



Matrix
Academy Trust
EDUCATION WITHOUT EXCEPTION

Child Safeguarding Policy

Last review date:		September 2024	
Next Review date:		September 2025	
Statutory Policy:		Yes	
Date	Version	Reason for change	Source
01.09.24	V3	Updates in line with KCSIE 2024	Trust

To be read alongside all relevant Matrix Academy Trust policies and procedures including Behaviour Policy and E-Safety Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Academies in Matrix Academy Trust are totally committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and young people. We expect everyone who works in our Academies to share this commitment. Adults in our Academies take all welfare concerns seriously and we always act in the best interests of the child.
- 1.2 The protection of our pupils from suffering or the likelihood of suffering significant harm is the responsibility of **all** staff within our Trust, superseding any other considerations. Action should also be taken to promote the welfare of a pupil in need of additional support, even if they are not suffering harm or at immediate risk.
- 1.3 In this policy, we clearly outline the responsibilities of all adults working in the Academies to be aware of their duty and how to act upon any concerns with regard to child safeguarding. *(Children includes everyone under the age of 18 and students who are over 18 but still attend school).*

2 Definition of Safeguarding

2.1 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy 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
- Making sure 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.

3 Aims

3.1 All of our Academies will aim:

- To protect our pupils and staff by recognising signs and symptoms of pupils suffering harm or likely to suffer harm at the earliest possible moment to prevent concerns from escalating
- To create a culture of vigilance by maintaining a 'child-centred' approach and always acting in the best interests of the child
- To ensure that pupils recognise when they are at risk and know how to get help when they need it

3.2 To achieve these aims each Academy:

- Appoints a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy with the appropriate level of seniority to carry out the duties of the post
- Delivers child protection training which is regularly updated for all staff
- Requires staff to attend safeguarding courses
- Provide INSET for the whole staff on the most current safeguarding issues
- Consulted with external agencies on this policy
- Has firmly embedded safeguarding in the curriculum

3.3 All staff must read 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (Part one and Annex A), Staff Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding Policy and sign to acknowledge they have read and understand the document.

3.4 All staff working with children should maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the best interests of the child.

- 3.5 Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.
- 3.6 If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately. They should follow this child protection policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead. In the absence of the designated safeguarding lead, staff should speak to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Head Teacher.
- 3.7 This policy can be found on the Academy's website and on the shared area for staff. Supporting documentation and guidance for staff can also be found on the staff area.

4 Types of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

- 4.1 It is important to remember that abuse, neglect 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.
- 4.2 Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.
- 4.3 Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

4.4 Physical abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, suffocating, burning or scalding, drowning 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 whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen's Syndrome by proxy.

4.5 Emotional abuse

Is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children 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 notion or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

4.6 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, or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not only perpetrated by

adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

4.7 Neglect

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

5 Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm.

5.1 All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug-taking or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk. Other safeguarding issues that all staff should be aware of include:

- Pupil's health and safety
- bullying, including cyber-bullying (by text message, on social networking sites, and so on)
- racist abuse
- homophobic and transphobic bullying
- harassment and discrimination
- domestic violence
- radicalisation and extremism
- child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE)
- serious violence
- gender or honour-based violence (including FGM)
- teenage relationship abuse
- use of physical intervention
- meeting the needs of pupils with medical conditions
- providing first aid
- drug and substance misuse
- educational visits
- gangs and youth/serious violence
- internet or e-safety
- issues which may be specific to our local area or population, for example gang activity
- peer-on-peer abuse (child-on-child)
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- impact of new technologies on sexual behaviour, e.g. sexting (youth produced imagery)
- private fostering
- children who go missing from education
- children's mental health
- children required to give evidence in criminal courts
- children with family members in prison

5.2 Victims and alleged perpetrator(s). KCSIE 2024 in places, uses the term 'victim'. It is a widely recognised and understood term. It is important that Academies recognise that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way. Ultimately, Trust Academies should be conscious of this when managing any incident and be prepared to use any term with which the individual child is most comfortable.

5.3 KCSIE 2024 also uses the term 'alleged perpetrator(s)' and where appropriate 'perpetrator(s)'. These are widely used and recognised terms. However, each Academy 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. What is appropriate and which term to use will be decided on a case by case basis.

5.4 All Academy staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful.

5.5 For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or are being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers.

5.6 This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people to facilitate communication.

5.7 Further information about specific safeguarding issues are found in addendum 1.

5.8 Each Trust Academy delivers Safeguarding across the curriculum to its pupils. This allows students to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it and to support students to keep physically and mentally healthy. Individual Academies identify how they achieve this within their addendums.

6 Procedures in Response to Disclosures or Concerns

Each Academy has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

6.1 If any staff member suspects that a child may be a victim of abuse, they immediately inform the DSL of their concerns. Abuse can be of a sexual, emotional or physical nature. It can also be the result of neglect.

6.2 In most circumstances when a child alleges abuse the Designated Safeguarding Lead will notify the parents at the earliest opportunity. However, in certain circumstances (usually in response to an allegation of physical or sexual abuse within the family) referral to Children's Services (and thereby to the Police) may be made first.

