

# OUR LADY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



We ASPIRE that through the love of Jesus everyone should  
"have life and have it to the full".

John 10:10

# CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Reviewed by: <i>Headteacher</i>	Approved by: <i>Governing Body</i>
Policy Date: <i>Autumn 2025</i>	Next Review Date: <i>September 2026</i>
Review Frequency: <i>Every Year</i>	



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### Key Safeguarding Contacts

- Headteacher & DSL: Ms A Przybylska
- Deputy DSLs: Mrs R Bryan & Mrs O Major
- Safeguarding Governor: Father A Berry

### Herefordshire Safeguarding Contacts:

- MASH (Children's Referral): 01432 260800
- Out of Hours (Emergency Duty Team): 01905 768020
- Email for Referrals: ReferralsCYPD@herefordshire.gov.uk
- LADO - The Local Authority Designated Officer (Allegations against staff/volunteers): 01432 260554 (or 01432 260100)
- Adult Safeguarding Team: 01432 260715 (or 0330 123 9309 out of hours)
- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline (0800 028 0285)

***If a child is in immediate danger, call 999.***

## 1. Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare
- All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding and child protection
- Staff are properly trained in recognising, responding to and reporting safeguarding concerns

In addition, the school aims to:

- Provide a safe, secure and inclusive environment in which all children can learn and thrive
- Ensure a child-centred approach, where the best interests of the child are paramount in all decision-making
- Identify children who may benefit from early help and provide support as soon as problems emerge
- Maintain effective systems for children to report concerns and feel listened to
- Ensure that safeguarding practice reflects local safeguarding partner procedures ([Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership HSCP](#))
- Promote a culture of vigilance, openness and professional curiosity among all staff
- Ensure that all staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- Protect children from harm both online and offline, including emerging risks such as technology and artificial intelligence
- Ensure that concerns about children are recorded accurately, securely and in a timely manner
- Work effectively with parents, carers and external agencies to safeguard children
- Support children's emotional wellbeing and mental health alongside their physical safety



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- Ensure that all safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and implemented effectively

## **2. Legislation and Statutory Guidance**

This policy is based on and complies with the following statutory guidance and legislation:

### **Statutory Guidance**

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (DfE advice for practitioners)

The school follows the procedures set by the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) and works in line with local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

### **Legislation**

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004 – provides the legal framework for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- Education Act 2002 (Section 175) – places a duty on schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 – defines regulated activity and requirements for DBS checks
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 – places a duty on schools to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (Prevent duty)
- Serious Crime Act 2015 – includes the statutory duty to report Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Equality Act 2010 – requires schools to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Human Rights Act 1998 – ensures protection from abuse and degrading treatment
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 – relates to disclosure of criminal convictions

### **Additional Statutory Considerations**

This policy also reflects:

- The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law)

The school recognises its responsibilities in relation to Martyn's Law and is committed to maintaining proportionate procedures to support emergency preparedness, site security, lockdown arrangements, communication systems and staff training. The school regularly reviews its critical incident and lockdown procedures in line with Department for Education guidance and local risk assessment.

- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework (where applicable)
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
- The requirement to follow locally agreed safeguarding procedures



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### **Compliance Statement**

The governing body and school leaders ensure that this policy is:

- Implemented effectively across the school
- Reviewed at least annually (or when guidance changes)
- Made available publicly via the school website

### **3. Definitions**

For the purposes of this policy:

#### **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined 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 the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

#### **Child Protection**

Child protection is part of safeguarding and refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm occurring inside or outside the home, including online.

#### **Abuse**

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or by another child or children.

Abuse can take place:

- In a family, institutional or community setting
- By people known to the child or, more rarely, by others
- Wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse

#### **Types of Abuse**

- **Physical abuse** – involves causing physical harm to a child
- **Emotional abuse** – persistent emotional maltreatment that affects a child's development
- **Sexual abuse** – forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including online
- **Neglect** – persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs

#### **Children**

For the purposes of this policy, a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18.



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## **Early Help**

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, to prevent escalation and improve outcomes.

