities;
- To ensure consistent good practice across the school; and

- To demonstrate our commitment to protecting and supporting our vulnerable children, students who need support through early help, children in need and children who have a child protection plan.

3) Legislation and Guidance

The Local Governing Body (LGB) of WVTC recognises and is committed to fulfilling its statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- The Education Act 2002 (section 175/157)
 - Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires local education authorities and the governors of maintained schools and further education (FE) colleges to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
 - Section 157 of the same act and the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 require proprietors of independent schools (including academies and city technology colleges) to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.
- The Education (independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The non-maintained Special schools (England) regulations 2015
- Wolverhampton Multiagency Safeguarding arrangements
- Thresholds of support to children and families in Wolverhampton
- Working together to safeguard children (Dec 2023)
- Keeping children safe in education (September 2024)
- Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (May 24)
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (March 2015)
- Sections 26 & 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Prevent Duty Guidance (Dec 2023)
- Working together to improve school attendance (Aug 2024)
- Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006

4) Related Policies

Our policy relates to safeguarding and child protection concerns and sits within a suite of other safeguarding policies. Our policy applies to all staff (teaching and non-teaching), governors and volunteers, temporary and supply staff working in our school. It will be reviewed at least annually by the Governing body and is in line with our WSCB local procedures, the expectations of the Department for Education and Ofsted which inspects schools' safeguarding arrangements. Other policies that may be referred to within this policy include:

- Attendance and Punctuality
- Admissions
- Anti-bullying
- Educational Visits
- Visiting Speakers
- Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment
- Behaviour Policy
- Equal Opportunity
- Diversity
- Management of Allegations
- PSHE
- Citizenship
- Online-Safety
- Children Missing Education
- Whistleblowing

- Sexting
- British Values
- Physical Intervention/Positive Handling

5) Roles and Responsibilities

A) Local Governing Body

Our Safeguarding Link Governor is **Paul Bellamy**

Our Chair of Governors is **Paul Bellamy**

Our LGB have a strategic leadership responsibility for the safeguarding arrangements and will ensure they comply with their duties under legislation, they will have regard to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' to ensure that the policies, procedures and training in our school are effective and comply with the law at all times.

Our LGB will ensure that they facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding. This will ensure that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. They will ensure that all systems, processes and policies operate with the best interests of the child at their heart. Our school will have a senior board level (or equivalent) lead to take leadership responsibility for our school's safeguarding arrangements, including filtering and monitoring systems for online safety.

Our LGB will ensure that all governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place at WVTC are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training will be regularly updated.

Our LGB will be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty, Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Our LGB will ensure:

Safeguarding policies:

- Appropriate policies and procedures are in place in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare. These policies will include an effective safeguarding/child protection policy, a code of conduct for adults which will amongst other things include - low level concerns, allegations against staff, whistle blowing plus acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications including the use of social media and a school behaviour policy.
- WVTC safeguarding policies and procedures will be transparent, clear, and easy to understand for staff, pupils, students, parents, and carers.
- These policies, along with our school's behaviour policy, part one of KCSIE and information regarding the role of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies, will be provided to all staff on induction. Our LGB will take a proportional risk-based approach to the level of information that is provided to temporary staff and volunteers.
- Our safeguarding/child protection policy will describe procedures which are in accordance with government guidance and refer to locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements put in place by the safeguarding partners. It will be updated annually (as a minimum), and be available publicly either via our school website or by other means.
- That the above policies and procedures, adopted by our LGB particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, are followed by all staff.
- Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place to children who are absent from school, particularly for repeated/prolonged periods and those missing education, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect including sexual abuse or exploitation and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

- Where reasonably possible, our school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil or student.
- Reflects the whole school approach to child-on-child abuse. Includes policies reflected elsewhere e.g online safety and SEND.
- The behaviour policy will include measures to prevent bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).

Designated safeguarding lead and deputies:

- They have appointed an appropriate senior member of staff, from our school leadership team to the role of designated safeguarding lead. The designated safeguarding lead will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). Their role will be made explicit in the role-holder's job description (see Annex C which describes the broad areas of responsibility and activities related to the role);
- They should ensure the designated safeguarding lead has the appropriate status and authority within the school or college to carry out the duties of the post. The role carries a significant level of responsibility and the postholder should be given the additional time, funding, training, resources, and support needed to carry out the role effectively.
- They determine whether they choose to have one or more deputy designated safeguarding lead(s) as appropriate. Any deputies appointed will be trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead;
- That whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, as set out above, remains with the designated safeguarding lead. This responsibility will not be delegated;
- That the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies will liaise with the safeguarding partners and work with other agencies;
- The designated safeguarding lead and any deputies should liaise with the safeguarding partners and work with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children. NPCC- 'When to call the police' will help designated safeguarding leads understand when they should consider calling the police and what to expect when they do.
- That during term time the designated safeguarding lead and or a deputy will always be available (during school or college hours) for staff in the school or college to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Our GB will arrange, in liaison with the HT/DSL, adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities; and
- The designated safeguarding lead and any deputies will undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. The training will be updated every two years. The DSL will attend Prevent training. In addition to their formal training, as set out above, their knowledge and skills will be updated, (for example via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments), at regular intervals, but at least annually.

Multi-agency working:

- That our school contributes to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- We, SLT and the DSL/DDSLs understand our role in the safeguarding partner arrangements
- We co-operate and engage fully with the published safeguarding arrangements
- Our school will work with social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans. Our school will allow access for children's social care from the host local authority and, where appropriate, from a placing local authority, for that authority to conduct, or to consider whether to conduct, a section 17 or a section 47 assessment;

- That our safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority as part of the inter-agency safeguarding procedures set up by the three safeguarding partners. This will include understanding and reflecting local protocols for assessment and the threshold document along with supplying information as requested by the safeguarding partners.

Information Sharing

Our LGB understands that sharing information is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect, and in promoting children's welfare, including their educational outcomes. They understand that we have clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes.

- Our LGB understand and recognise the importance of information sharing between practitioners and local agencies. Our LGB will ensure arrangements are in place that set out clearly the process and principles of information sharing within the school and with the three safeguarding partners, other organisations, agencies and practitioners as required
- Our LGB understand the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure.
- Our LGB understand the DPA 2018 and the GDPR are not barriers to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child being placed at risk of harm they understand that fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.
- Our LGB will ensure relevant staff have due regard to the data protection principles, which allow them to share personal information, as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018, and the GDPR. Relevant staff should be confident of the processing conditions under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR which allow them to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information which is sensitive and personal, and should be treated as 'special category personal data'.
- Our LGB will ensure that staff who need to share 'special category personal data' are aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent, if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk.
- If our school is unable to provide pupils' personal data where the serious harm test under the legislation is met. For example, in a situation where a child is in a refuge or another form of emergency accommodation, and the serious harms test is met, we should withhold providing the data in compliance with schools' obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR. Where in doubt our school will seek independent legal advice. Where children leave our school, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college within 5 days ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt will be obtained from the receiving school or college. The file will be transferred separately from the main pupil file. Our school will ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and SENCOs or the named person with oversight for SEN in a college, are aware as required.
- In addition to the child protection file, our designated safeguarding lead will also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse or those who are currently receiving support through the Channel programme and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

Staff Training:

- That all staff members undergo safeguarding and child protection training including online safety, which includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring at induction. The training will be regularly updated. Our induction and training will be in line with advice from the safeguarding partners. In addition, all staff members will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings), as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively;

- Our LGB recognises the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis. Our staff will be provided with the opportunity to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and child protection policy.
- Safeguarding training, including online safety training, is integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole school safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning.
- Whilst consider training requirements there will be regard to the Teachers' Standards which set out the expectation that all teachers manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe educational environment and requires teachers to have a clear understanding of the needs of pupils.

Online Safety:

Our LGB understand that our school increasingly work online and that it is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material.

- Appropriate filters and appropriate monitoring systems are in place and take care that "over blocking" does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught with regards to online teaching and safeguarding.
- Remote learning - Where children are being asked to learn online at home our school will refer to and use the links and resources provided by the DfE: safeguarding in schools colleges and other providers and safeguarding and remote education.
- Technology and the risks and harms associated with it evolve rapidly. We will review our approach to online safety annually, supported by an annual risk assessment.
- Our school meets the DfE filtering and monitoring standards and Cyber standards.

Opportunities to Teach Safeguarding:

- Our LGB will ensure that children are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe, including online. It should be recognised that effective education will be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs or disabilities.
- Teach about online challenges and hoaxes and share the information about this with parents and carers
- Relevant topics will be included within Relationships and Sex Education (for all secondary pupils) and Health Education (for all primary and secondary pupils). In teaching these subjects we will have regard to the statutory guidance.
- Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school approach that prepares our students for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment. We will have a clear set of values and standards, upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. These will be underpinned by the school's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as by a planned programme of evidence-based RSHE delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum. The programme will be fully inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering the needs of children with SEND and other vulnerabilities). This program will tackle at an age-appropriate stages issues such as:
 - healthy and respectful relationships
 - boundaries and consent
 - stereotyping, prejudice and equality
 - body confidence and self-esteem
 - how to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
 - the concepts of, and laws relating to- sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support, and
 - what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.

Inspection

- They are familiar with the OFSTED Education Inspection Framework and safeguarding: Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings.

Safer Recruitment:

- They prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by adhering to statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required; and ensuring volunteers are appropriately supervised. Our academy has written recruitment and selection policies and procedures in place; and
- At least one person on any appointment panel has undertaken appropriate safer recruitment training.
- Will ensure that policies and processes are monitored to ensure that they are effective and embedded
- They will ensure that the SCR is regularly audited by and appropriate member of staff

Dealing with concerns about staff who may pose a risk of harm to children:

- There are procedures in place to manage concerns/allegations against teachers (including supply teachers and volunteers), that might indicate they would pose a risk of harm to children. These allegations or concerns will be referred to the designated officer at the local authority, by the appropriate person. Our school will follow the procedures outlined in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- “Lower level” concerns will be addressed as set out in Section 2 of Part for of KCSIE.
- Procedures are in place to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns or would have been had they not resigned.
- Our LGB is aware that this is a legal duty and failure to refer when the criteria are met is a criminal offence.

Child- on- child abuse

- ALL staff should recognise that children can abuse their peers (including online). Our LGB will ensure that ALL staff are clear about our school’s policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse.
- Our safeguarding/child protection policy includes:
 1. procedures to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse;
 2. systems in place (and they are well promoted, easily understandable and easily accessible) for children to confidently report abuse, knowing that they concerns will be treated seriously
 3. sets out how allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated and dealt with;
 4. 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 reported.
 5. clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any other child affected by child-on-child abuse will be supported;
 6. a statement that makes clear there should be a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and it will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter” “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”
 7. recognition of the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse, that all child- on- child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously;
 8. the different forms of child -on- child abuse, such as: bullying - including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying; sexual violence and harassment, physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; up-skirting; consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes ad semi-nude images and/or videos; causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent; abuse in intimate relationships between peers and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

The Child’s wishes

- The child’s wishes, and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems are in place for children to express their views and give feedback. Systems and processes will operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

Children potentially at greater risk of harm (both online and offline)

a) Children who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)

- The school DSL/or deputies are aware that some children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Local authorities should share the fact a child has a social worker. Children may need this help due to abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health. The designated safeguarding lead will hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. Where children need a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services).

b) Children requiring mental health support

- School has an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils. 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. Our governing body ensures our school has clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.

c) Looked after children and previously looked after children

- That staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep looked after children safe.
- And that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. They should also have information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her. The designated safeguarding lead should have details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child.
- All staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after and previously looked after children we will ensure that all agencies work together, and prompt action will be taken when necessary to safeguard these children

The designated teacher

- They appoint a designated teacher to work with local authorities to promote the educational achievement of registered children who are looked after and to ensure that this person has appropriate training. With the commencement of the sections 4-6 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the designated teacher will also have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales
- The designated teacher has appropriate training and relevant qualifications and experience

Virtual school heads

- The designated teacher works with the virtual school head to discuss how looked after children pupil premium plus funding can be best used to support the progress of looked after children in the school and meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan.
- The designated teacher will work with the virtual school headteacher to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children.

d) Care leavers

Our LGB knows that the local authority has ongoing responsibilities to young people who cease to be looked after and become care leavers.