6.3 Early help is support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. All staff should have an awareness of any children who may benefit from 'Early Help' support to prevent concerns from escalating. Staff should discuss any concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

6.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will log all concerns and work with the appropriate agencies e.g. Children's Services. The Academies receive advice and guidance from their local Child Safeguarding Advisors. Academies use the common referral procedures available on line as per their Local Authority.

6.5 The Designated safeguarding lead should keep written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions, including the rationale for those decisions on CPOMS. This includes instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency.

6.6 If a pupil personally confides an incident and only wishes to speak to you, you should:

6.6.1 Inform them that you have a responsibility to report all incidents of abuse.

6.6.2 Reassure them they have done the right thing.

6.6.3 Leave questioning to the Police / Children's Services. If you contaminate evidence with incorrect questioning you may put the child at risk.

6.6.4 Be honest about what happens next. If a child has told you about an incident, it is because they want help and look to you to give help.

6.6.5 Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead, personally and immediately (in their

absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Head Teacher).

6.6.6 Make detailed notes immediately (no later than one hour later) of what the child has said quoting the child's words verbatim. This referral should be completed on CPOMS and if you have handwritten any notes, these should be scanned and attached to your referral.

6.6.7 Be aware that if you are unable to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (e.g. out of Academy hours), you have a **duty** to report your concerns to Children's Services.

6.7 All staff are aware that should a child disclose that they are a victim of female genital mutilation, a phone call to the Police, dialling 999, must be made immediately.

6.8 The member of staff should not:

6.8.1 Investigate the matter independently, especially through questioning the pupil.

6.8.2 Implement Child Protection procedures without first consulting the Designated Safeguarding Lead unless, and only in exceptional circumstances such as in emergency or when there is a genuine concern that appropriate action has not been taken, staff members can speak directly to Children's Services. If a referral is made, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed as soon as possible.

6.8.3 Discuss the disclosure with anyone unless instructed by DSL or Deputy DSL

6.9 If a member of staff is concerned that a pupil is at risk according to any of the definitions, they should discuss the matter with the Academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will:

6.9.1 Collect any other relevant information from colleagues / other agencies.

6.9.2 Decide whether or not there are sufficient grounds to refer the matter to the appropriate agencies.

6.10 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (supported by other safeguarding staff), will call Early Help meetings and when necessary, Multi-agency Professionals' Meetings in order to support early intervention for children and families in need. Children's Services will be consulted at every stage.

6.11 KCSIE 2024 (paragraph 18) states that any child may benefit from early help but that staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan) • has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care,
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child.

- 6.12 The Academy will also have regard to extra-familial harm as we are aware that children can be at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families.
- 6.13 Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the Academy and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. All staff, but especially the DSL (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families.
- 6.14 Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, and radicalisation.
- 6.15 The Academy will send a representative to Child Protection Conferences and will forward full written reports if attendance is not possible. The Designated Safeguarding Lead receives and acts upon any updates or minutes. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure participation by an appropriate member of staff in all Core Group activities forming a part of the Child Protection Plan established following a conference.
- 6.16 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff. Safeguarding training will be completed as part of the new staff induction process.
- 6.17 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that children will have an ‘appropriate adult’ present if there is police involvement.
- 6.18 The Academy will also work with agencies to ensure the monitoring of children not on the Child Protection List (not deemed to be *in need of a child protection plan*), but who may be living in risky situations - through a Child in Need plan or an Early Help Assessment.
- 6.19 If after a referral the child’s situation does not appear to be improving, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should press for re-consideration to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the child’s situation improves.

7 Internal Communication

- 7.1 All Child Safeguarding concerns/issues will be CONFIDENTIAL. Sharing of relevant information to staff will be strictly at the discretion of the Designated Safeguarding Lead following the guidance issued by HM Government July 2018 - ‘Information Sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services’ (DfE 2018).
- 7.2 Information in relation to a student should not be kept “Confidential” if it is obtained through an external route. For example, a member of staff learnt of a concern through a social encounter with a parent.

8 External Communication

- 8.1 In line with ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024’, data protection is not a barrier to sharing information where failure to do so would result in a child being placed at risk of harm.
- 8.2 The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent. (Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024).
- 8.3 All Academies follow the guidance in ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ September 2024 regarding transferring child protection files if a child leaves the academy.

9 Safeguarding Concerns, Allegations Against Adults and Whistleblowing

- 9.1 Whistleblowing is the act of disclosing wrongdoing. Please see the Matrix Whistleblowing Policy for further information.