## **Safeguarding Partners**

The three safeguarding partners are:

- **Herefordshire Council (Local Authority)**
- **West Mercia Police**
- **NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (Health)**

These partners work together through the **Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP)** to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

## **Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP)**

HSCP is the statutory multi-agency partnership responsible for safeguarding children in Herefordshire. It coordinates local safeguarding arrangements, including procedures, thresholds and referral pathways.

The school follows HSCP procedures and works in partnership with other agencies to promote the welfare of children and ensure that concerns are identified and acted upon promptly.

## **Victim**

The term *victim* is widely used and understood. However, the school recognises that not all children who have experienced harm will identify with this term. The school will use language that the child feels comfortable with.

## **Alleged perpetrator / perpetrator**

These terms are used for clarity in safeguarding processes. The school will consider carefully how language is used, particularly when speaking with children, and will adopt a sensitive and appropriate approach on a case-by-case basis.

## **Child-on-child abuse**

Child-on-child abuse is when children abuse other children. It can occur both inside and outside school, including online, and includes:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying)
- Physical abuse
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Abuse in intimate relationships
- Sharing of nude or semi-nude images

## **CSE - Child Sexual Exploitation**

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where a child is manipulated, coerced or deceived into sexual activity in exchange for something.

- Gifts



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- Money
- Attention or affection
- Status or protection

It can also involve:

- Grooming (online or in person)
- Pressure, threats or violence

### **CCE - Child Criminal Exploitation**

Child Criminal Exploitation is when a child is manipulated or coerced into committing crimes.

Common examples include:

- County lines drug dealing
- Carrying drugs, money or weapons
- Theft or shoplifting
- Violence or gang activity

Children are often:

- Threatened or controlled
- Groomed into believing they have no choice
- Exploited by older individuals or groups

### **Online Safety**

Online safety refers to safeguarding children from risks associated with technology, including:

- Exposure to harmful content
- Online grooming and exploitation
- Cyberbullying
- Sharing of inappropriate images
- Risks linked to emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence

## **4. Equality Statement**

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, both online and offline, and additional barriers may exist that prevent them from recognising or disclosing abuse. The school is committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognises children's diverse circumstances.

We ensure that all children receive the same level of protection, regardless of any barriers they may face, and that safeguarding arrangements are inclusive and responsive to individual needs.

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or health conditions (see section 10)



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- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender identity or sexual orientation
- Have English as an additional language (EAL)
- Are known to be living in challenging circumstances, for example temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance misuse, domestic abuse or parental mental health needs
- Are at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers or refugees
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after (see section 12)
- Are missing or absent from education, particularly on a repeated or prolonged basis
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's responsibility**. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, governors and visitors.

All staff have a duty to safeguard children, provide a safe environment, and act in the best interests of the child at all times.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors and is consistent with the procedures of the three safeguarding partners through the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP).

Our safeguarding arrangements also apply to extended school provision and off-site activities.

The school plays a crucial role in preventative education, as part of a whole-school approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. We promote a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and sexual violence/harassment.

The school will ensure that staff receive appropriate information, instruction and training relating to emergency preparedness, lockdown procedures and site safety arrangements appropriate to their role.

This is underpinned by:

- The behaviour policy
- The pastoral support system
- A planned programme of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE), which is inclusive and delivered regularly

This curriculum includes teaching about:

- Healthy and respectful relationships
- Boundaries and consent
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality



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- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Recognising abusive relationships, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- The concepts of, and laws relating to:
  - Sexual consent
  - Sexual exploitation and abuse
  - Grooming and coercion
  - Harassment and rape
  - Domestic abuse
  - So-called honour-based violence (including FGM and forced marriage)
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence, and why these are always unacceptable
- How to access support

### 5.1 All Staff

Safeguarding and child protection is everyone's responsibility. All staff, including teachers, support staff, supply staff, volunteers and contractors, have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

All staff who work directly with children are expected to read at least Part 1 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)*. Staff who do not work directly with children will read either Part 1 or Annex A (a condensed version). Staff will also be expected to read Annex B, which outlines specific safeguarding issues.