- Designated safeguarding leads will obtain details of the local authority Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support the care leaver and should liaise with them as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

e) Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities or health issues

Our governors know that children with special educational needs and disabilities or certain health conditions may face additional safeguarding challenges

- Our safeguarding/child protection policy reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in children with special educational needs and disabilities. This can include:
- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- Being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children;
- Children with SEN and disabilities or certain medical conditions can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying- without outwardly showing any signs; and
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

To address these additional challenges our school/college will consider extra pastoral support for these children when necessary.

f) Elective home education

Many home educated children have an overwhelmingly positive leaning experience. WVTC expects the parents' decision to home educate to be made with their child's best education at the heart of the decision. Where a child has an EHCP the LA will need to review the plan, working closely with parents/carers.

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from WVTC with the view to educating at home a meeting between the LA, school and other key professionals and parents/carers will take place. This meeting is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable and/or has a social worker.

g) Children who are absent from education

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect. At WVTC we have clear procedures to respond to persistently absent pupils and children missing education.

The use of 'reasonable force' in schools and colleges

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

Our school does not adopt a 'no contact' policy, we have a policy which allows and supports our staff to make appropriate physical contact that enables staff to fully support and protect our pupils. The decision on whether or not to use reasonable force to control or restrain a pupil is down to the professional judgement of the staff concerned and will always depend on individual circumstances.

When using reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEN or disabilities or with medical conditions, our school will consider the risks carefully and recognise the additional vulnerability of these groups. We will also consider our duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to making reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and our Public Sector Equality Duty. By planning positive and proactive behaviour support, for instance through drawing up individual behaviour plans for more vulnerable children, and agreeing them with parents and carers, our school can reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use reasonable force.

B) Designated and deputy safeguarding lead/s

Our designated safeguarding lead is **Mr Chris Potter**

Our deputy safeguarding leads are **Mrs Dipti Dhamia, Mrs Joanne Wilson, Mr Paul Tucker & Miss Helen Andrioli**

Our LGB will ensure that a senior member of staff from the leadership team is appointed to the role of designated safeguarding lead. The designated safeguarding lead will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection including online safety (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). Their responsibilities will be explicit in the role holder's job description.

Our LGB will ensure that this person has the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post. The role of the designated safeguarding lead carries a significant level of responsibility, and they should be given the additional time, funding, training, resources and support they need to carry out the role effectively. Their additional responsibilities include providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and/or supporting other staff to do so, and to contributing to the assessment of children.

Our LGB will determine whether to appoint additional deputy designated safeguarding leads, they will be trained to the same level as the designated safeguarding lead and their responsibilities will be explicit in their job description.

Our designated safeguarding lead may delegate safeguarding activities to the deputy safeguarding lead however the designated safeguarding lead will retain the lead responsibility for child protection and safeguarding (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). This responsibility will not be delegated.

At WVTC the designated lead, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, is expected to:

Manage referrals:

- Refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care as required;
- Make appropriate referrals to external services to support children at Early Help level
- Support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care;
- Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required;
- Support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme;
- Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required; and
- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.

Work with others:

- Liaise with the headteacher to inform him or her of issues especially on-going enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This will include being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult (PACE Code C 2019)
- Act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners
- As required, liaise with the "case manager" (as per Part four) and the designated officer(s) at the local authority for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member;
- Liaise with staff (especially pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT Technicians, and SENCOs or the named person with oversight for SEN in a college) on matters of safety and safeguarding (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children's needs are considered holistically
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff.
- Liaise with the senior mental health lead and, where available, the Mental Health Support Team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health;

- Work with the headteacher and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these have issues might have on attendance, engagement, and achievement. This includes:
 - ensure that the school or college knows who its cohort of children who have or have had a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort; and,
 - support teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children’s educational outcomes.
- Promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances.

Training, knowledge and skills:

- Undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. Training should provide the DSL with a good understanding of their own role, , how to identify, understand and respond to specific needs that can increase the vulnerability of children, as well as the specific harms that can put children at risk and the processes, procedures, and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly children’s social care. This training will be updated at least every two years.
- The designated safeguarding lead will undertake Prevent awareness training and referral training for Channel
- In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills will be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, but at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role so they;
- Understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and local authority children’s social care referral arrangements.
- Have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so;
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school’s child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff;
- Are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers
- Understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR
- Understand the importance of information sharing, both within school and with the three safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
- Can keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals;
- Understand and support the school with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and can provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation;
- Can understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at school and have responsibility for filtering and monitoring;
- Can recognise the additional risks that children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support SEND children to stay safe online;
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses; and
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school may put in place to protect them.

Raise Awareness:

- Ensure the school safeguarding and child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately, especially new and part-time staff
- Ensure the school child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies or proprietors regarding this;
- Ensure the safeguarding and child protection policy is available publicly and parents know referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this; and
- Link with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements.
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and school and college leadership staff. Their role could include ensuring that the school or college, and their staff, know who these children are, understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort; supporting teaching staff to identify the challenges that children in this group might face and the additional academic support and adjustments that they could make to best support these children.

Sharing information and managing the Child Protection File:

The DSL is responsible for ensuring that the safeguarding and child protection files are kept up to date. The records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- A note of any action taken, decisions reached and outcome

Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. They will ensure the file is only accessed by those who need to see it and where the file or content within it is shared, this happens in line with information sharing advice as set out in KCSIE.

Ensure a child's protection file is transferred to the new school within 5 days. This will be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit and confirmation of receipt will be obtained. Our school will ensure key staff such as the designated safeguarding lead, deputies and the SENCO are aware of any child with a safeguarding concern.

Availability:

- The designated safeguarding lead or deputy will be available (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Whilst our designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) will be available in person, there may be occasions, in exceptional circumstance when this is not possible however they may be available via e-mail, phone and or Skype or other such mediums.
- Our school will arrange adequate and appropriate arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities - DSL is available on phone, skype and e-mail at all times throughout the year, including school holidays.

Providing support to staff

Training should support the designated safeguarding lead in developing expertise, so they can support and advise staff and help them feel confident on welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters. This includes specifically to:

- ensure that staff are supported during the referrals processes; and
- support staff to consider how safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked, including to inform the provision of academic and pastoral support.

Understanding the views of children

It is important that children feel heard and understood. Therefore, designated safeguarding leads should be supported in developing knowledge and skills to:

- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, and in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them; and
- understand the difficulties that children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication.

Holding and sharing information

The critical importance of recording, holding, using and sharing information effectively is set out in Parts one, two and five of KCSIE, and therefore the designated safeguarding lead should be equipped to:

- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and college, and with other schools and colleges on transfer including in-year and between primary and secondary education, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners;
- understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR); and
- be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals including justifications for decisions that have been made to meet the needs of a child or young person and understand the purpose of this record-keeping

C) All staff

The Teacher Standards (2012) state that teachers, including headteachers, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties. We extend this level of duty to include all the staff and volunteers who work at WVTC.

All staff are given part one of Keeping children safe in education together with Annexe B, all staff receive annual safeguarding training and regular safeguarding updates throughout the course of the year. Staff confirm that they have received, read and understood our school's safeguarding policies and procedures and that they have attended safeguarding training.

- All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn;
- All staff have a responsibility to identify children who may benefit from early help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.
- Any staff member who has a concern about a child must follow the referral process
- All staff have a responsibility to take appropriate action, our staff will be expected to support social care and other agencies following referrals;
- In addition to working with the designated safeguarding lead or deputy designated safeguarding lead staff members should be aware that they may be asked to support social workers and other agencies to take decisions about individual children;
- During induction, all staff members will be made aware of the systems within our school/college which support safeguarding and these will be explained to them as part of their induction. This includes: the safeguarding and child protection policy, which includes the procedures to deal with child on child abuse; the staff behaviour policy/code of conduct; the school behaviour policy, which includes measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based bullying and discriminatory bullying; the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education; Keeping Children Safe in Education -part 1, Annex B and Annex C- the role of the designated safeguarding lead and the names of the designated safeguarding lead and deputies. (Please refer to our Induction policy and procedures);
- All staff members will receive appropriate safeguarding/child protection updates regularly, but at least annually. Including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.
- All staff will be made aware of the local early help process and understand their role in it.
- All staff will be made aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments, especially children in need (section 17) and a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm (Section 47) that may follow a referral along with the role that they may be expected to play in such assessments

- All staff will be made aware of what to do if a child discloses that he/she is being abused or neglected
- All staff members will be made aware of the types and signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation so that they can identify cases of children who may need help or protection;
- Staff members working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the best interests of the child and always speak to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy immediately. Staff should be aware that children may be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.
- Staff should consider when a child's mental health might become a safeguarding concern.
- All staff should be aware of the seven golden rules for sharing information, if in any doubt about sharing information; staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children.
- Staff should ensure that if a child has made a disclosure, they are aware that the information will only be shared with the designated safeguarding lead and children's social care. staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse.
- Our staff will be alert to the potential need for any child who: is disabled and has specific needs; has special educational needs; is a young carer; is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social behaviour including gangs and organised crime; frequently goes missing from care or home, is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves; is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation; is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child; has returned home to their family from care; is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect; is at risk of being radicalised or exploited and is a privately fostered child.
- All staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead with regards to any concerns about female genital mutilation. Our teachers know that there is a legal duty placed upon, teachers must report to the police if they discover that an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18.
- If staff have concerns, or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including volunteers) posing a risk of harm to children, then the concern should be referred to the headteacher. If the concern is about the headteacher the member of staff should report this to the chair of governors. Our staff will comply with the guidelines in part four of Keeping children safe in education.
- All staff and volunteers should raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in our school's safeguarding regime. Staff should follow the school's whistleblowing policy and procedures or contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline.
- All staff will be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor will a victim ever be made to feel ashamed of making a report.
- 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 being 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 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.
- All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues

D) Supply staff, volunteers, work experience and students:

The designated safeguarding lead will explain the responsibility of reporting and recording any concerns about children's safety and welfare. Further, they will be briefed on the school's confidentiality policy and the code of conduct that we expect from all in our school.

Therefore, supply staff, volunteers and students have the responsibility to:

- Work within the school's code of conduct, KCSIE, safeguarding/child protection policy, acceptable use of technology policy and confidentiality/information sharing expectations; and

- Immediately share any concerns about a child's welfare with the designated safeguarding lead or deputy.

E) Parental Responsibilities

At WVTC we have an open-door policy where we encourage parents to share any concerns regarding their own children or any other child/children who they feel may be at risk of harm. All concerns will be explored in a sensitive and timely manner. We will always ask for consent from parents to seek additional support from partner agencies to meet the needs of the child/young person and family. If gaining consent would put the child/young person at risk of significant harm, this won't be sought.

Parents /carers should ensure their child attends school and that they arrive on time and are collected on time. Should a pupil not be collected on time, the school will ensure that safeguarding arrangements are in place and the pupil will always be supervised by a member of staff until parents/carers arrive. In exceptional circumstances, we will speak with social care for support and advice to ensure the child can get home safely (this may involve professionals supporting from partner agencies and/or the child being transported by a trusted adult other than the parent/carer).

We expect parents/carers to notify us of any changes in family circumstances and inform us of any changes of address and contact numbers and where reasonably possible to provide more than one emergency contact number.

F) Children's Responsibilities

In our school, we respect our children. The safeguarding culture within our school is one that encourages all children to do their best and to talk freely about any concerns or worries. We provide opportunities that enable our children to take and make decisions for themselves. Children will always be taken seriously and listened to if they seek help from a member of staff. Our school encourages all pupils to share any worries or concerns with any adult in the school at any time.

6) Confidentiality and Information sharing

Our school adopts the principles outlined in the DfE Information sharing guidance. As a school we have clear powers to share, hold and use information to identify and tackle all forms of abuse and neglect and promote the children's welfare, including their educational outcomes.

Data protection legislation (the Data Protection Act 2018 (the DPA 2018) and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)) does not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of safeguarding children, when it is necessary, proportionate, and justified to do so. In fact, data protection legislation provides a framework which enables information sharing in that context. The first and most important consideration is always whether sharing information is likely to support the safeguarding of a child.