- 9.2 Any allegations of abuse by a member of staff, supply teacher or volunteer should be reported **directly to the Head Teacher**, who will implement locally agreed procedures. The first priority for the Head Teacher will be to contact the Chief Executive Officer and the LA appointed Designated Officer (LADO), before any other action is taken, including informing the adult concerned.
- 9.3 In the event of the allegation being made against the Head Teacher, the Chief Executive Officer of Matrix Academy Trust (Ms Lynsey Draycott) should be informed and can be contacted on 01922 211264. The Chief Executive Officer (or in her absence the Chair of The Board of Trustees Mr J Bench) will seek advice from the Local Authority before any other action is taken. The Chief Executive Officer will then manage the allegation. Further guidance can be found in (Part Four) of Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024.
- 9.4 In the event of the allegation being made against Matrix Central Team, the Chief Executive should be informed on 01922 211 264.
- 9.5 On the conclusion of a case, the Academy will abide by its legal duty to make a referral to the DBS any individual who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult ('Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2024).
- 9.6 Our Academies aim to create a culture of safeguarding in which all concerns, be they considered low level concerns or serious allegations about staff are shared responsibly, with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately.
- 9.7 Low level concerns (including allegations) which do not meet the harm threshold as outlined above and in Part Four of Keeping Children Safe in Education are defined as an adult acting in a way that:
- 9.7.1 is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- 9.7.2 does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.
- Low-level concerns about a member of staff, supply staff, volunteer or contractor must be reported to the Headteacher (or CEO if the concern is about the Headteacher) who will determine the appropriate course of action and record the details and action taken in writing. Reports about supply staff and contractors will be reported to their employers.
- 9.8 These will be kept securely and confidentially, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).
- 9.9 If an allegation is received relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using our premises for the purposes of running activities for children or they work closely with our Academies (for example Football Academy) the Academy will follow their safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO

10 Procedures in Relation to Management and Recruitment of Staff

- 10.1 We acknowledge that Safer Recruitment is an integrated element of safeguarding and that the principles are on-going through induction, monitoring and performance management.
- 10.2 Further information is found in the addendum entitled 'procedures in relation to management and recruitment of staff'.

11 Governance

- 11.1 All Matrix Trustees and members of the Parent Advisory Forums have an Enhanced DBS Check (without barred list, unless they are additionally in regulated activity).
- 11.2 Trustees fulfil legal obligations to provide a secure learning environment for its pupils.
- 11.3 Trustees and members of the Parent Advisory Forums receive training in their responsibilities for safeguarding. This includes ensuring there are policies and procedures in place in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote pupils' welfare.

This includes ensuring:

11.3.1 Statutory safer recruitment procedures are adhered to

- All staff and Trustees undergo safeguarding training and child protection training at induction (including online) and this is regularly updated in line with advice from the local Safeguarding Children's Board
- Appropriate filters and appropriate monitoring systems are in place to safeguard pupils from accessing potential harmful and inappropriate online material from the Academy IT system (please refer to the Trust's E-Safety Policy and ICT Acceptable Use Policies)
- Pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum
- They are aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998; the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements; Human Rights Act

11.4 The Trust appoints a Nominated Lead for Safeguarding and E-Safety, Mrs T Goodyere. They are responsible for liaising with the Head Teachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads over matters regarding child protection issues. The role is strategic and does not involve concerns about individual pupils. Trustees can be contacted via our main office on 01922 211264.

11.5 The Trustees have allocated the role of Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after, or previously looked after, to the Designated Lead. This is because the most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse/neglect. The Designated Lead works with the Virtual School Head Teacher to identify individual pupil needs and to develop and implement a Personal Educational Plan for every pupil in Local Authority care.

11.6 The Trust acknowledges its retained responsibility for any activities carried out with children on site or using the Academy's facilities - even if delivered by an external body or organisation. In such circumstances, the governing body satisfies itself that the group or organisation has its own safeguarding policy and procedures for safer recruitment of staff or leaders, or that the organisation signs up to the policy and procedure of the Academy. Therefore, the Trustees and Head Teacher will only grant permission for use of the premises to recognised bodies (usually a national affiliation and a written statement of their adherence to safeguarding principles).



All Staff

If you are concerned that a child is at risk from:

If a child discloses to you that they are at risk from:

Emotional Abuse	Neglect	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Any Other Safeguarding Concern(s)
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DO NOT discuss with the child in person.
Report immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Listen
 - Reassure
 - DO NOT promise confidentiality
 - Establish basic facts - what, when, where, who
 - Tell the child what you are going to do next
- Report immediately, in person, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead**
- Record accurately and refer using your schools safeguarding procedure.

**Child Safeguarding Designated Staff
Designated Safeguarding Lead
or in their absence:
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
Headteacher**

Members of staff with Advanced Level Child Safeguarding and Multi Agency Working training are identified for each school within the schools individual appendix.

Addendum 1

Further information about safeguarding

Alternative Provision

Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, it continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs. 172. The cohort of pupils in Alternative Provision often have complex needs, it is important that governing bodies and proprietors of these settings are aware of the additional risk of harm that their pupils may be vulnerable to. The department has issued two pieces of statutory guidance to which commissioners of Alternative Provision should have regard:

[Alternative Provision DFE statutory guidance](#) (DFE statutory) and [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school](#) (DFE statutory guidance)

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. Further information is available at: www.actionagainstabduction.org and www.clevernevergoes.org.

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

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.

In some cases, the exploitation or abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants (for example, money, gifts or affection), and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage, such as increased status, of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or in groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim.