All staff will:

- Read and understand this child protection and safeguarding policy and the school's safeguarding systems
- Read and understand *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and review it at least annually
- Sign a declaration to confirm they have read and understood the relevant safeguarding guidance
- Be aware of the role and identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs
- Be aware of and follow the school's safeguarding procedures, including how to report concerns
- Reinforce the importance of online safety when communicating with pupils and parents/carers
- Maintain an attitude of "**it could happen here**", recognising that children can be at risk of harm both inside and outside school, including online
- Provide a safe environment where pupils feel able to speak out and share concerns

All staff will be aware of:

- The systems that support safeguarding, including:
  - This policy
  - The staff code of conduct
  - The behaviour policy



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- The online safety approach, including filtering and monitoring
- Procedures for children missing or absent from education
- The early help process and their role in identifying emerging needs
- The process for making referrals to children's social care and other agencies
- What to do if a child discloses abuse or neglect, including maintaining appropriate confidentiality
- The signs and indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including:
  - domestic abuse
  - sexual violence and harassment
  - child criminal exploitation (CCE)
  - child sexual exploitation (CSE)
  - female genital mutilation (FGM)
  - radicalisation and extremism
  - serious violence, including county lines
- New and emerging safeguarding risks, particularly those linked to technology and online environments
- The importance of reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and will be supported
- That children may not always recognise abuse or may find it difficult to report concerns
- That children who are or are perceived to be LGBTQ+ may be more vulnerable to harm
- That children may experience multiple and overlapping needs

All staff must:

- Act immediately on any safeguarding concerns
- Share concerns with the DSL without delay
- Record concerns accurately and promptly
- Work collaboratively with other professionals where required

Staff will receive regular safeguarding training and updates to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to safeguard children effectively.

## **5.2 Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

The Headteacher is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and safeguarding arrangements across the school.

In this role, the Headteacher/DSL will:

- Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of safeguarding systems and procedures as part of induction
- Ensure that safeguarding and child protection procedures are followed consistently and effectively
- Communicate this policy to parents and carers and make it available on the school website



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- Ensure that there is appropriate safeguarding cover in place at all times
- Act as case manager for allegations of abuse made against staff and volunteers (in liaison with the Local Authority Designated Officer, where appropriate)
- Manage and respond to low-level concerns in line with school procedures
- Take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including managing referrals to external agencies
- Ensure safeguarding records are accurate, secure and up to date
- Support staff in identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns
- Promote a strong safeguarding culture across the school
- Ensure that the voice of the child is central to all safeguarding decisions

In primary and early years provision, the Headteacher/DSL will also ensure:

- Appropriate staffing ratios are maintained
- The safe and appropriate use of technology and devices, including mobile phones and cameras

The DSL will be given time, funding, training, resources and support to carry out the role effectively.

The school may work with external agencies and security professionals to review and strengthen safeguarding, security and emergency response arrangements where appropriate.

### **5.3 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (Deputy DSLs)**

The Deputy DSLs:

- Support the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in all safeguarding and child protection matters
- Act as the DSL in the absence of the DSL, ensuring there is always appropriate safeguarding leadership available
- Work closely with the DSL to ensure continuity, consistency and effective safeguarding practice across the school
- Take part in safeguarding training appropriate to their role and keep their knowledge and skills up to date
- Liaise with staff, parents/carers and external agencies as required, in line with safeguarding procedures

The Deputy DSLs will have appropriate status, authority, time and training to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

While the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding remains with the DSL, the Deputy DSLs are trained to carry out the role and can act with full authority in the DSL's absence.

### **5.4 The Governing Body**

The governing body will:

- Ensure a whole-school approach to safeguarding
- Approve and review this policy annually



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- Hold the headteacher to account for safeguarding practice
- Ensure compliance with:
  - Human Rights Act
  - Equality Act (including PSED)
  - Local safeguarding arrangements
- Appoint a safeguarding governor (separate from the DSL)
- Ensure staff receive regular safeguarding training
- Ensure effective filtering and monitoring systems are in place

The governing body will also ensure that:

- The DSL has sufficient authority and resources
- Online safety is embedded across school practice
- Procedures exist for managing:
  - Safeguarding concerns
  - Allegations and low-level concerns about staff
- Additional barriers for children with SEND are recognised

Where external providers use school premises, the governing body will:

- Seek assurance of their safeguarding arrangements
- Ensure safeguarding is a condition of use
- Terminate agreements where safeguarding standards are not met

The Chair of Governors will act as case manager for allegations against the Headteacher.