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential. The headteacher or designated safeguarding lead and deputies will disclose any information about a child to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis only. All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other statutory agencies in order to safeguard children.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing. If a child wishes to confide in a member of staff/volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, the member of staff/volunteer will tell the child, in an appropriate manner to the individual needs of the child, that they cannot promise confidentiality and will need to pass the information on to help keep the child or other children safe. All information and data is stored securely and any information or data is shared on a need to know basis.

7) Communication with Parents

Our school will always discuss concerns with parents/carers and consent for any referrals should be sought unless to do so would:

- Place the child at risk of significant harm or further risk of significant harm;
- Place a vulnerable adult at risk of harm; and
- Compromise any enquiries that need to be undertaken by children's social care or the police.

The school will endeavour to ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibilities placed on the school and staff to safeguard children.

In the best interests of safeguarding children there may be occasions when the school may consult with other agencies without a parent's or carer's prior knowledge. Our first concern and responsibility is the child's welfare and we have a duty to protect children first and always. Such consultation may result in a formal referral which could prompt visits from social care and/or the police. We fully understand that this can be a very distressing set of circumstances. Our school will follow the procedures required by the Wolverhampton Safeguarding Partnership.

The visit may take place at the school at the request of the police or social care. In the event of the meeting being held at school parents/carers will be asked by the school to remain on the school premises until such time that the police or social care can attend. If parents/carers choose to leave school premises with their child the school will contact the police or social care to inform them of the parent's/carer's decision. Our school will employ the services of an interpreter if required.

8) Recording and reporting concerns and disclosures procedures

Staff at WVTC are advised to report a concern or disclosure with immediate effect to the DSL/DDSL.

The member of staff will use the Central Safeguarding platform to record their concerns or come directly to speak to the DSL/DDSL's. If a member of staff raises a verbal concern, then the DSL/DDSL may ask for this to be written up formally as a report by the end of the same working day.

9) Making a referral to children's social care - points to be considered Child Protection Procedures

Upon receipt of a school concern the designated safeguarding lead or deputy will decide and seek advice to determine whether the concern/disclosure meets a threshold for support from Social Services. They would complete an EMARF and refer it to the Wolverhampton MASH service.

10) Voice of the child – (children's wishes)

Children's wishes and feelings are taken into account if appropriate when determining what action to take and what services to provide to protect individual children through ensuring there are systems in place for children to express their views and give feedback. Staff members do not promise confidentiality and always act in the best interests of the child.

11) Record Keeping

At WVTC all records of concerns and safeguarding/child protection files are stored separately from the student's school file. They are locked in a secure location. All low level concerns are currently recorded on our Central Safeguarding platform.

If a student moves school, we will transfer the files, wherever possible, this will be done in person if not the file will be transferred securely and separately from the student's main file, or electronically. The files will be transferred within 5 days of a transfer. We will obtain a receipt from the receiving school. If our school is the last known school the child attend, records will be retained until the child's 25th birthday.

If a student arrives at our school with a child protection file, we will ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads, designated teacher and SENCOs, are aware as required. In addition to the child protection file, our designated safeguarding lead will also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

12) Looked After Children (LAC), previously Looked After, designated teacher and liaison with the virtual school headteacher

Our designated teacher for Young People in Care and previously looked after children is **Mr Chris Potter**.

Our designated teacher will undertake any relevant training to update their skills, understanding and knowledge to enable them to keep our looked after children and previously looked after children safe. Our designated teacher will promote the educational, physical, social and emotional welfare of children who are looked after and previously looked after children.

Previously looked after children are children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.

Our designated teacher will ensure:

- They are aware of the legal status (interim care order, full care order, voluntary arrangements of any looked after child);
- They obtain information regarding, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility;
- They obtain information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him or her;
- They obtain the name of the child's social worker;
- They obtain the name and contact details of the virtual head in the local authority that looks after the child; and
- They liaise with the virtual school headteacher to discuss how the funding for that child can be best used to support the child's need outlined in the personal education plan.
- The role of virtual school heads includes a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of children with a social worker. In offering advice and information to workforces that have relationships with children with social workers, virtual school heads should identify and engage with key professionals, helping them to understand the role they have in improving outcomes for children. This should include Designated Safeguarding Leads, social workers, headteachers, governors, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, mental health leads, other local authority officers, including Designated Social Care Officers for SEND, where they exist.

13) Care Leavers

Local authorities have on-going responsibilities to young people who cease to be looked after and become care leavers. That includes keeping in touch with them, preparing an assessment of their needs and appointing a personal advisor who develops a pathway plan with the young person. This plan describes how the local authority will support the care leaver to participate in education or training. Our designated safeguarding lead or deputy should be given details of the local authority personal advisor appointed to guide and support the care leaver, our designated safeguarding lead or deputy will liaise with the personal advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

14) Children with special educational needs and disabilities or health issues

We are aware that children with special educational needs and disabilities or certain health issues may face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. Barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children.

These can include:

- 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 or certain medical conditions can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying- without outwardly showing any signs;
- Being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children; and
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.
- Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.

We will ensure we have appropriate mechanisms in place to assist these children. Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will therefore require close liaison with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) and the SENCO.

We will consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place.

15) Children potentially at greater risk of harm

a) Children who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)

- Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs.
- Children may need this help due to abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.
- Local authorities should share the fact a child has a social worker, and the designated safeguarding lead should hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. This should be considered as a matter of routine. There are clear powers to share this information under existing duties on both local authorities and schools and colleges to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Where children need a social worker, this should inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services).
- Findings from the Children in Need review, 'Improving the educational outcomes of Children in Need of help and protection' contains further information; the conclusion of the review, 'Help, protection, education' sets out action Government is taking to support this. Our DSL is familiar with this review.

b) Children requiring mental health support

- Schools and colleges have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils.
- 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. The Governing Body should ensure we have clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.
- We will investigate a range of advice and resources to help identify children in need of extra mental health support, this includes working with external agencies.

c) Elective home education

- Many home educated children have an overwhelmingly positive leaning experience. WVTC expects the parents' decision to home educate to be made with their child's best education at the heart of the decision.
- Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from WVTC with the view to educating at home a meeting between the LA, school and other key professionals and parents/carers will take place. This meeting is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable and/or has a social worker.

- Where a child does have an EHCP the LA will need to review the plan, working closely with parents and carers.

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

- 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 they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.
- Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced, and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

With sensitive topics such as gender questioning and social transition, our setting will always strive to keep the interests of the child at the centre of our support mechanisms and individuals will be supported by the safeguarding and pastoral teams on a case-by-case basis.

e) Children who are absent from education

- Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign for a range of safeguarding issues including neglect.
- At WVTC we know our response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identify such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps to 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 LA Social Care and need a social worker (those on a CIN plan, CP plan or is a LAC) where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or community.

16) Safeguarding Training

Induction

All staff members, governors and trustees will undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction. The training will be regularly updated. Induction and training provided will be in line with advice from the WSP. Upon appointment and starting the new post, new staff, students and volunteers will be issued with an induction pack, safeguarding policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education - Part 1, annex B and annex C, Whistleblowing Policy, Management of Allegations Policy, Code of Conduct, Acceptable use of IT policy, the school's behaviour policy, our school's children missing education procedures, online safety policy and other relevant safeguarding information e.g. the name of the designated safeguarding lead and deputies. They will sign to say that they have received it, read and understood it. A meeting will be arranged on appointment to clarify and check understanding and to respond to any questions.

Designated safeguarding lead and deputies

Our designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) will undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training will be updated at least every two years.

Our designated safeguarding lead and deputies will undertake Prevent awareness training. In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills will be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, but at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as early help assessments;
- have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so;
- ensure each member of staff has access to and understands our school's safeguarding policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff, including supply staff;

- understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR
- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and with the three safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisation and practitioners
- are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers
- can keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals;
- understand and support our school with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and can provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation;
- can understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at school or college;
- can recognise the additional risks that children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support SEND children to stay safe online;
- understand when a child's mental health might become a safeguarding concern
- understand that children may be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence
- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses; and
- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them.

Staff Training

- All staff members will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Our Governing Body recognises the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis. Opportunity will therefore be provided for staff to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and child protection policy.

Governor Training

All governors are invited and encouraged to attend safeguarding training and it will be updated regularly, including online safety.

Safer Recruitment Training

Our school will ensure that at least one member of any recruitment panel has received safer recruitment training.

17) Safer working practices

Our school has a code of conduct; all staff and volunteers are issued with this at induction.

You should seek to keep your personal contact with children under review and seek to minimise the risk of any situation arising in which misunderstandings can occur. The following sensible precautions can be taken when working alone with children:

- Work in a room where there is a glass panel in the door or leave the door open;
- Make sure that other adults visit the room occasionally;
- Avoid working in isolation with children unless thought has been given to safeguards;
- Must not give out personal mobile phone numbers or private e-mail addresses;
- Must not give pupils lifts home in your cars;
- Must not arrange to meet them outside of school hours; and
- Must not chat to pupils on the social websites.

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is a criminal offence for anyone working in an education setting to have a sexual relationship with a pupil even when the pupil is over the age of consent. Any use of physical force or restraint of pupils will be carried out and documented in accordance with the relevant physical restraint policy. If it is necessary to use physical action to prevent a child from injury to themselves or others parents will be informed.

18) Safer recruitment

To create a safe environment for our children our school will adopt the safer recruitment procedures that help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children, outlined in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. The policies and procedures will be monitored to ensure that they are embedded and effective.

Our school will ensure that at least one member of any recruitment panel has received safer recruitment training.

Our school adheres to statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children, making decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required; and ensuring volunteers are appropriately supervised.

We expect all staff to have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain confidence and respect of the general public and those with whom they work.

There may be times where an individual's actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from the community, the media or public authorities, including with regard to their own children, or children or adults in the community. Staff should be aware that their behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, could compromise their position within the work setting in relation to the protection of children, loss of trust and confidence, or bringing the employer into disrepute. Such behaviour may also result in prohibition from teaching by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) a bar from engaging in regulated activity, or action by another relevant regulatory body.

At WVTC all staff must inform the Executive Head teacher during the recruitment process of anything that affects their suitability for employment, including any relevant cautions, convictions or relevant orders that they are aware of, or they may have accrued during their employment, and/or they are charged with a criminal offence that would render them disqualified from working with children.

All shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children e.g

- if they have a criminal history;
- whether they are included on the barred list;
- whether they are prohibited from teaching;
- whether they are prohibited from taking part in the management of an independent school;
- information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales, not the law in their country of origin or where they were convicted;
- if they are known to the police and children's social care;
- have they been disqualified from providing childcare and,
- any relevant overseas information

In addition, as part of the shortlisting process we will consider carrying out an online search as part of our due diligence on the shortlisted candidate, candidates will be informed if this is going to happen. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which we might want to explore with the applicant at interview.

Any offer of appointment made to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad will be conditional on satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-employment checks and satisfactory references. Upon appointment of new staff our school will:

- Verify a candidate's identity. Best practice is to check the birth certificate, where this is available;
- Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity);
- Obtain a separate barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available;
- Verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. A job applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role;
- Verify the person's right to work in the UK. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, we will follow advice on the GOV.UK website;
- if the person has lived or worked outside the UK, make any further overseas checks the school consider appropriate
- Disqualification by Association check (if required);
- Verify professional qualifications, as appropriate; we will use The Teacher Services' system to verify any award of qualified teacher status (QTS) and the completion of teacher induction and probation
- Check that a person taking up a management position is not subject to a section 128 direction made by the Secretary of State.
- Check that the candidate is not disqualified under the Childcare Act 2006 (2018 regulations) where relevant to the post
- These checks are part of a wider safeguarding regime which will carry on following appointment.

Our school understands that it is a criminal offence to allow any individual who is barred to carry out any form of regulated activity. Our school will comply with the legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult; where the harm test is satisfied in respect of that individual; where the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or if there is reason to believe that individual has committed a listed relevant offence; and that individual has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left.

Our school makes decisions about the suitability of any prospective employees based on checks and evidence including; criminal record checks (DBS), barred list checks and prohibition checks together with references and interview information.

Consideration is given to the regulated activity prospective employees will be engaged in. In summary, a person will be considered to be engaging in regulated activity if as a result of their work they:

- Will be responsible, on a regular basis in a school, for teaching, caring for or supervising children;
- Will carry out paid or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children; and
- Engage in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once.

For all other staff who have opportunity for regular contact with children who are not engaging in regulated activity, the school requires an enhanced DBS certificate, which does not include a barred list check.