Whilst the age of the child may be a contributing factor for an imbalance of power, there are a range of other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, including, sexual identity, cognitive ability, learning difficulties, communication ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where children:

- appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions

- associate with other children involved in exploitation
- suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- have older boyfriends and girlfriends and:
- misuse alcohol and other drugs
- go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late, and regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Children who have been exploited will need additional support to help keep them in education.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

Some additional specific indicators that may be present in CSE are children who:

- suffer from sexually transmitted infections, display sexual behaviours beyond expected sexual development or become pregnant.

Further information on signs of a child's involvement in sexual exploitation is available in Home Office guidance: Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners

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. There are two age appropriate guides to support children 5-11-year olds and 12-17-year olds.

The guides explain each step of the process, support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained.

Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

Children with family members in prison

Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders, NICCO provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

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).

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 sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. Our Academies response to persistently absent pupils and children deliberately missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

Further information and support, includes:

- Guidance on school attendance 'Working together to improve school attendance' including information on how schools should work with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.
- Information regarding schools' duties regarding children missing education, including information schools must provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points, can be found in the department's statutory guidance: Children Missing Education.

Each Academy will inform their Local Authority of any pupil who is going to be removed from the admission register where the pupil:

- has been taken out of the Academy by their parents and the Academy has received written notification from the parent they are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- has ceased to attend school and no longer lives within reasonable distance of the Academy at which they are registered;
- has been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the Academy at the end of that period;
- has been permanently excluded.

Our Academies will inform the Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend the Academy regularly, adhering to the authority's guidelines. Our Academies work closely with the Local Authority Attendance Officer, who will carry out 'safe and well' checks where necessary, in discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Our Academies will always liaise with, and take advice from Children's Services.

The Academy will inform the Local Authority of any first day absence of a Looked After Child, where contact with carers could not be made.

Parents/Carers must ensure the Academy has at least two emergency contacts for their child.

Children requiring mental health support

Our Academies 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.

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

Our Academies have clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.

Child on Child abuse

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children at any age (often referred to as child-on-child abuse) and that it can happen both inside and outside of the Academy and online.

It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

All staff should be clear as to the school or college's policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment

Staff are clear as to the Academy policy and procedures with regards to child on child / child on child abuse as defined in the Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policy, and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

Staff within the academies will ensure that any disclosure of child on child abuse from a pupil, or indeed behaviours that have been witnessed are reported via CPOMS and a conversation held with the DSL as soon as possible to allow the incident to be investigated in the correct manner and by trained staff.

Pupils who abuse others will be responded to in a way that meets their needs as well as protecting others within the school community through a multi-agency risk assessment. We ensure that the needs of children and young people who abuse others will be considered separately from the needs of their victims.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities or physical health issues

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. Staff in our Academy recognise that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation in this group of children. This can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- these children are more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based

bullying) than other children;

- children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges
- 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.

Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will therefore require close liaison with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and the SENCO or the named person with oversight for SEND in a college.

Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning

N.B. In KCSIE 2024 this section remains under review, pending the outcome of the gender questioning children guidance consultation, and final gender questioning guidance documents being published.

A child or young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, they can sometimes be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are.

However, the Cass review identified that caution is necessary for children questioning their gender as there remain many unknowns about the impact of social transition and children may well have wider vulnerabilities, including having complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases additional diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

It recommended that when families/carers are making decisions about support for gender questioning children, they should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice. When parents are supporting pre-pubertal children, clinical services should ensure that they can be seen as early as possible by a clinical professional with relevant experience.

As such, when supporting a gender questioning child, our Academies will take a cautious approach and:

- consider the broad range of their individual needs
- do this in partnership with the child's parents (other than in the exceptionally rare circumstances where involving parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child),
- Include any clinical advice that is available
- Consider how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying. Schools should refer to our Guidance for Schools and Colleges in relation to Gender Questioning Children, when deciding how to proceed.

Risks can be compounded where children lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where they can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

LGBTQ+ inclusion is part of the statutory Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum and there is a range of support available to help schools counter homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and abuse.

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 skills 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), should consider referring into the Cyber Choices programme. This is a nationwide police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing. It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low-level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests. 146 Note that Cyber Choices does not currently cover 'cyber-enabled' crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs on-line and child sexual abuse and exploitation, nor other areas of concern such as on-line bullying or general on-line safety.

Additional advice can be found at: Cyber Choices, 'NPCC- When to call the Police' and National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK.

County lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell 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 any type of schools (including special schools), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children's homes and care homes.

Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

A number of the indicators for CSE and CCE as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are children who:

- go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from their home
- have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime)
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs
- are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection
- are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a "trap house or

cuckooing' or hotel room where there is drug activity

- owe a 'debt bond' to their exploiters
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office and The Children's Society County Lines Toolkit For Professionals

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse 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.

The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members. The definition captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. Under the statutory definition, both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be "personally connected" (as defined in section 2 of the 2021 Act).

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. The government has issued statutory guidance to provide further information for those working with domestic abuse victims and perpetrators, including the impact on children.

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. Experiencing domestic abuse 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.

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.