All governors will read **KCSIE in full**.

### **5.5 Safeguarding Governor**

The safeguarding governor:

- Provide strategic oversight of safeguarding and child protection arrangements within the school
- Ensure that safeguarding is a priority at governing board level
- Monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding policies, procedures and practice
- Support and challenge school leaders to ensure safeguarding responsibilities are fully met
- Ensure that the school complies with its statutory duties under safeguarding legislation and guidance, including KCSIE
- Meet regularly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to review safeguarding practice, including training, case management (anonymised where appropriate), and record-keeping
- Report to the governing body on safeguarding matters, including strengths, areas for development and any significant concerns



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- The safeguarding governor is a different person from the DSL and does not have operational responsibility for safeguarding. Their role is to provide independent scrutiny and assurance.

### **5.6 Volunteers, Supply Staff and Contractors**

All volunteers, supply staff and contractors:

- Must follow the school's safeguarding procedures
- Must be aware of how to report concerns
- Will receive safeguarding information as part of induction
- Are subject to appropriate safeguarding checks

### **5.7 Pupils**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is at the heart of the school's work. Pupils play an important role in creating a safe and supportive environment.

Pupils will be encouraged and supported to:

- Feel safe, secure and valued within the school environment
- Know how to recognise when they are at risk or feel unsafe, including online
- Understand what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, including child-on-child abuse
- Speak to a trusted adult if they have any concerns about themselves or others
- Report concerns confidently, knowing they will be taken seriously and acted upon

The school will ensure that:

- Pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, through the curriculum (including RSHE and computing)
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including when using technology and social media
- Pupils are aware of the school's reporting systems and know who they can speak to
- Pupils feel listened to and that their views are taken into account when decisions affecting them are made

Pupils can report concerns to any trusted adult in school and through established reporting systems.

The school recognises that some pupils may face additional barriers to reporting concerns, including those with SEND, those who are vulnerable, or those who have experienced trauma. Staff will be particularly vigilant in identifying and supporting these pupils.

### **5.8 Parents and Carers**

The school recognises the important role that parents and carers play in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to keep children safe.

The school will:



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- Ensure that parents and carers are aware of the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures
- Make this policy available on the school website
- Provide parents and carers with information about safeguarding, including online safety, through regular communication and events where appropriate
- Work with parents and carers to support children's safety and wellbeing

Where appropriate, the school will discuss concerns about a child with their parents or carers. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will usually take responsibility for this.

However, the school will not inform parents or carers where doing so may:

- Place the child at increased risk of harm
- Compromise a police or children's social care investigation

In such cases, the school will seek advice from children's social care before making a decision.

The school will always act in the best interests of the child and will take the child's wishes and feelings into account when working with parents and carers.

### **5.9 Managing Allegations Against Staff**

Where an allegation is made against:

- The Headteacher/DSL → the concern must be reported to the Chair of Governors and referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Any other staff member → the concern must be reported to the Headteacher/DSL

The school will follow statutory guidance and local procedures when managing allegations.

## **6. Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

The school recognises, in line with statutory guidance, that timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding. All staff understand that safeguarding concerns must always be shared appropriately in order to protect children.

The school follows the principles set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and the Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding Practitioners.

### **6.1 Key Principles**

- The welfare and safety of the child is the paramount consideration
- Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis
- Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of protecting children
- The school will work in partnership with the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) and other agencies

### **6.2 Data Protection and Information Sharing**

The school understands that:



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- The Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information where this is necessary to safeguard children
- Personal information, including special category data, can be shared lawfully without consent where:
  - It is not possible to gain consent
  - It cannot reasonably be expected that consent would be gained
  - Seeking consent would place a child at risk

Staff must ensure that any information shared is:

- Necessary
- Proportionate
- Relevant
- Accurate
- Timely
- Secure

### **6.3 Sharing Information with Other Agencies**

The school will share information with:

- Children's social care
- The police
- Health professionals
- Other relevant agencies

This is done in line with local safeguarding procedures (HSCP) to ensure children receive the right support at the right time.