For anyone appointed to carry out teaching work, an additional check will be undertaken to ensure they are not prohibited from teaching (including directions, sanctions and restrictions)

Since 01 January 2021 the TRA Teacher Services system no longer maintains a list of those teachers who have been sanctioned in EEA member states. Schools will apply the same approach for any individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK regardless of whether or not it was in an EEA country or the rest of the world.

These checks could include, where available:

- criminal records checks for overseas applicants - Home Office guidance can be found on GOV.UK; and for teaching positions

- obtaining a letter (via the applicant) from the professional regulating authority in the country (or countries) in which the applicant has worked confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions, and or that they are aware of any reason why they may be unsuitable to teach. Applicants can find contact details of regulatory bodies in the EU/EEA and Switzerland on the Regulated Professions database. Applicants can also contact the UK Centre for Professional Qualifications who will signpost them to the appropriate EEA regulatory body.

Our school keeps a Single Central Record that complies with all the requirements. It is monitored by the Executive Headteacher and DSL at regular intervals.

The Single Central Record covers the following people:

- all staff (including supply staff, and teacher trainees on salaried routes) who work at the school: in colleges, this means those providing education to children;
- all members of the proprietor body;
- Volunteers;
- Governors; and
- Agency, third-party staff and contractors

The following information will be recorded on the Single Central Record:

- An identity check;
- A standalone children's barred list check;
- An enhanced DBS check/certificate;
- Prohibition, directions, sanctions and restrictions checks;
- A section 128 check
- Further checks on people who have lived or worked outside the UK; this would include an EEA check teacher sanctions and restrictions;
- A check of professional qualifications; and
- A check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom.
- The date upon which the current and original DBS certificate was seen (applicable for employees appointed after 1/9/16)

Our school will obtain written confirmation that the employment business supplying staff has carried out the relevant checks and obtained the appropriate certificates. Our school will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made (Identity check)

We will obtain written confirmation from alternative providers we use to confirm they have undertaken the relevant pre-employment and DBS checks for their staff

All applicants MUST show their current original DBS certificate to the school as soon as they take up post.

Agency and third-party staff (supply staff)

- We will obtain written notification from any agency, or third-party organisation we use that the organisation has carried out the checks (in respect of the enhanced DBS certificate, written notification that confirms the certificate has been obtained by either the employment business or another such business), on an individual who will be working at the school or college that the school would otherwise perform.
- Where the position requires a barred list check, this must be obtained by the agency or third party prior to appointing the individual. The school will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Trainee/student teachers

- Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by the school, the school will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out. As trainee teachers are likely to be engaging in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information) must be obtained.

- Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, it is the responsibility of the initial teacher training provider to carry out the necessary checks. School will obtain written confirmation from the provider that it has carried out all pre-appointment checks that the school would otherwise be required to perform, and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children. There is no requirement for the school to record details of fee-funded trainees on the single central record.

19) Safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, including teachers, volunteers and contractors

Our school has adopted the Trust Managing Allegations Policy.

Our policy complies with the guidance set out in part four of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

All allegations of abuse of children carried out by any staff member or volunteer will be taken seriously. If an allegation is made regarding a member of staff or volunteer, the following will be considered:

Has the member of staff/volunteer;

- 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 they would 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.

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer the headteacher must be informed immediately or as soon as possible within 1 working day and he or she must contact the Designated Officer (Kenny Edgar) immediately to discuss the allegation to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action.

If an allegation is made against a supply teacher:

- Whilst schools and colleges are not the employer of supply teachers, we will ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In no circumstances should we decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the local authority designated officer (LADO) to determine a suitable outcome. The Governing body will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, whilst we carry out our investigation.
- Agencies will be fully involved and co-operate in any enquiries from the LADO, police and/or children's social services. The school will usually take the lead because agencies do not have direct access to children or other school staff, so they will not be able to collect the facts when an allegation is made, nor do they have all the relevant information required by the LADO as part of the referral process. Supply teachers, whilst not employed by the school or college, are under the supervision, direction and control of the governing body when working in the school.
- When using an agency, school will inform the agency of its process for managing allegations.

If an allegation is made against the headteacher, the member of staff who has the concern must contact the chair of governors, who must then contact the Designated Officer (Kenny Edgar) immediately or as soon as possible within 1 working day to discuss the allegation to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action.

Our procedures and approach to dealing with allegations will be applied with sensitivity and common sense. Our school will exercise its duty of care to employees, we will act appropriately to manage and minimise the stress inherent in the allegation process. Our school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

At WVTC we understand that there is a legal requirement for employers to make a referral to the DBS where we think that an individual has engaged in conduct that harmed (or is likely to harm) a child; or if a person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child. If the accused person resigns, or ceases to provide their services, this will not prevent an allegation being followed up and a referral to the DBS *must* be made, if the criteria are met (outlined in KCSiE).

As part of our whole school approach to safeguarding, we will ensure that we promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school or college (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately. Staff should feel comfortable to discuss matters both within, and where it is appropriate, outside of the workplace (including online), which may have implications for the safeguarding of children. We have policies and processes to deal with concerns (including allegations) which do not meet the harm threshold.

Low level concerns

If staff have a safeguarding concern or an allegation about another member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers or contractors) that does not meet the harm threshold, then this should be shared in accordance with the low-level concerns policy.

At WVTC we create a culture in which all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harms threshold are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical. 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.

A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

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

Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: 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. It is crucial that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately.

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

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or
- humiliating pupils.

If the concern has been raised via a third party, the Centre Manager/ (or a nominated deputy) should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

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

Our LGB will set out their low-level concerns policy within their staff code of conduct and safeguarding policies. It will contain procedures for sharing confidentiality such concerns which is clear, easy to understand and implement. Low-level concerns about a member of staff, supply staff, volunteer or contractor will be reported to the Head Teacher. Reports about supply staff and contractors will be notified to their employers, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

We will create an environment where staff are 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.

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and the action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible. Records will be retained by the Headteacher and will be reviewed regularly so that potential patterns of concerning behaviour can be identified.

Should the level of concern reach the harms threshold the case will be referred to the LADO. Records will be retained until the individual ceases to be employed in WVTC.

For references we should only provide substantiated safeguarding allegations in references. Low level concerns will not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance. It follows that a low-level concern which relates exclusively to safeguarding (and not to misconduct or poor performance) should not be referred to in a reference. However, where a low-level concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated, it should be referred to in a reference.

The Local Designated Officer in Wolverhampton is **Kenny Edgar**.

20) Whistleblowing

All staff, volunteers and parents at WVTC should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in our safeguarding regime and such concerns will be taken seriously by our headteacher and senior leadership team. Our school has adopted the Trust Whistleblowing Policy and appropriate whistleblowing procedures, which are suitably reflected in staff training and staff behaviour policies, are in place for such concerns to be raised with our headteacher, governing body or senior leadership team.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with our headteacher, governing body or senior leadership team or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are open to them, for example:

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

21) Curriculum and online-safety

Child safety issues and child protection will be addressed through the curriculum where appropriate, especially through PSHE, Computing and online-safety, Citizenship, Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and British values.

Our LGB will ensure online safety is a running and interrelated theme whilst devising and implementing their whole school or college approach to safeguarding and related policies and procedures. This will include considering how online safety is reflected as required in all relevant policies and considering online safety whilst planning the curriculum, any teacher training, the role and responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) and any parental engagement.

School is likely to be in regular contact with parents and carers. Those communications will be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online and parents and carers are likely to find it helpful to understand what systems we use to filter and monitor online use. It will be especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be clear who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online

We use a variety of resources and approaches to teach the children how to keep themselves safe, build their resilience and manage risks.

The online-safety lead is **Mr Chris Potter**

The police will be involved and advice will be sought from CEOP if required if there is any criminal element to misuse of the internet, phones or any other form of electronic media.

We have an online-safety policy which will be reviewed annually and include a risk assessment.

Central Learning Partnership Trusts Firewall, Filtering and Monitoring Provision

The Central Learning Partnership Trust is dedicated to ensuring the safety of our students, staff, and visitors when they are using online resources and connected to CLPT's school IT network. To accomplish this goal, our in-house IT services team maintains a cutting-edge firewall and filtering solution, along with a third-party device monitoring system, to reduce the risk of staff, students, and visitors encountering inappropriate content online while connected to the trust's IT network.

The firewall and filtering system have been specifically designed and implemented to ensure that any device, whether owned by the school or personally owned, connecting to a CLPT school's network will be subjected to, at the very minimum, student-level filtering.

Additionally, the school employs a third-party cloud software package known as 'Senso Cloud.' Senso Cloud is an all-in-one cloud software package for allowing for teachers to be in control of student using IT in lessons and pro-actively monitor for safeguarding alerts for DSL's and the individual schools safeguarding teams.

Senso's safeguarding module is deployed to all school/trust owned devices across the Central Learning Partnership's academies and works by proactively monitoring devices via AI-driven threat analysis. Each violation is automatically and instantly logged, screenshotted with annotated audit log including the date, time, user, and school and categorised in-line with DfE, KCSIE and NCSE frameworks. School safeguarding teams can filter and sort by severity, phrase, user, keyword, visual threat, and more. Reviewing violations is flexible and allows you to pinpoint those that require support quickly, as well as providing full browsing history to understand online activity in a wider context. Keyword libraries are generated from Senso Cloud's own comprehensive keyword library, an integrated keyword library and URL list from the Internet Watch Foundation, which is updated monthly, as well as an up-to-date list of URLs from the Counter-Terrorism Internet Referral Unit. This means you are always monitoring for the very latest potential threats. Each keyword is provided with a definition where appropriate, too, taking out the guesswork of those modern-day acronyms and slang terms.

Senso Cloud is set up to provide DSL and school safeguarding teams reports and email alerts.

Monitoring

The DSL and DDSL's are responsible for monitoring this. It is reported to Governors on a termly basis and any concerns regarding staff or students are referred to the Executive Headteacher.

22) Contextual safeguarding

We know that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside our school and/or can occur between children outside our school. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) will consider the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children will 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 our school will provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse.

23) Types and indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation

All staff and volunteers are familiar with the types and indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, they are aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

All staff will understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of home and online. They will exercise professional curiosity and know what to look for to identify abuse and neglect early.

All staff are expected to be vigilant at all times, taking account of the following.

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

Physical abuse

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

Some indicators:

- Bruising of various ages
- Bite marks
- Burns and scalds
- Fractures in non-mobile children
- Injuries in unusual areas or with well - defined edges
- Old injuries or scars
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Inconsistent explanations
- Talk of punishment which seems excessive
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
- Reluctance to remove clothing for PE or swimming

Emotional abuse

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

Some indicators:

- Physical, mental or emotional development delay
- Abnormal attachment to parents/carer
- Low self-esteem
- Lack of confidence
- Over-reaction to making mistakes
- Fear of new situations
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Self-harm

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.

Some indicators:

- Aggression
- Withdrawn
- Self-harming, including eating disorders
- Distrust of familiar adult
- Wetting or soiling day and night
- Fear of undressing for sport or swimming
- Sleep disturbances or nightmares
- Apparent secrecy about social activities or special friends
- Inappropriate sexualized conduct
- Drawings of sexual behaviours
- Sexually explicit behaviour

Neglect

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

Some indicators:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- neglect of or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs
- Under weight for age
- Hungry
- Tired
- Poor state of clothing for the child's size, weather or time of year
- Persistently dirty with a body odour
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging
- Poor health and untreated medical problems
- Lack of immunisations

- Frequently missed medical appointments

The list of indicators is not an exhaustive list. If staff recognise any of these indicators, they should not presume that the child is being abused, but **MUST** report their concerns to the designated safeguarding lead or the deputy designated safeguarding lead immediately.

24) Mental Health

All staff at WVTC are 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. We understand only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Our staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Our staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, attendance, and progress.

If any staff member has a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action will be taken, following our child protection policy and they will speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy immediately

The senior Mental Health lead for WVTC is **Mrs Dipti Dhamia**

25) Children who are absent from education

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Effective information sharing between parents, settings, schools/colleges and the local authority is critical to ensure that all children are safe and receiving suitable education.

We are aware that a children being absent from school, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of children going missing in future.

Our staff are aware of and adhere to the school's procedures for unauthorised absence, repeated and/or prolonged absence and children missing from education. Our school has appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who are persistently absent or go missing from education. Our school has an admission register and an attendance register. All students are placed on these registers at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend our school. If the child fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, our school will notify the local authority at the earliest possible opportunity to prevent the child from going missing.