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 the 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 (or a deputy)) 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 immediate support to be put in place, according to the child's needs.

Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures. Where appropriate, the police and/or schools should make a referral to local authority children's social

care if they are concerned about a child's welfare.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. Its website provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which a safe time from the team for a call can be booked.

Refer to page 147 of KCSIE 2024 for more information on Operation Encompass and the National Domestic Abuse Helpline Refuge and additional advice on identifying children affected by domestic abuse.

Elective Home Education

Many home-educated children have an overwhelmingly positive learning experience. We would expect the parents' decision to home educate to be made with their child's best education at the heart of the decision. However, this is not the case for all, and home education can mean some children are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their needs.

From September 2016 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended so that schools must inform their Local Authority of all deletions from their admission register when a child is taken off roll.

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, we recommend that local authorities, schools, and other key professionals work together to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. This would be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has special educational needs or a disability, and/or has a social worker, and/or is otherwise vulnerable. Where a child has an Education, Health and Care plan local authorities will need to review the plan, working closely with parents and carers.

DfE guidance for local authorities on Elective home education sets out the role and responsibilities of local authorities and their powers to engage with parents. Although this is primarily aimed at local authorities, schools should also be familiar with this guidance.

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 KCSIE 2024 (part 5, para 455).

HSB can occur online and/or face-to-face and can also occur simultaneously between the two. HSB should be considered in a child protection context. When considering HSB, both ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors.

Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller instature.

Confidential specialist support and advice on HSB is available from the specialist sexual violence sector.

It is effective safeguarding practice for the designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies)

to have a good understanding of HSB. This could form part of their safeguarding training. This will aid in 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 or college 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

More details and information on sexual harassment and sexual violence is written below.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into 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, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into local authority children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live. The following factsheets usefully summarise the new duties: Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets. The new duties shift the focus to early intervention and encourages those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.

In most cases school and college staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised 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. Local authority children's social care will be the lead agency for these children and the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities have published joint statutory guidance on the provision of accommodation for 16- and 17-year olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation.

'Honour Based' Abuse (HBA)

So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to 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. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

If Academy staff have a concern regarding a child who might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). As

appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with the police and local authority children's social care.

Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on teachers¹⁵² that requires a different approach (see below).

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 reporting 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. Those failing to report such cases may face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils or students, but the same definition of what is meant ¹⁵² Under Section 5B(11)(a) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, "teacher" means, in relation to England, a person within section 141A(1) of the Education Act 2002 (persons employed or engaged to carry out teaching work at schools and other institutions in England). ¹⁵⁵ by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. Information on when and how to make a report can be found at: Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information.

There is a duty that teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. **In our Academies staff must report immediately to the DSL who will support the member of staff in directly report to the police.**

The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures.

Further information can be found in the Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation and the FGM resource pack particularly section 13.

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 perpetrators use perceived cultural practices to coerce a person into marriage.

Our Academies can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage. The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) has created: Multi-agency practice guidelines: handling cases of forced marriage (pages 75-80 of KCSIE 2024 which focus on the role of schools and colleges) and, Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage, which can both be found at The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fmufcdo.gov.uk.

In addition, since February 2024 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

Looked after children and previously looked after children

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect. The Academy will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked after children safe.

In particular, we will ensure 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 the child's contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. They will 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.

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. Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in Statutory Guidance. Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK Preventing radicalisation.

A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, it is important that all agencies work together and prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.

Looked after and previously looked after children may also have additional barriers to overcome in relation to safeguarding. The staff member for each Academy with responsibility for LAC and PLAC children are named in their Academy addendum.

Online Safety

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation - technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm. An effective approach to online safety empowers an Academy to protect and educate the whole school community in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene and escalate any incident where appropriate.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material
- Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users
- Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm – this can include sending nude images and/or semi-nude images
- Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing or financial scams

Please also refer to the Trust's E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policies.

As our Academies increasingly work online, it is essential that children are safeguarded from

potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, including when they are online at home. All our Academies use specialist online monitoring software to ensure that inappropriate content or sites are not accessed by pupils or staff on school devices and school networks. Please also refer to the Trust's 'Employee Code of Conduct'.

The safeguarding and online training that our Academy staff receive will include an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.

As outlined in our E-safety policy, our Designated Safeguarding Leads take responsibility in this area and have a full understanding of the filtering and monitoring systems and processes

Matrix IT Department will ensure that our Academies are meeting the [DFE's filtering and monitoring standards](#).

The Trustee with specific responsibility for safeguarding will pay due regard to the [DFE's filtering and monitoring standards](#) and consider how our Academies are meeting these standards during their annual safeguarding audit.

Ours Academies will cascade information regarding keeping children safe online regularly to parents/carers.

Preventing Radicalisation

Note: This preventing radicalisation section remains under review, following the publication of a new definition of extremism on the 14 March 2024.

Children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools or colleges safeguarding approach.

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, 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 is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.

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.

Although there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism, there are factors that may indicate concern. It is possible to protect people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being drawn to terrorism.

As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act

proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) making a Prevent referral.