If staff are unsure about sharing information, they must seek advice from the DSL or Deputy DSL.

### **6.4 Confidentiality and Disclosure**

Staff must:

- Never promise a child that they will keep a disclosure confidential
- Reassure the child that they will share the information only with those who need to know
- Act in the best interests of the child at all times

### **6.5 Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment**

Where a child reports sexual violence or sexual harassment:

- The DSL will carefully consider the wishes of the child alongside the duty to protect them and others
- Parents or carers will normally be informed, unless this would place the child at greater risk
- If a child is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care



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- Allegations of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault will be referred to the police

## 6.6 Anonymity and Information Protection

All staff will:

- Protect the confidentiality and privacy of children involved in safeguarding concerns
- Only share information with those who need to know
- Consider the risks of social media and information sharing
- Take steps to prevent the spread of rumours or identification of children

## 6.7 Further Guidance

The school follows the **7 golden rules of information sharing** as set out in government guidance.

Confidentiality is also addressed in:

- Section 15: Record Keeping
- Appendix 3: Allegations Against Staff

## 7. Recognising Abuse and Taking Action

All staff are expected to identify and recognise all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation, and be alert to the potential need for early help.

Staff should be particularly alert to children who:

- Have a disability or special educational needs
- Are young carers or have experienced bereavement
- Are showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gangs, county lines, organised crime or serious violence
- Are frequently missing from education, home or care
- Are at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation (CSE/CCE)
- Are at risk of radicalisation or extremism
- Are viewing harmful or inappropriate online content or developing unsafe online relationships
- Are living in challenging family circumstances, including substance misuse, domestic abuse or parental mental health issues
- Are misusing drugs or alcohol
- Are experiencing mental health difficulties
- Have returned home from care
- Are at risk of so-called honour-based abuse, including FGM or forced marriage
- Are privately fostered
- Have a parent in custody or affected by offending



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- Are persistently absent from education or not receiving full-time education
- Have experienced multiple suspensions or are at risk of exclusion

Staff, volunteers and governors must follow the procedures below in the event of a safeguarding concern.

All safeguarding concerns, disclosures and actions must be recorded promptly and accurately on the school's safeguarding system, CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System).

### **7.1 If a Child is in Immediate Danger or at Risk of Harm**

If a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, or is in immediate danger:

- Make an immediate referral to children's social care and/or the police
- Anyone can make a referral
- Inform the DSL as soon as possible

Staff must not delay action.

The school follows local procedures set out by the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP).

### **7.2 If a Child Makes a Disclosure**

If a child discloses abuse:

- Listen carefully and **believe the child**
- Allow them to speak freely and do not ask leading questions
- Stay calm and do not show shock or disbelief
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing
- Explain what will happen next
- Do **not promise confidentiality**
- Record the information accurately, using the child's own words
- Sign and date the record
- Report it to the DSL immediately

Staff must not investigate.

Some children may:

- Not recognise that they are being abused
- Feel unable or unwilling to disclose
- Feel embarrassed, ashamed or frightened

Staff must maintain **professional curiosity** and report concerns.

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

FGM is illegal in the UK and is a form of child abuse with serious, long-term consequences.

Mandatory reporting duty:



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Teachers must report to the police immediately if:

- A girl under 18 discloses that FGM has been carried out, or
- There are visible signs that FGM has taken place

The DSL must also be informed.

All other staff must report concerns to the DSL and follow safeguarding procedures.

Staff must not examine pupils.

#### **7.4 If You Have Concerns About a Child**

If a child is not in immediate danger:

- Speak to the DSL to agree a course of action
- If the DSL is unavailable, take advice from:
  - A senior leader
  - Children's social care
  - NSPCC helpline (0808 800 5000)

Do not delay taking action.

#### **Early Help**

Early help is support provided as soon as a problem emerges to prevent escalation.