Our attendance and admission registers are kept up to date. We actively encourage our parents and carers to inform us of any changes whenever they occur. Our school monitors attendance regularly and we address any issues that may cause concern and where attendance fails to meet the expected level.

Our school monitors attendance regularly and we address any issues that may cause concern and where attendance fails to meet the expected level in line with our attendance policy. We follow guidance set out in Working together to improve school attendance (August 2024) and in partnership with the Local Authority we will:

- **Expect** high standards of attendance for all pupils
- **Monitor** attendance rigorously
- **Listen and Understand** barriers to attendance and agree how to resolve them
- **Facilitate support** to ensure all barriers are removed which may be outside the school setting
- **Formalise support** when necessary, through attendance contracts
- **Enforce** attendance through statutory intervention when appropriate

Our school will notify the local authority of any child who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or, more at such intervals as are agreed by the school and the local authority.

Where a parent notifies our school that a pupil will live at another address, our school will record in the admission register:

- the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live;
- the new address; and
- the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent of a pupil notifies our school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in future, our school will record in the admission register:

- the name of the new school; and
- the date on which the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school.

Our school will notify the local authority within five days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register. We will provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. Our school will also notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the fifteen grounds set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, as soon as the ground for deletion is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register.

Our school will only delete a pupil's name from the admission register under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraph (f)(iii) or (h)(iii) if our school and the local authority have failed to establish the pupil's whereabouts after jointly making reasonable enquiries. When our school notifies the local authority that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, our school will provide the local authority with:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- at least one telephone number of the parent with whom the pupil lives;
- the full name and address of the parent with whom the pupil is going to live, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- the name of pupil's destination school and the pupil's expected start date there, if applicable; and
- the ground in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

Our school will work with the local authority to agree on methods of making returns. When making returns, we will highlight to the local authority where we have been unable to obtain the necessary information from the parent, for example in cases where the child's destination school or address is unknown. We will also consider whether it is appropriate to highlight any contextual information of a vulnerable child who is missing education, such as any safeguarding concerns. If a child/student arrives at our school and the previous school is unknown, we will contact the local authority for assistance.

26) Private Fostering Arrangements

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of the local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18 if disabled) who is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a 'close relative'. This is a private arrangement made between a parent and a carer; for 28 days or more. Close relatives are defined as step parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts, (whether of full blood, half blood, or marriage/ affinity.)

School staff will notify the designated safeguarding lead or deputy when they become aware of private fostering arrangements. The designated safeguarding lead or deputy will speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform the LA. Our school is aware that we need to report any private fostering arrangements that we become aware of to the Local Authority.

27) Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or videos

At WVTC we know and understand that sharing photos and videos online is part of daily life for many young people, enabling them to share their experiences, connect with friends and record their lives. Photos and videos can be shared as text messages, email, posted on social media or increasingly via mobile messaging apps, such as, Snapchat, Whatsapp or Facebook Messenger, etc.

The increase in the speed and ease of sharing imagery has brought concerns about young people producing and sharing sexual imagery of themselves. This can expose them to risks, particularly if the imagery is shared further, including embarrassment, bullying, sexual harassment and increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation.

Although the production of such imagery will likely take place outside of our school, these issues often manifest in schools and organisations working with children and young people. Our school will respond swiftly and confidently to ensure that young people are safeguarded, supported and educated. Producing and sharing sexual images of under-18s is also illegal.

Our school will deal with all incidents of youth produced sexual imagery as a safeguarding concern. We will be guided by the principle of proportionality and our primary concern will be the welfare and protection of the children/young people involved. Our school may respond to incidents without involving the police in accordance with the guidelines set out in the UKCCIS- Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people. Schools may respond to incidents without involving the police.

Our school will adopt the recommended procedures regarding the law and handling incidents outlined in UKCCIS- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people and DfE guidance – Searching, screening and confiscation -January 2018.

Whilst dealing with an incident our school will:

- Respond immediately to disclosures or incidents in line with our school's safeguarding procedures, staff will notify the designated safeguarding lead immediately of any concern, incident or disclosure
- Handle devices and imagery according to DfE advice (Searching, Screening and confiscation- January 2018)
- Risk assess situations
- Involve other agencies, including escalation to the police and children's social care
- Record incidents
- Involve parents unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the child/young person at risk of harm
- Seek to support young people
- All incidents relating to youth produced sexual imagery will be recorded in school. This includes incidents that have been referred to external agencies and those that have not

- Support young people to report youth produced sexual imagery online
- Provide preventative education to learn about the issue of youth produced sexual imagery
- Our staff will **not** view youth produced sexual imagery unless there is good and clear reason to do so. Wherever possible responses to incidents will be based on what DSLs have been told about the content of the imagery.
- If our school decides that other agencies do not need to be involved, then consideration will be given to deleting imagery from devices and online services to limit any further sharing of the imagery.

28) Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child 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.

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

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex;
- can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual;
- can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity; can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (through others copying videos or images they have created and posting on social media, for example);
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Child sexual exploitation is never the victim's fault, even if there is some form of exchange: all children and young people under the age of 18 have a right to be safe and should be protected from harm.

At WVTC we understand that any child in any community may be vulnerable to child exploitation, we will be alert to the fact that child sexual exploitation is complex and rarely presents in isolation of other needs and risks of harm (although this may not always be the case, particularly in relation to online abuse). Child sexual exploitation may be linked to other crimes and we will be mindful that a child who may present as being involved in criminal activity is actually being exploited.

We are aware that the following vulnerabilities are examples of the types of things children can experience that might make them more susceptible to child sexual exploitation:

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse;
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic violence or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example);
- Recent bereavement or loss;
- Social isolation or social difficulties;
- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality;

- Economic vulnerability;
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status;
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited;
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work;
- Having a physical or learning disability;
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories); and
- Sexual identity.

We understand that not all children and young people with these vulnerabilities will experience child sexual exploitation. Child sexual exploitation can also occur without any of these vulnerabilities being present.

Indicators include:

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

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines, see page 85 for more information), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

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

We know that different forms of harm often overlap, and that perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines and sexual exploitation).

29) County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money.

Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children’s homes and care homes.

Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered.

If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

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.

30) '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. Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. Our staff will be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

If our staff have any concerns regarding a child that might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBV they will speak to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy. As appropriate the designated safeguarding lead or deputy will activate the local safeguarding procedures by contacting the police and or social care.

31) Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

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.

FGM mandatory duty for teachers

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.

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.

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 our school's designated safeguarding lead or deputy 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 will follow local safeguarding procedures.

Some warning signs:

- Difficulty walking, sitting or standing;
- Unusual behaviour after an absence from school;
- Age of the young girl (0-15 years);
- A young girl may visit the bathroom more frequently or spend more time than usual in the bathroom;
- A young girl may have frequent, urinary, menstrual or stomach problems;
- Prolonged or repeated absence from school;
- A young girl may try to avoid PE lessons;
- Travel to a country known to practise FGM (School holiday times);
- An Elder family member visiting from a country known to practise FGM;
- Over hearing conversations related to FGM;
- A young girl may disclose, ask questions or ask for advice;
- Reluctance to undergo normal medical examination; and
- Girls that are withdrawn from PSHE or SRE.

32) 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. It is a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their 18th birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. This applies to non-binding, unofficial “marriages” as well as legal marriages.

The Forced Marriage Unit has published Multi-agency guidelines, with pages 35-36 focusing on the role of schools and colleges. 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.

33) Breast ironing/flattening

Breast flattening, also known as breast ironing, is the process during which young pubescent girls’ breasts are ironed, massaged, flattened and/or pounded down over a period of time (ranging from a few weeks to years) in order for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely. In some families, large stones, a hammer or spatula that have been heated over hot coals can be used to compress the breast tissue. Other families may opt to use an elastic belt or binder to press the breasts to prevent them from growing. Breast flattening usually starts with the first signs of puberty, it is usually carried out by female relatives.

It should also be acknowledged that some adolescent girls and boys may choose to bind their breast using constrictive material due to gender transformation or questioning their identity, and this may also cause health problems.

Indicators that a girl could be at risk

- A girl is embarrassed about her body
- A girl is born to a woman who has undergone breast flattening
- A girl has an older sibling or cousin who has undergone breast flattening • References to breast flattening in conversation, for example a girl may tell other children about it

- A girl may request help from a teacher or another adult if she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk
- A girl from an affected community is withdrawn from PSHE and/or Sex and Relationship Education as her parents wish to keep her uninformed about her rights and her body.
- One of both parents or elder family members consider breast flattening integral to their cultural identity.
- The family indicate that there are strong levels of influence held by elders who are involved in bringing up female children and support breast flattening.

Indicators that breast flattening has occurred

As well as keeping in mind the signs that indicate a girl may be at risk of breast flattening, professionals and others should be mindful that:

- A girl may disclose to a teacher, social worker, GP or another medical professional
- Some girls may ask for help, perhaps talk about pain or discomfort in their chest area, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear
- A girl may display reluctance to undergo medical examination
- A girl may be fearful of changing for physical activities due to scars showing or bandages being visible

Law in the UK

There are no specific laws in the UK regarding breast flattening. If any member of staff is concerned that a girl is at risk of breast flattening, they must speak to the DSL/DDSL immediately. The DSL /DDSL will contact the MASH and make a referral.

34) Up-Skirting

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a persons clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim. This is a criminal offense.

35) Serious violence

All staff should be aware of indicators which may signal that children are at risk from or 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 significant change in well-being, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

All staff should be aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to manage these. There are a number of indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include:

- increased absence from school
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- a significant decline in performance
- signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

The likelihood of involvement in serious violence may be increased by factors such as:

- being male
- having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school
- having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery

Staff should also be aware that violence can often peak in the hours just before or just after school, when pupils are travelling to and from school. These times can be particularly risky for young people involved in serious violence.

36) Prevent (Radicalisation and Extremism)

Children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk will be a part of our school's/college's safeguarding approach.

- Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.
- Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

We understand there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media) and settings (such as the internet). However, it is possible to protect vulnerable people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being radicalised.

As with other safeguarding risks, our staff will be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff will use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) making a referral to the Channel programme.

From 1 July 2015, specified authorities, including all schools (and since 18 September 2015 all colleges) as defined in the summary of this guidance, are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 ("the CTSA 2015"), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard" to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. This duty is known as the Prevent duty. It applies to a wide range of public-facing bodies. Bodies to which the duty applies must have regard to statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the CTSA 2015. Paragraphs 57-76 of the statutory "Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales" (for schools) summarises the requirements on schools in terms of four general themes:

We will:

- Assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology;
- Work in partnership with parents, children, families and statutory agencies;
- Assess the risk in our local area and as a minimum our designated safeguarding lead will undertake Prevent awareness training to provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation;
- Our DSL/DDSL will complete training for Channel referrals

- Our school will hold a Prevent risk assessment/Action plan (in line with the Prevent Duty guidance 2023), which will be reviewed annually
- Ensures that suitable filtering and monitoring is in place on all staff and pupil devices. Our pupils are taught to stay safe on-line. Our online-safety is integral to the school's IT curriculum.

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 behavior;
- 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; and
- Advocating violence towards others.

We aim to build the children's resilience to radicalisation by providing a safe environment and through particular aspects of the curriculum including SMSC, British Values, PSHE and Citizenship.

Training on Prevent will be delivered as required to the relevant staff.

Channel

Our staff should understand when it is appropriate to make a referral to the Channel programme. Channel guidance is available at: [Channel Guidance](#).

E-learning channel awareness programme for staff is available at: [Channel General Awareness](#).

Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being at risk of being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be susceptible to radicalisation. An individual will be required to provide their consent before any support delivered through the programme is provided.

37) Child-on-child abuse

This is generally where a child abuses another child/children.

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

We recognise that some children will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's relevant policy e.g. behaviour policy.

ALL staff recognise that children can abuse their peers and that it can happen inside and outside of school or online.

All staff will be clear as to the school's policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

All allegations will be taken seriously, we understand that 'abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up". We have a zero-tolerance approach to this behaviour.