- **If you have any concerns about any of the above please report immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.**

The Prevent duty

As with all schools and colleges, our Academies are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter- Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism”.¹This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty is seen as part of schools’ and colleges’ wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) and other senior leaders in education settings should familiarise themselves with the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 141-210, which are specifically concerned with education (and also covers childcare). The guidance is set out in terms of three general themes: leadership and partnership, capabilities and reducing permissive environments.

Our Academies designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) will be aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

Channel

Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals are assessed and may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are at risk of being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from our academies may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual will be required to provide their consent before any support delivered through the programme is provided.

The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should 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. Statutory guidance on Channel is available at: [Channel guidance](#) and [Channel training from the Home Office](#).

Private Fostering

Where Academies have not been involved in making the arrangement but a member of staff at an Academy becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement, where a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by someone to whom they are not related in that person’s home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more, parents and private foster parents both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least 6 weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence. The member of staff should raise this in the first instance with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Academy will notify the Local Authority of the

circumstances and the Local Authority will check that the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child.

Serious Violence

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.

A fuller list of risk factors can be found in the Home Office's Serious Violence Strategy.

Professionals 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. Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office's Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance. The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) Toolkit sets out the evidence for what works in preventing young people from becoming involved in violence.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act will introduce early in 2024 a new duty on a range of specified authorities, such as the police, local government, youth offending teams, health and probation services, to work collaboratively, share data and information, and put in place plans to prevent and reduce serious violence within their local communities. Educational authorities and prisons/youth custody authorities will be under a separate duty to co-operate with core duty holders when asked, and there will be a requirement for the partnership to consult with all such institutions in their area. The Duty is not intended to replace or duplicate existing safeguarding duties. Local partners may choose to meet the requirements of the Duty through existing multi-agency structures, such as multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, providing the correct set of partners are involved.

Sexting (Youth Produced Imagery)

Sexting is the sharing of sexual imagery (including nudes and semi-nudes) by young people.

Creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal and therefore causes the greatest complexity for schools and other agencies when responding. It also presents a range of risks which need careful management.

The Academy adheres to guidance from the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS August 2016) which acknowledges the current broad usage of the term 'sexting' and introduces the phrase 'youth produced sexual imagery'. The guidance covers the following incidents:

- A person under the age of 18 creates and shares sexual imagery of themselves with a peer under the age of 18.
- A person under the age of 18 shares sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18 with a peer under the age of 18 or an adult.
- A person under the age of 18 is in possession of sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18.

The advice does not cover the sharing of sexual imagery of people under the age of 18 by adults as this constitutes child sexual abuse and requires immediate police involvement.

All incidents of youth produced sexual imagery are dealt with as safeguarding concerns. Staff must follow the safeguarding referral system if any such incident comes to their attention.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of **any** age and sex, from primary to secondary stage and into colleges. It can also occur online. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

As set out in Part one Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, all staff working with children in our Academies are advised to maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here**'.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are **never acceptable**.

It is important that **all** victims are taken seriously, offered appropriate support and reassured that we will work with agencies to keep them safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment, nor should they ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBTQ+ children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

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

What is the difference between sexual violence and sexual harassment?

Sexual Violence

It is important that Academy and college staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way, **and that it can happen both inside and outside of the Academy**. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

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.

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.)

What is 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 had the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

Academy staff should be aware that:

- 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

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so 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 (Academies should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature;
- 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 sexual images and videos;
 - sharing of unwanted explicit content
 - upskirting (is a criminal offence)
 - sexualised online bullying;
 - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; and
 - sexual exploitation; coercion and threats

Upskirting

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's 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 sex, can be a victim.

The response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment:

The response to a report from a child is important. Our Academies are aware that how we respond to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment to report or come forward. If we fail to recognise, acknowledge or understand the scale of harassment and abuse, or even downplay some of these behaviours, we are risking this leading to a culture of unacceptable behaviour. It is **essential** that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should **never** be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

An example of what to say to a child if they disclose to a member of staff is given below:

"Thank you for sharing this with me. You have been very brave in telling me and I appreciate how difficult that will have been. You have done nothing wrong, and I am so proud of you for sharing this today. It is really important that I pass this information onto (DSL name) so that we can support you."

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Academy staff taking a report should never promise confidentiality as it is very likely it will be in the best interests of the victim to seek advice and guidance from others in order to provide support and engage appropriate agencies. They should only engage staff and agencies who are required to support the children involved and/or be involved in any investigation.

The victim may ask the Academy staff 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 are to perform a public interest task or exercise official authority, and the task or authority has a clear basis in law.

Advice should be sought from the designated safeguarding lead (or a 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 should be

handled extremely carefully, the reasons should be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support should be offered.

Additional information on confidentiality and information sharing is available at Safeguarding Practitioners Information Sharing Advice and NSPCC: Information sharing and confidentiality for practitioners.

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

As a matter of effective safeguarding practice, schools and colleges should do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. Amongst other things, this will mean carefully considering, based on the nature of the report, which staff should know about the report and any support that will be put in place for the children involved.

Trust Academies should also consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victim's identities.