- The DSL will usually lead early help
- Staff may be required to contribute to assessments
- Cases will be reviewed regularly

#### **Referral**

If appropriate:

- The DSL will make a referral to children's social care or the police
- Referrals should receive a response within 1 working day
- The DSL (or person making the referral) must ensure outcomes are recorded

If concerns are not acted upon, staff must follow local escalation procedures (HSCP).

The school follows the procedures set out by the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. All staff understand their responsibilities in relation to local safeguarding arrangements, including early help, thresholds for intervention, and referrals to children's social care.

The DSL will make referrals to children's social care (via the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)) in line with local procedures and statutory guidance. Where appropriate, the school will also contribute to multi-agency plans, attend child protection conferences and core group meetings, and escalate concerns where responses are not considered adequate.



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### 7.5 Concerns About Extremism

The school has a duty to prevent children from being drawn into extremism.

If concerns arise:

- Speak to the DSL
- The DSL may refer to:
  - Channel programme
  - Police
  - Children's social care

Emergency: call **999**

Non-emergency advice: DfE helpline **020 7340 7264**

### 7.6 Mental Health Concerns

Mental health issues may be an indicator of safeguarding concerns.

- If there is a safeguarding concern → follow safeguarding procedures
- If not → speak to the DSL

Staff must be alert to changes in behaviour.

### 7.7 Concerns About Staff

If there are concerns about a member of staff:

- Report to the Headteacher
- If the concern is about the Headteacher → report to the Chair of Governors or LADO

Where there is a conflict of interest, report directly to the LADO.

Procedures are set out in **Appendix 3**.

### 7.8 Child-on-Child Abuse

The school has a **zero-tolerance approach** to child-on-child abuse. Abuse will never be dismissed as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up".

This includes:

- Sexual violence and harassment
- Bullying (including online)
- Physical abuse
- Sexual exploitation
- Sharing of nude or semi-nude images

All concerns must be reported to the DSL.

The DSL will:



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- Assess risk
- Refer to external agencies where appropriate
- Put support plans in place for all children involved

### **7.9 Sharing of Nudes and Semi-Nudes**

If an incident occurs:

Staff must:

- Report it immediately to the DSL
- Not view, copy, share or store images
- Not investigate

The DSL will:

- Carry out a risk assessment
- Decide whether to involve police or social care
- Involve parents where appropriate
- Record all decisions and actions

### **7.10 Reporting Systems for Pupils**

The school ensures that pupils:

- Know how to report concerns
- Feel safe and supported
- Are listened to and taken seriously

The school provides:

- Clear and accessible reporting systems
- Trusted adults for pupils to speak to
- Support through the curriculum (including RSHE)

Pupils can report concerns to any trusted adult or through established school systems, and are encouraged to do so.

### **7.11 Operation Encompass**

The school is part of Operation Encompass, a national initiative which supports children who have been exposed to domestic abuse.

Through this partnership, the school will receive notifications from the police prior to the start of the next school day when a child may have been exposed to domestic abuse.

This information is shared in strict confidence and is used to ensure that appropriate support can be provided to the child.



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The DSL (or a deputy DSL) will be responsible for receiving and acting upon this information, ensuring that support is provided in a sensitive and appropriate way.

## 8. Online Safety and the Use of Mobile Technology

The school recognises the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. We understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues, including bullying, exploitation and radicalisation.

Online safety is a key part of our whole-school safeguarding approach and is embedded across policies, curriculum and practice.

### 8.1 Aims

The school aims to:

- Have effective systems in place to safeguard pupils online, including appropriate filtering and monitoring systems
- Protect and educate the whole school community in the safe and responsible use of technology
- Set clear expectations for the use of mobile and smart technology
- Identify, respond to and escalate online safety concerns effectively
- Ensure online safety is considered in all safeguarding decisions

### 8.2 Categories of Online Risk

Our approach to online safety addresses four key categories of risk:

- **Content** – exposure to harmful, inappropriate or illegal content, including pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, extremism, misinformation and disinformation
- **Contact** – harmful interaction with others online, including grooming, exploitation, peer pressure, or adults posing as children
- **Conduct** – inappropriate online behaviour, including bullying, harassment, sharing of images, or risky behaviour
- **Commerce** – risks such as online scams, phishing, gambling and financial exploitation

### 8.3 Education and Prevention

Pupils are taught about online safety as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, including RSHE and computing.