All allegations will be carefully considered and all decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis in consultations with social care. Referrals under safeguarding arrangements may be necessary, key specific considerations will include:

- The age, maturity and understanding of the children; and
- Any disability or special needs of the children

Allegations against other children which are safeguarding issues

Some allegations may be of such a serious nature that they may raise safeguarding concerns. These allegations may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, sexual violence and harassment and sexual exploitation, causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent; and consensual and non-consensual use of nude and semi-nude images/videos.

We understand the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse (it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys will be perpetrators) but all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. Other gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse could, for example, include girls being sexually touched or assaulted or boys being subject to initiation or hazing type violence. It is also likely that incidents may involve older students and their behaviour towards younger students or those who are vulnerable. It is likely that, to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a child, some of the following features will be found.

If the allegation:

- Is made against an older child and refers to their behaviour towards a younger child or a more vulnerable child;
- Is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence;
- Raises risk factors for other children in the school;
- Indicates that other children may have been affected by this child; and
- Indicates that young children outside the school may be affected by this child.

Examples of safeguarding issues against a child could include:

Physical Abuse

- Violence, particularly pre-planned;
- Forcing others to use drugs or alcohol; and
- Initiation and hazing violence.

Emotional Abuse

- Blackmail or extortion;
- Threats and intimidation; and
- Bullying and cyber-bullying.

Sexual Abuse including sexting and gender-based violence

- Indecent exposure, indecent and inappropriate touching or serious sexual assaults;
- Forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting; and
- Initiation and hazing violence.
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')

Sexual Exploitation/violence and harassment

- Encouraging other children to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour (For example - having an older boyfriend/girlfriend, associating with unknown adults or other sexually exploited children, staying out overnight); and
- Photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts.

Prevention, assessing and minimising the risks

We will minimise the risk of allegations against other children by:

- Providing a developmentally age appropriate PSHE, RSE, British Values curriculum which develops children's understanding of acceptable behaviour and keeping themselves safe;
- Having clear systems in place for any child to raise concerns with staff, knowing that they will be taken seriously
- Delivering targeted work on assertiveness, protective behaviours and keeping safe those children identified as being at risk;
- Developing robust risk assessments & providing targeted work for children identified as being a potential risk to other children; and
- Training and awareness sessions will be provided for staff.
- Staff recognising, acknowledging, or understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and not downplaying some behaviours related to abuse which can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenario a culture that normalises abuse and leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Procedure to manage and record child-on-child allegations

- When an allegation is made by a child against another child, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern the designated safeguarding lead or deputy will be informed;
- A factual record will be made of the allegation, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances;
- The designated safeguarding lead or deputy will contact social care/multi-agency agency safeguarding hub (MASH) to discuss the allegation and seek advice;
- The designated safeguarding lead or deputy will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a referral where appropriate;
- If the allegation indicates that a potential criminal offence has taken place, this will be referred to the multi-agency agency safeguarding hub MASH where the police will become involved;
- Following advice from Social Care and/or the police, parents of both the child being complained about and the alleged victim, should be informed and kept updated on the progress of the referral;
- The designated safeguarding lead or deputy will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in the files of both children's files;
- It may be appropriate to exclude the pupil being complained about for a period of time according to the school's behaviour policy and procedures;
- Where neither social services nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough school investigation should take place into the matter using the school's usual behaviour procedures;
- In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan; and
- The plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned.
- Abuse that occurs online or outside of school will not be downplayed and will be treated equally seriously

At WVTC we recognise and understand that child-on-child allegations will be very distressing situations for all concerned – the victim, perpetrator, other children, family members and staff. We will seek to provide any support required and make any necessary referrals for counselling and support services.

38) Child-on-child sexual violence and harassment

If an incident of sexual violence or sexual harassment occurs our school will follow the guidance set out in Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2024).

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing.

This will, likely, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) inside or outside of school and are never acceptable.

At WVTC we take a zero-tolerance approach and any inappropriate behaviour will be addressed, even if it appears to be relatively innocuous.

All victims will be taken seriously and offered appropriate support. We know that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Staff are aware and know the importance of:

- making clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, that it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It should never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “a part of growing up” or “boys being boys”. Failure to do so can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.
- recognising, acknowledging, and understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported.
- challenging physical behaviour (potentially criminal in nature) such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Sexual violence

Our staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

Legislation.

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. This covers a wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.

Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)

Consent

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
- the age of consent is 16;
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment means ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline. For this policy, reference to sexual harassment, is in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child’s dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names
- sexual “jokes” or taunting
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes. Schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence – it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim.
- displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- upskirting (this is a criminal offence), and
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:

- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos.

o sharing of unwanted explicit content o sexualised online bullying

o unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media

o sexual exploitation; coercion and threats, and

o coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they’re not comfortable with online.

We will consider sexual harassment in broad terms. Sexual harassment (as set out above) creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.

Harmful sexual behaviour

Children’s sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is “harmful sexual behaviour” (HSB). The term has been widely adopted in child protection and is used in this advice. HSB can occur online and/or face-to-face and can also occur simultaneously between the two. HSB will be considered in a child protection context.

When considering HSB, both ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors.

The designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) to have a good understanding of HSB. This will form part of their safeguarding training. This will aid in our planning preventative education, implementing preventative measures, drafting and implementing an effective child protection policy and incorporating the approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment into the whole school approach to safeguarding.

HSB can, in some cases, progress on a continuum. Addressing inappropriate behaviour can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. Children displaying HSB have often experienced their own abuse and trauma. It is important that they are offered appropriate support.

Preventing abuse

Effective safeguarding practice is demonstrated when we are clear, in advance, about what local processes are in place and what support can be accessed when sexual violence or sexual harassment has occurred. The DSL (Or a deputy) will understand local procedures and where there is local specialist support.

Our school response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment

Our school will follow the guidance set out in part 5 Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2024.

- Any decisions made upon receipt of a concern will be made on a case-by-case basis by the designated safeguarding lead or deputy who will liaise with social care and or the police if necessary.
- All staff who have a concern regarding sexual violence or sexual harassment will speak with and report their concern to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy immediately
- All victims will be reassured that they are being taken seriously and they will be supported.
- It is important to explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.
- All staff will act in the best interest of the children
- Our staff will be supportive and respectful of the child
- Our staff will listen carefully to the child/student, they will be non-judgemental and will not ask leading questions
- Our staff will not promise confidentiality and will explain that the information will be shared with those people who will be able to help and progress the report.
- A record of the report will be made. Best practice is to wait until the end of the report and immediately write up a thorough summary. It may be appropriate to make notes during the report however staff must remain engaged with the children, listen very carefully and not be distracted by note taking.
- The record will only include the facts as the child presents them. We understand that the notes should not reflect the personal opinion of the note taker and we are aware that the notes could become part of a statutory assessment by social care or part of a criminal investigation
- Where the concern includes an online element, we know we should not view or forward any images unless there is a valid reason to do so and we will follow the DfE guidance set out in Screening, searching and confiscation advice.
- Where possible we will try to manage and record an initial report with two members of staff present preferably one of them being the designated safeguarding lead or deputy.
- If the designated safeguarding lead or deputy is not involved in the initial report the staff member will speak to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy immediately.

Considering confidentiality and anonymity

We will only engage staff and agencies who are required to support the children involved and/or be involved in any investigation.

The victim may ask us not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment. There are no easy or definitive answers when a victim makes this request. If the victim does not give consent to share information, staff may still lawfully share it, if there is another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies. For example, the public task basis may apply, where the overall purposes is to perform a public interest task or exercise official authority, and the task or authority has a clear basis in law. Advice will be sought from the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), who should consider the following:

- parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)
- the basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care, and
- rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of referring to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice approach, in these cases.

Ultimately, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children.

If the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) decide to go ahead and make a referral to local authority children's social care and/or a report to the police against the victim's wishes, this will be handled extremely carefully, the reasons will be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support should be offered.

Anonymity

Where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system, we should be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general so we can offer support and act appropriately.

We will do all we reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. We will also consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities.

Risk assessment

If we receive a report of sexual violence or harassment, the designated safeguarding lead or deputy will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. This will be considered on a case-by case basis

Our risk and needs assessment will consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support;
- whether there have been other victims
- the alleged perpetrator; and
- all the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at our academy, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s) or from future harms
- the time and location of the incident, and any action required to make the location safer.

Our risk assessment will either be an electronic record and will be reviewed and updated regularly. We will continually and actively consider the risks posed to all children/students and we will put adequate measures in place to protect and keep them safe.

Our designated safeguarding lead or deputy will engage with children's social care and specialist services as required. Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk assessments by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required. Any such professional assessments should be used to inform WVTC's approach to supporting and protecting our children/students and will be used to update our own risk assessment.

Actions to consider following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

The starting point regarding any report made at WVTC is that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and it is never acceptable and it will not be tolerated. We will not pass off any sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

Following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment we will consider:

- the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed (in an age-appropriate way.) This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Victims will be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. This will however need to be balanced with our duty and responsibilities to protect other children;
- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including: whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour;
- the ages of the children involved;
- the developmental stages of the children involved;
- any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?
- if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse (sexual abuse can be accompanied by other form of abuse and a sustained pattern may not just be of a sexual nature);
- that sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers;
- importance of understanding intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents

- are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff; and
- other related issues and wider context e.g. contextual safeguarding, any links to CSE and CCE

Managing a report

We will consider every report on a case-by-case basis. When to inform the alleged perpetrator will be carefully considered. Where a report is going to be made to children's social care and/or the police, then, generally, our school/college will speak to the relevant agency and discuss next steps and how the alleged perpetrator will be informed of the allegations. However, as per general safeguarding principles, this will not stop our school/college taking immediate action to safeguard our children, where required.

In all scenarios decisions and actions will be regularly reviewed and relevant policies will be updated to reflect lessons learnt. We will look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour. Where a pattern is identified, we will decide on a course of action. We will consider whether there are wider cultural issues within the school or college that enabled the inappropriate behaviour to occur and where appropriate extra teaching time and/or staff training could be delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

We should be part of discussions with statutory safeguarding partners to agree the levels for the different types of assessment and services to be commissioned and delivered, as part of the local arrangements.

Considering bail conditions

Our school will have due regard for the information available in KCSiE part 5.

When there is a criminal investigation, without bail conditions, our academy will work with children's social care and the police to support the victim, alleged perpetrator and other children/students involved (especially potential witnesses). Where required, we will seek advice from the police to help manage our safeguarding responsibilities.

- The term 'Released Under Investigation' or 'RUI' will replace those previously on bail for offences in circumstances that do not warrant the application of bail to either re-attend on a particular date or to include conditions preventing activity or in some cases ensuring compliance with an administrative process.
- Where bail is deemed proportionate and necessary, we will work with children's social care and the police to manage any implications and safeguard our children. An important consideration will be to ensure that the victim can continue in their normal routine, including continuing to receive a suitable education.
- Particular regard will be given to: the additional stress and trauma that might be caused to a victim within the institution; the potential for the suspected person to intimidate the victim or a witness; the need to ensure that any risk management measures strike a balance between management of risk and the rights of an unconvicted person (e.g. rights to privacy, family life, etc).
- Careful liaison with the police investigators should help to develop a balanced set of arrangements

Managing any delays in the criminal process

- There may be delays in any case that is being progressed through the criminal justice system. Our school will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a police investigation before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator and other children in the school or college. We will use a risk assessment to help inform any decision.
- Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator, our designated safeguarding lead or deputy will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions our school/college take do not jeopardise the police investigation.
- If our school/college has questions about the investigation, we will ask the police.

The end of the criminal process

- If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, we will update our risk assessment, ensure relevant protections are in place for all the children at our school and, we will consider any suitable action in light of our behaviour policy. If the perpetrator remains in our school with the victim, we will be very clear as to our expectations regarding the perpetrator now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions the school thinks are reasonable and proportionate regarding the perpetrator's timetable.

- We will ensure both the victim and alleged perpetrator remain protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).
- Where cases are classified as “no further action” (NFA’d) by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, we will continue to offer support to the victim and the alleged perpetrator for as long as is necessary. A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with their case will likely be traumatic for the victim. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. We will discuss any decisions with the victim in this light and continue to offer support. The alleged perpetrator is also likely to require ongoing support for what will have likely been a difficult experience.

Unsubstantiated, unfound, false and malicious reports

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. Safeguarding and supporting the victim. Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified, and addressed.

If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the designated safeguarding lead will consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to children’s social care may be appropriate.

If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, we will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per our behaviour policy.