Sanctions and the alleged perpetrator(s) Schools

With regards to the alleged perpetrator(s), advice on behaviour in schools is clear that teachers can sanction pupils whose conduct falls below the standard which could be reasonably expected of them.

Trust Academies are able to take disciplinary action and can be taken whilst other investigations by the police and/or local authority children's social care are ongoing. The fact that another body is investigating or has investigated an incident does not in itself prevent our Academies from coming to its own conclusion, on the balance of probabilities, about what happened, and imposing a penalty accordingly.

This is a matter for each Academy and should be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should take a leading role.

Trust Academies 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 school decide. It will also be important to consider whether there are circumstances that make it unreasonable or irrational for the school to reach its 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.

Trust academies will be very clear as to what its 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.

Academies 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

Trust Academies 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.

Our Trust Academies will carefully consider what information they 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 our Academies will work with relevant agencies to ensure a consistent approach is taken to information sharing.

Academy staff will meet the victim's parents or carers with the victim present to discuss what arrangements are being put in place to safeguard the victim and understand their wishes in terms of support they may need and how the report will be progressed. Academy staff will also 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 and support for the alleged perpetrator should be discussed.

The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) would generally attend any such meetings. Consideration to the attendance of other agencies should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education.

Our Academies are undertaking a phased approach to incorporating relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education within the curriculum. Please also see our Trust's Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policies.

Safeguarding during Covid-19 measures

From September 2020, the Government allowed schools to fully re-open for all pupils and there have been a variety of protective measures in place due to Covid-19.

Academies within Matrix Academy Trust will continue to be mindful of any further specific guidance released by the Government in relation to safeguarding. Staff will continue to be alert to the impact there has been on pupils following this pandemic and may identify new safeguarding concerns as a result.

Addendum 2

Procedures in Relation to Visitors to the Academy Site

- Visitors are required to report **directly** to the reception by the main entrance.
- Once inside the Academy, all visitors must sign the visitors' book.
- The Visitor Information Booklet must be read and signed for at reception.
- A visitor's lanyard will be issued which is to be worn at all times.
- Any unaccompanied visitors on site who are not recognised must be politely approached, questioned about their business in school and escorted **immediately** to reception.
- The Academies reserve the right to refuse entry or terminate a visit at anytime.

Classification of Visitors

- Visitors can be classified according to their degree of access to children:

People working with children

- Peripatetic teachers, sports coaches, LA employees, school nurses, volunteers, Children's Services staff.
- Unless the visit is expected or the visitor is well known to the person admitting them, authority must be obtained from a member of the Leadership Team before allowing access to the Academy.
- The identity of the visitor must be confirmed.
- All such visitors will have enhanced DBS clearance.
- If the clearance is not held by us, we will require confirmation that appropriate clearance has been obtained and the visitor will wear a badge issued by the organisation holding their DBS clearance.
- Material and key messages planned by guest speakers will be vetted prior to the event and, where appropriate, a social media check will be carried out.
- School Experience Programme participants are **accompanied at all times by Academy staff**.

People not working with children

Examples: builders and gardeners etc.

- Unless the visit is expected or the visitor is well known to the person admitting them, their identity should be confirmed and the authority of a member of the Leadership Team must be obtained before allowing access to the Academy.
- They are to be **supervised while pupils are on the premises**. The amount of supervision required is dependent on the visitors' actual or potential proximity to pupils and the Academy's knowledge of them.

Escorted visitors

Examples: parents/carers, prospective parents, job candidates.

- These people **must be accompanied at all times**.
- Please note that any parent/carer that may pose a risk to pupils (for example a registered sex offender) will **not** be allowed on school site

Addendum 3

Procedures in Relation to Management and Recruitment of Staff

Our recruitment procedure pays full regard to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2024 and our safer recruitment practice includes: scrutinising applicants; verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications; obtaining professional and character references; checking previous employment history and ensuring that the candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes interviews and undertaking appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). An online search of shortlisted candidates may also be considered as part of the Trust Academies due diligence.

Additional checks are carried out on applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK to ensure any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered.

Relevant staff undertake Safer Recruitment training and there is always at least one person on every interview panel who has completed Safer Recruitment training.

A central record is maintained within Academies of all staff and teacher trainees, indicating whether the following checks have been carried out or certificates obtained, and the date on which each check was completed / certificate obtained:

identity; barred list; enhanced DBS; prohibition from teaching; qualifications; the person's right to work in the UK.

Where checks are carried out on volunteers, the details will be recorded on the single central register.

The specific vulnerability of supply staff and volunteers is recognised by the Academy and they are appropriately supported by senior staff. Provisions include issue of guidelines of our Behaviour Management Procedures and Child Safeguarding Procedures to all supply staff and volunteers whilst they are engaging with the children in the Academy.