Teaching includes:

- Safe and responsible use of the internet, social media and technology
- Protecting personal information and managing privacy settings
- Recognising online risks, including grooming, exploitation and harmful content
- Understanding appropriate online behaviour and respectful communication
- How to report concerns and seek help

The curriculum is designed to be age-appropriate, inclusive and responsive to emerging risks.



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#### **8.4 Staff Training and Responsibilities**

All staff:

- Receive online safety training as part of induction
- Receive regular updates (at least annually)
- Understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding online
- Are aware of the school's filtering and monitoring systems
- Know how to identify and report online safety concerns
- Staff maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" in relation to online safety risks

Staff understand that online safety is a safeguarding issue, not just a technical issue.

Safeguarding training may also include emergency preparedness, lockdown procedures, communication protocols and responding to risks linked to serious violence, extremism or terrorist incidents.

#### **8.5 Working with Parents and Carers**

The school works in partnership with parents and carers by:

- Providing guidance through newsletters, the website and meetings
- Sharing advice on keeping children safe online at home
- Promoting awareness of current online risks
- Explaining how to report concerns

#### **8.6 Use of Mobile Phones and Technology**

The school has clear expectations regarding the use of mobile devices:

##### **Staff**

- May bring personal mobile phones to school
- Must only use them during non-contact time
- Must not use personal devices to take photographs or recordings of pupils
- Must follow the staff code of conduct and acceptable use policy

##### **Pupils**

- Must follow school rules regarding mobile phone use
- Must not use devices in a way that could harm others
- Will face sanctions if policies are breached

All members of the school community are expected to follow acceptable use agreements.

#### **8.7 Filtering and Monitoring**

The school follows the Department for Education's filtering and monitoring standards.

The school has robust filtering and monitoring systems in place to:



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- Restrict access to harmful or inappropriate content
- Monitor user activity and identify safeguarding concerns
- Alert staff to potential risks

The school ensures that:

- Filtering systems are age-appropriate and effective
- Monitoring systems support safeguarding responses
- Staff understand how these systems work and their responsibilities

The governing body reviews the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring systems regularly, in line with DfE expectations.

### **8.8 Responding to Online Safety Concerns**

All online safety concerns are treated as safeguarding concerns.

The school will:

- Respond promptly to concerns
- Record and report incidents in line with safeguarding procedures
- Involve the DSL where appropriate
- Work with external agencies where necessary
- Provide support for pupils affected

Sanctions will be applied in line with the behaviour policy where appropriate.

### **8.9 Policy Review and Monitoring**

The school:

- Reviews its online safety arrangements at least annually
- Carries out risk assessments based on current and emerging risks
- Provides regular safeguarding updates to staff

Further details can be found in the school's online safety policy and mobile phone policy, available on the school website.

### **8.10 Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

The school recognises that artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly used by staff and pupils.

While AI can support teaching and learning, it may also present safeguarding risks, including:

- Exposure to harmful or misleading content
- Bullying or harassment, including through manipulated or "deepfake" content
- Misuse of AI-generated images or information

The school will:



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- Treat misuse of AI in line with safeguarding and behaviour policies
- Ensure filtering and monitoring systems apply to AI use
- Carry out risk assessments before introducing new AI tools
- Take appropriate action where safeguarding concerns arise

## 9. Notifying Parents or Carers

Where appropriate, the school will discuss safeguarding concerns with a child's parents or carers. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will normally take responsibility for this.

Other staff will only speak to parents or carers about safeguarding concerns following consultation with the DSL.

### 9.1 When Parents/Carers Will Be Informed

In most cases, the school will inform parents or carers of concerns relating to their child. The school recognises the importance of working in partnership with families to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

The school will also take into account the wishes and feelings of the child, where appropriate.

### 9.2 When Parents/Carers May Not Be Informed

The DSL will consider carefully whether informing parents or carers would:

- Place the child at increased risk of harm
- Lead to the child being intimidated, coerced or placed under pressure
- Compromise a police or children's social care investigation

Where there are concerns about sharing information with parents or carers, the DSL will seek advice from local authority children's social care before making a decision.