Safeguarding and supporting the victim

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and will help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the victim.

- The age and the developmental stage of the victim
- The needs and wishes of the victim will be paramount (along with protecting the child) in any response. It is important they feel in as much control of the process as is reasonably possible. Wherever possible, the victim, if they wish, should be able to continue in their normal routine. Overall, the priority will be to make the victim’s daily experience as normal as possible, so that our school/college is a safe space for them.
- The victim should never be made to feel they are the problem for making a report or made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Consider the proportionality of the response. Support should be tailored on a case-by-case basis. The support required regarding a one-off incident of sexualised name-calling is likely to be vastly different from that for a report of rape. Support can include: Children and Young People’s Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ChISVAs), Rape Crisis, The Survivors Trust, CAMHS, Rape Crisis centres and the Internet Watch Foundation, The Male Survivors Partnership, NHS, Childline, Rape and assault referral centres
- We are aware that sexual assault can result in a range of health needs, including physical, mental, and sexual health problems and unwanted pregnancy. Children and young people that have a health need arising from sexual assault or abuse can access specialist NHS support from a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC).
- It will be important in all scenarios that decisions and actions are regularly reviewed and that relevant policies are updated to reflect lessons learnt. It is particularly important to look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour. Where a pattern is identified, we will decide on a course of action. Consideration will be given as to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled the inappropriate behaviour to occur and where appropriate extra teaching time and/or staff training could be delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

Victims may not disclose the whole picture immediately. They may be more comfortable providing information on a piecemeal basis. It is essential that dialogue is kept open and encouraged. When ongoing support will be required, we will ask the victim if they would find it helpful to have a designated trusted adult (for example, their form tutor or designated safeguarding lead) to talk to about their needs. The choice of any such adult should be the victim’s. We will respect and support this choice.

We are aware that sexual assault can result in a range of health needs, including physical, mental and sexual health problems and unwanted pregnancy.

We understand that a victim of sexual violence is likely to be traumatised and, in some cases, may struggle in a normal classroom environment. While we will avoid any action that would have the effect of isolating the victim, in particular from supportive peer groups, there may be times when the victim finds it difficult to maintain a full-time timetable and may express a wish to withdraw from lessons and activities. This should be because the victim wants to, not because it makes it easier to manage the situation. If required, we will provide a physical space for victims to withdraw.

We will do everything we reasonably can to protect the victim from bullying and harassment as a result of any report they have made.

Whilst the victim will be given all the necessary support to remain in our academy, if the trauma results in the victim being unable to do this, alternative provision or a move to another academy should be considered to enable them to continue to receive suitable education. This should only be at the request of the victim (and following discussion with their parents or carers).

If the victim does move to another educational institution (for any reason), the new educational institution will be made aware of any ongoing support needs. The designated safeguarding lead will take responsibility to ensure this happens (and should discuss with the victim and, where appropriate their parents or carers as to the most suitable way of doing this) as well as transferring the child protection file.

Children who have experienced sexual violence display a very wide range of responses to their experience, including in some cases clear signs of trauma, physical and emotional responses, or no overt signs at all. We will remain alert to the possible challenges of detecting those signs and show sensitivity to the needs of the child (e.g. about attendance in lessons) irrespective of how overt the child's distress is.

Safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s) and children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and will help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator:

We will have a difficult balancing act to consider. On one hand, they need to safeguard the victim (and the wider pupil/student body) and on the other hand provide the alleged perpetrator(s) with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions. Taking disciplinary action and still providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions. They can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary.

The age and the developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator(s) and nature of the allegations. Any child will likely experience stress as a result of being the subject of allegations and/or negative reactions by their peers to the allegations against them.

Consider the proportionality of the response. Support (and sanctions) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. An alleged perpetrator(s) may potentially have unmet needs (in some cases these may be considerable) as well as potentially posing a risk of harm to other children. Harmful sexual behaviours in young children may be (and often are) a symptom of either their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices and or materials. We will seek advice, as appropriate, from children's social care, specialist sexual violence services and the police.

It is important that the perpetrator(s) is/are also given the correct support to try to stop them re-offending and to address any underlying trauma that may be causing this behaviour. Addressing inappropriate behaviour can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

Advice on behaviour and discipline in schools is clear that teachers can sanction pupils whose conduct falls below the standard which could be reasonably expected of them. If the perpetrator(s) is to be excluded the decision must be lawful, reasonable and fair.

School can be a significant protective factor for children who have displayed HSB, and continued access to school, with a comprehensive safeguarding management plan in place, is an important factor to consider before final decisions are made.

It is important that if the alleged perpetrator(s) does move to another educational institution (for any reason), that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs and where appropriate, potential risks to other children and staff. The designated safeguarding lead will take responsibility to ensure this happens as well as transferring the child protection file.

Sanctions and the alleged perpetrator(s)

Disciplinary action can be taken whilst other investigations by the police and/or local authority children's social care are ongoing. We will carefully consider this on a case-by-case basis. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will take a leading role. We will consider if, by taking any action, it would prejudice an investigation and/or any subsequent prosecution. Careful liaison with the police and/or local authority children's social care should help the us make a determination. It will also be important to consider whether there are circumstances that make it unreasonable or irrational for us to reach our own view about what happened while an independent investigation is considering the same facts.

Discipline and support

Taking disciplinary action and still providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions. They can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary. We will be very clear as to what our approach is. On the one hand there is preventative or forward-looking action to safeguard the victim and/or the perpetrator(s), especially where there are concerns that a perpetrator themselves may have been a victim of abuse; and, on the other, there is disciplinary action to punish a perpetrator for their past conduct. We will be very clear as to which category any action they are taking falls or whether it is really both and should ensure that the action complies with the law relating to each relevant category.

Working with parents and carers

We will, in most instances, engage with both the victim's and the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers when there has been a report of sexual violence (this might not be necessary or proportionate in the case of sexual harassment and should be considered on a case-by-case basis). The exception to this rule is if there is a reason to believe informing a parent or carer will put a child at additional risk. We will carefully consider what information we provide to the respective parents or carers about the other child involved and when they do so. In some cases, local authority children's social care and/or the police will have a very clear view and it and we will work with the relevant agencies to ensure a consistent approach.

We will meet the victim's parents or carers, with the victim present, to discuss what arrangements are being put into place to safeguard them and to understand their wishes in terms of support and how the report is progressing.

We will meet with alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss any arrangements that are being put into place that impact an alleged perpetrator, such as, for example, moving them out of classes with the victim and what this means for their education. The reason behind any decisions will be explained. Support for the alleged perpetrator will be discussed.

Safeguarding other children

Consideration will be given to supporting children (and adult students) who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape and assault by penetration. Witnessing such an event is likely to be traumatic and support may be required.

Following any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, it is likely that some children will take "sides". We will do all we can to ensure both the victim and alleged perpetrator(s), and any witnesses, are not being bullied or harassed – this includes online and school transport.

Our whole school approach to safeguarding, a culture that makes clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and that it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated, and a strong preventative education programme will help create an environment in which all children at WVTC are supportive and respectful of their peers when reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment are made.

We will keep our policies, processes, and curriculum under constant review to protect all their children. Reports of sexual violence and/or harassment (especially where there is evidence of patterns of behaviour) may point to environmental and/or systemic problems that could and will be addressed by updating relevant policies, processes, or relevant parts of the curriculum. Alongside this, patterns identified in school may also be reflective of the wider issues within a local area and it would be good practice to share emerging trends with our safeguarding partners.

39) Domestic Abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional. All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members.

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

Operation Encompass - Operation Encompass operates in all police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the key adult (usually the designated safeguarding lead) in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This ensures that the school has up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable support to be given to the child according to their needs. Police forces not signed up to operation encompass will have their own arrangements in place.

Our school will make use of the advice and links available in Keeping Children Safe in Education (Annex B) to identify children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

40) Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. When required our designated safeguarding lead or deputies will obtain contact details and know referral routes in to the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, this does not, and will not, replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Our school staff will consider homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, we will also recognise in some cases 16 and 17-year-olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Children's services will be the lead agency for these young people and our designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances.

Other types of abuse to be aware of include:

- Bullying including cyber-bullying
- Children missing from home or care
- Drugs
- Fabricated and Induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Gangs and youth violence
- Gender based violence/violence against women and girls
- Hate
- Mental health
- Relationship abuse
- Sexting
- Trafficking
- Modern slavery

Whilst it is important for our staff to be vigilant regarding the types and signs of abuse at all times it does not necessarily mean that a child or young person has been abused because the signs have been noted or observed. However, ALL concerns MUST be shared with the designated safeguarding lead or deputy.

41) Children and the court system

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. Our school will use the age-appropriate guides to support children, 5-11year olds and 12-17year olds. Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. Our school will use the Ministry of Justice online child arrangements information tool to support this process and will make this information available to parents and carers if they require our assistance.

42) Children with family members in prison

Some children who attend our school may have a parent who has been sent to prison or in custody. Our school will utilise the information NICCO provides designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

43) Modern slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs. If we have concerns about a child then this information will be passed on to the DSL who will make a referral to social care, who will then also make a referral to the National referral Mechanism.

44) Cybercrime

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). Cyber-dependent crimes include;

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded;
- denial of Service (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources; and
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above

Children with particular skill and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime. If there are concerns about a child in this area, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), will consider referring into the Cyber Choices programme.

Our school takes Cyber Security seriously and ensure that we meet the required DFE Cyber security standards for schools. All staff have appropriate training in Cyber Security.

45) Child abduction and community safety incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends, and acquaintances); and by strangers.

Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation.

As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. Many schools provide outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers or by local police staff. It is important that lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers.

46) Monitoring policy and practice

Our safeguarding policy and procedures will be reviewed annually or sooner if required. All staff and stakeholders may contribute to the development of our policies and procedures. Our policy will be published on our website and paper copies are available upon request.

Processes for managing individual cases

Chart 1 - Action taken when a child is referred to local authority children's social care services