Members of staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction followed up by regular updates including annual refresher training to ensure they are fully briefed on safeguarding and child protection developments. Staff induction includes awareness sessions on the Safeguarding Policy, the Academy's Behaviour Policy and the response from schools when a child goes missing from education. In addition:

- All staff and volunteers receive Level 1 Basic Awareness Safeguarding Children and Young People training at least every 2 years, delivered by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and safeguarding staff.
- Members of staff also receive training to raise their awareness of appropriate behaviour in relation to physical contact, professional relationships and so on, in order to keep pupils safe and to keep staff safe from inappropriate allegations (see Employee Code of Conduct).
- Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies receive DSL specific Advanced Training (level 2 or 3 depending on authority) every 2 years.

Designated Safeguarding Lead receives regular training, at least annually, to keep up to date with any developments relevant to the role which includes:

- Management/support for the Early Help process
- Providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters
- Taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings
- Contributing to the assessment of children
- Liaising with the Local Authority and working with other agencies in line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (July 2018) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2024.

There may be times when adults in our Academy, in the course of their duty, use physical intervention to restrain children. The Head Teacher requires the adult involved in any such

incident to report this to him/her **immediately** so it can be recorded appropriately. *NB: Physical intervention is appropriate in line with guidelines in section 50A of the Education Act 1996.*

Members of staff are aware of their rights, responsibilities, duties and powers relating to managing pupils' behaviour in school (see Policy for the Use of Control & Reasonable Force), during school activities offsite. They are also aware of the need to **report** issues for action by the Academy Leadership, even when these occur beyond the Academy and other than during an offsite activity - if there are safeguarding implications for the individual children involved, other children or members of the public.

NB: These powers and those of the Head Teacher to act against a child who causes a problem even beyond the school and outside school hours are outlined in the Education & Inspections Act 2006.

Our primary Academy will follow the DfE statutory guidance 'Disqualification under the childcare Act 2006' updated 31 August 2018. Staff at the Primary Academy should declare on appointment they are not disqualified but if their circumstances change they must inform the Head Teacher.

Staff relationships and associations in and out of the Academy (and online) may have implications for the safeguarding of students. Staff should discuss any changes to personal circumstances with the DSL and/or Head Teacher if it may impact the safeguarding of any student.

Addendum 4

Legislation and the law (outlined in KCSIE 2024)

The Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA)

The Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to and contains the Articles and protocols of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) (the Convention) that are deemed to apply in the UK. It compels public organisations to respect and protect an individual's human rights when they make individual decisions about them.

Being subjected to harassment, violence and or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of these rights, depending on the nature of the conduct and the circumstances. Further information (including on absolute and qualified rights) can be found at Human Rights | Equality and Human Rights Commission 21 Human Rights Act 1998 (legislation.gov.uk)

The Equality Act 2010

Schools and colleges have obligations under the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act). According to the Equality Act, schools and colleges must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).

Whilst all of the above protections are important in the context of safeguarding, this guidance and the legal duties placed on schools and colleges, in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, governing bodies and proprietors should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils and students with regard to particular protected characteristics - including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race.

Provisions within the Equality Act allow schools and colleges to take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils or students with a particular protected characteristic in order to meet their specific need. This includes a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people, including those with long term conditions. A school or college, could, for example, consider taking positive action to support girls if there was evidence they were being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or sexual harassment.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is found in the Equality Act. Compliance with the PSED is a legal requirement for state-funded schools and colleges, advice on this – including on specific duties, is set out in the advice linked in paragraph 90 of KCSIE 2024.

The PSED places a general duty on schools and colleges to have, in the exercise of their functions, due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation (and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act), to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

The duty applies to all protected characteristics and means that whenever significant decisions are being made or policies developed, specific consideration must be given to the equality implications of these such as, for example, the need to eliminate unlawful behaviours that relate to them, such as sexual violence and sexual harassment, misogyny/misandry and

racism. This is one reason why good record-keeping and monitoring of all forms of abuse and harassment is essential.

The PSED helps schools and colleges (which are subject to it) to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil and student outcomes. Some pupils or students may be more at risk of harm from specific issues such as sexual violence, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or racial discrimination. Such concerns will differ between education settings, but it is important schools and colleges are conscious of disproportionate vulnerabilities and integrate this into their safeguarding policies and procedures. For further information please see Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty: England | Equality and Human Rights Commission (equalityhumanrights.com).

Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR

It is important that governing bodies and proprietors are aware that among other obligations, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure. See ICO guidance 'For Organisations' which includes information about your obligations and how to comply, including protecting personal information, and providing access to official information.

In addition, see the DfE Data Protection guidance for schools, which will help school staff, governors and trustees understand how to comply with data protection law, develop their data policies and processes, know what staff and pupil data to keep and follow good practices for preventing personal data breaches.

Addendum 5

Designated Safeguarding Leads

Barr Beacon School:	Mrs S Saunders
Bloxwich Academy (Primary):	Mrs S Shepherd
Bloxwich Academy (Secondary):	Mrs M Lockley
Dame Elizabeth Cadbury School:	Ms Amy Morris
Etone College:	Mrs R Price
Smestow Academy:	Mr N Dyke
Turves Green Boys' School:	Mr S Rogers
Wednesfield Academy:	Mrs S Roberts

On each school's website they have a personalised Safeguarding Policy detailing school specific safeguarding procedures, staff and key contacts.