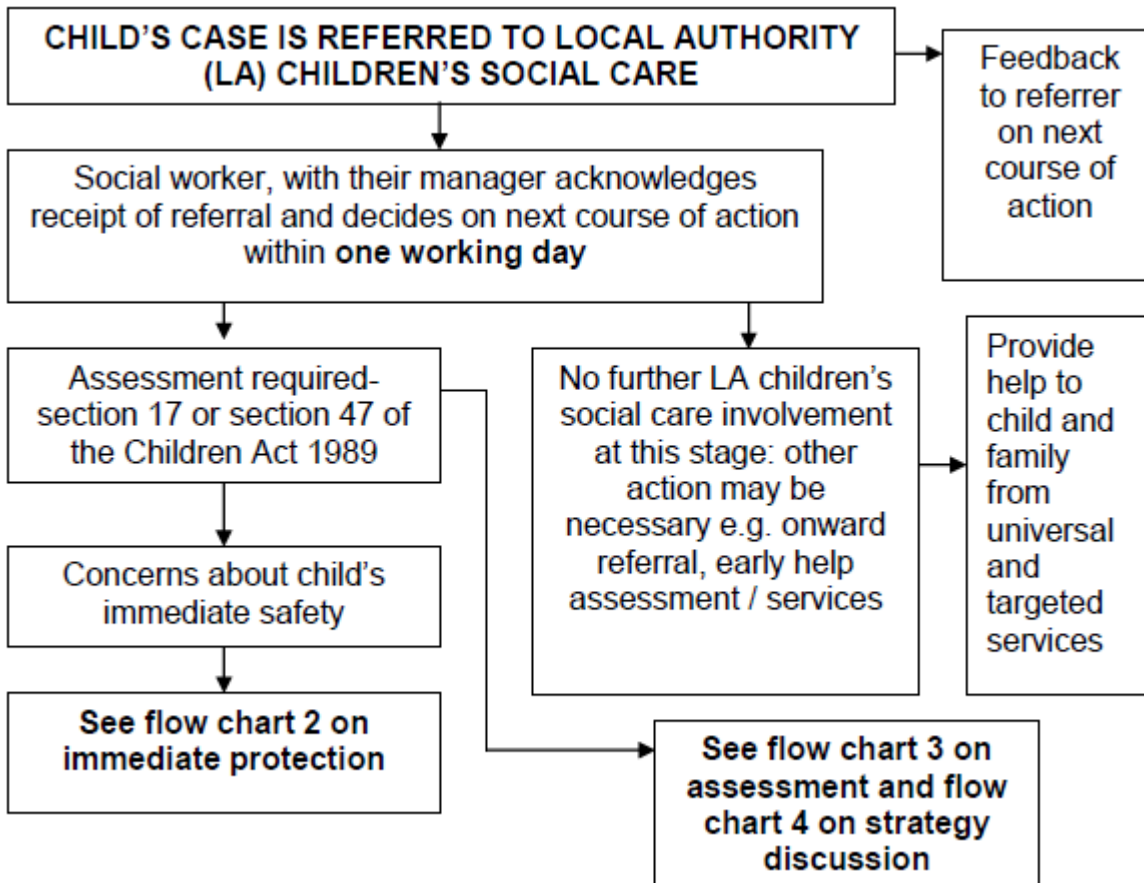


Chart 2 – Immediate Protection

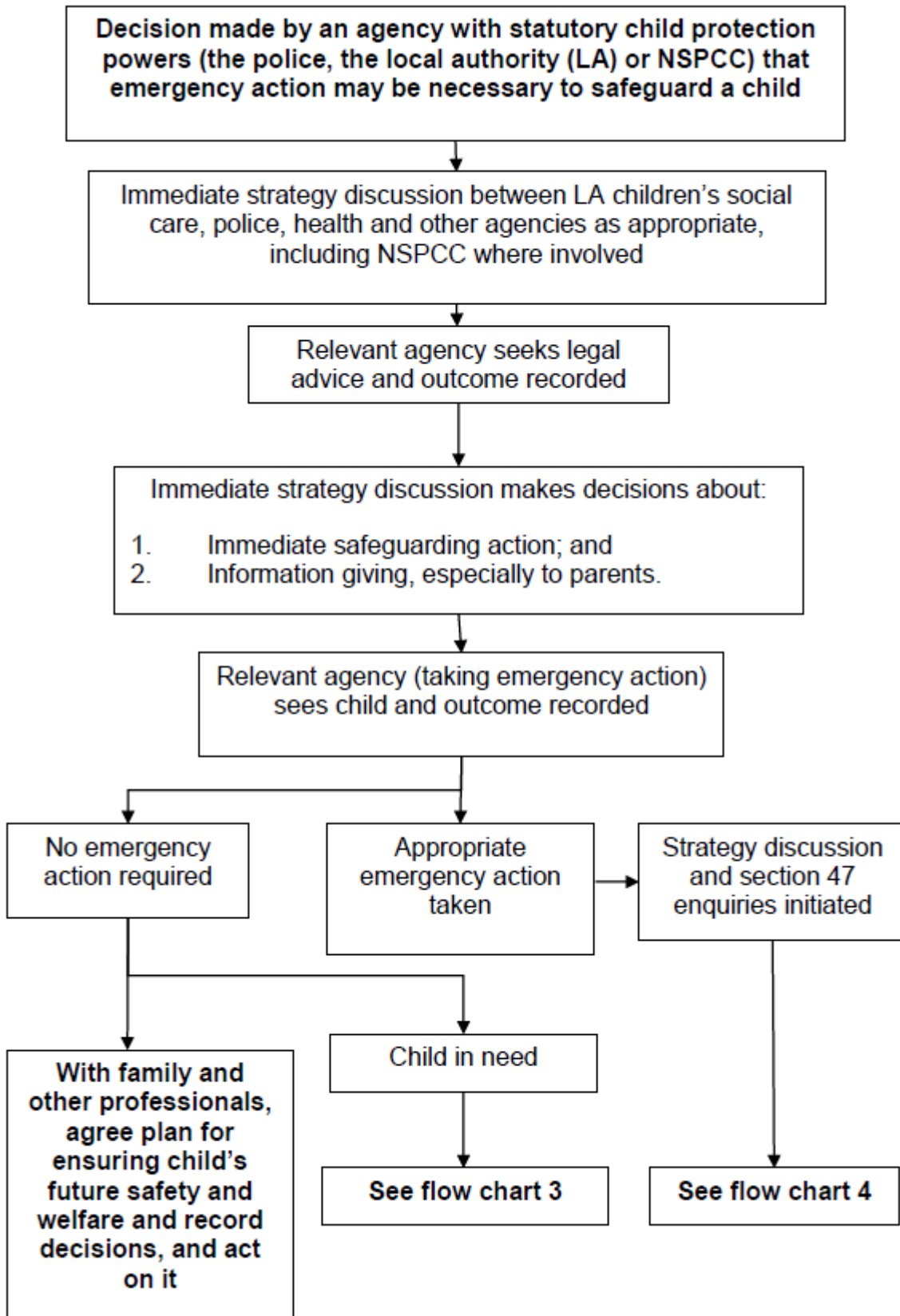


Chart 3 – Action taken for the assessment of a child

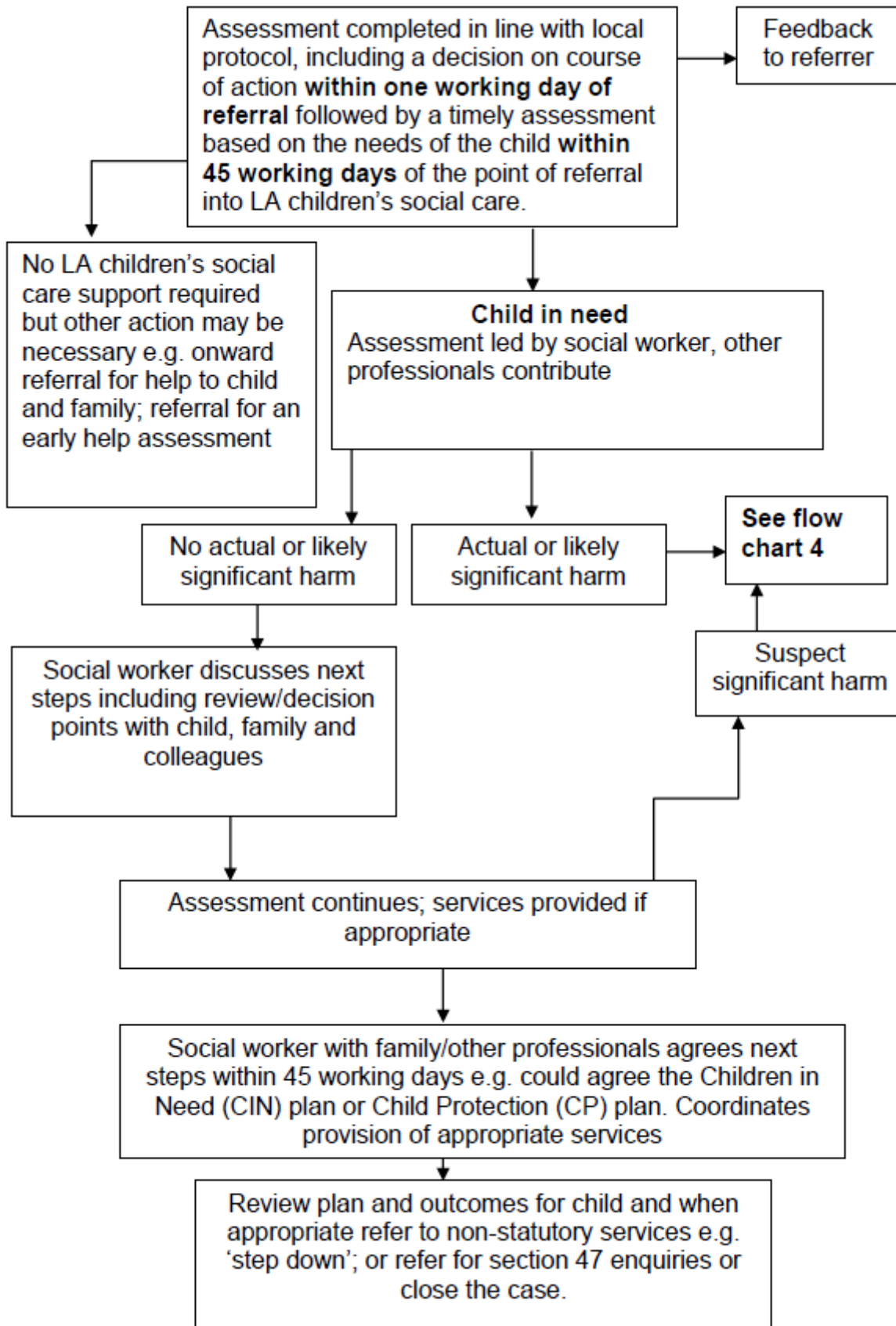


Chart 4 – Action following strategy discussion

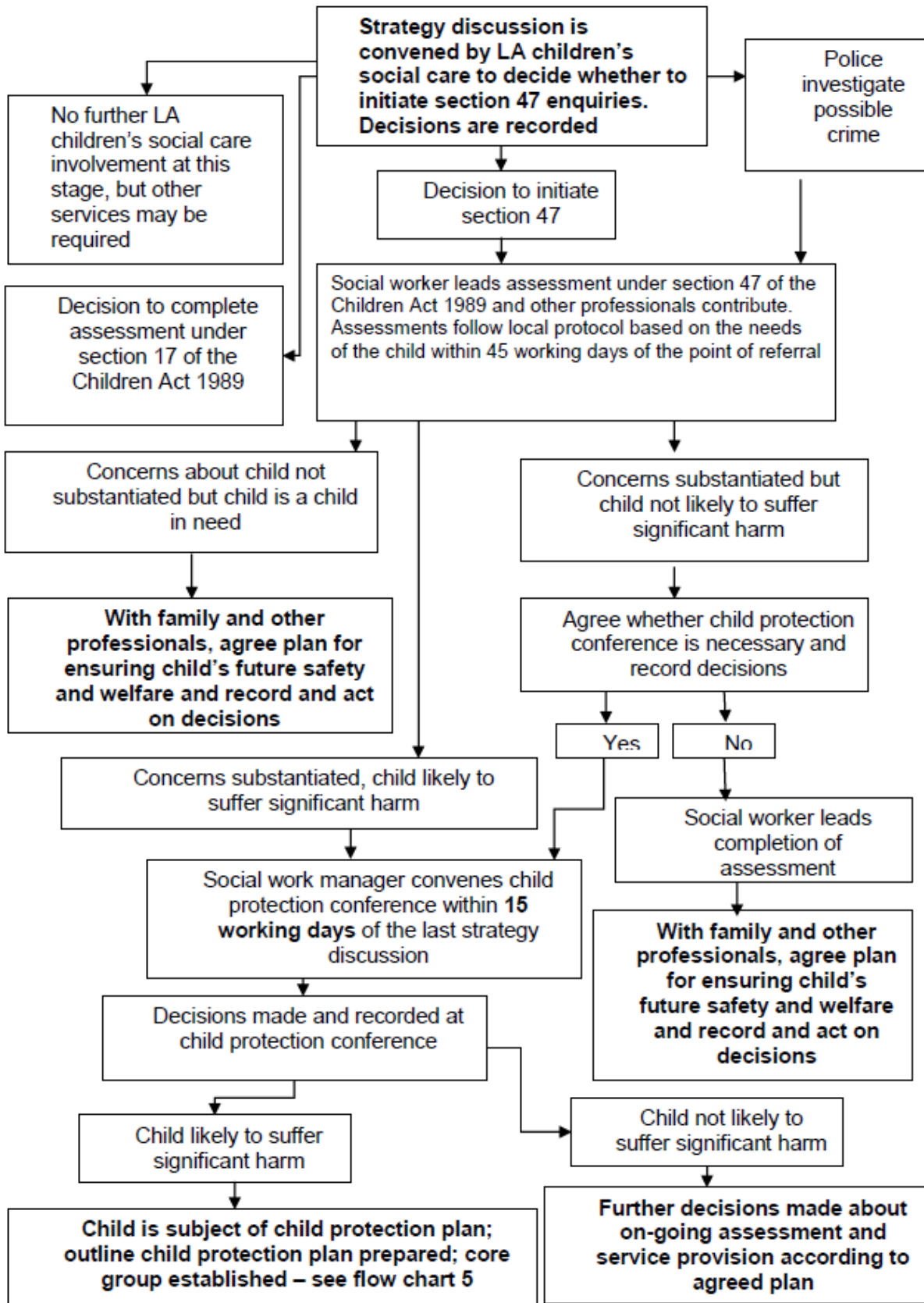


Chart 5 – Child Protection Plan