### 9.3 Child-on-Child Abuse

In cases of child-on-child abuse, the school will normally inform the parents or carers of all children involved.

The school will:

- Carefully consider what information is appropriate to share
- Avoid sharing information that could place any child at risk
- Ensure confidentiality is maintained as far as possible
- Work with the police and/or children's social care to ensure a consistent and appropriate approach

### 9.4 Working with Parents and External Agencies

The DSL, in partnership with relevant agencies, will:

- Meet with the victim and their parents or carers to:
  - Discuss the safeguarding measures in place
  - Understand their wishes and concerns



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- Agree appropriate support and next steps
- Meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to:
  - Discuss the support being provided
  - Explain any actions taken (e.g. separation from the victim, timetable changes)
  - Ensure they understand the safeguarding measures in place

These meetings will be managed sensitively and in line with safeguarding procedures.

### **9.5 Principles for Information Sharing with Parents/Carers**

When working with parents or carers, the school will:

- Act in the best interests of the child at all times
- Share information in a way that is lawful, proportionate and necessary
- Ensure that information sharing does not place any child at further risk
- Work collaboratively with external agencies where appropriate

## **10. Pupils with Special Educational Needs, Disabilities or Health Issues**

The school recognises that pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges. These pupils may be more vulnerable to abuse and may have additional barriers to recognising, disclosing or reporting harm.

Children with disabilities are more likely to be abused than their peers, and staff must remain vigilant to this increased risk.

### **10.1 Additional Barriers**

Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect or exploitation in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of abuse (such as behaviour, mood or injury) relate to the child's condition without further exploration
- Increased likelihood of peer isolation or bullying, including prejudice-based bullying
- Being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing signs
- Communication barriers, including difficulties in expressing concerns or being understood
- Cognitive understanding, including difficulty distinguishing between fact and fiction (particularly online) or understanding consequences

### **10.2 School Response**

The school takes a proactive and inclusive approach to safeguarding pupils with SEND and health needs.

Staff will:

- Be aware that additional barriers may exist and avoid making assumptions
- Take extra care to ensure that all pupils are able to communicate concerns effectively
- Provide opportunities for pupils to express themselves in ways that suit their needs



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- Be alert to changes in behaviour, presentation or communication

### **10.3 Pastoral Support**

The school provides additional pastoral support for pupils with SEND, including:

- Access to trusted adults and key staff
- Adapted communication strategies (e.g. visual supports, simplified language)
- Support from the SENCO and pastoral team
- Individual support plans where appropriate
- Close monitoring of wellbeing and behaviour

### **10.4 Multi-Agency Working**

Any safeguarding concerns involving pupils with SEND will involve:

- Close liaison between the DSL and SENCO
- Collaboration with external agencies where appropriate
- Consideration of the child's individual needs when planning support

## **11. Pupils with a Social Worker**

Some pupils may have a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs.

The school recognises that experiences such as trauma, neglect or adversity can:

- Increase vulnerability to further harm
- Impact attendance, behaviour, learning and mental health

### **11.1 School Responsibilities**

The DSL and all staff will:

- Work closely with social workers and other professionals
- Share information appropriately to support safeguarding
- Promote the child's welfare and educational outcomes

### **11.2 Decision Making**

Where a pupil has a social worker, the DSL will always take this into account when making decisions, including:

- Responding to absence or missing education
- Providing pastoral and academic support
- Assessing safeguarding risks

## **12. Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children**

The school recognises that looked-after and previously looked-after children are particularly vulnerable.



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The school will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to safeguard these pupils effectively.

### **12.1 School Responsibilities**

The school will ensure that:

- Staff are aware of children's legal status and care arrangements
- The DSL has up-to-date details of social workers and virtual school heads
- Safeguarding arrangements reflect the specific needs of these pupils

### **12.2 Designated Teacher**

We will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked-after children and previously looked-after children safe. In particular, we will ensure that:

- Appropriate staff have relevant information about children's looked-after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements
- The DSL has details of children's social workers and relevant virtual school heads

We have appointed a designated teacher, Mrs Aga Przybylska (Headteacher & DSL), who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children in line with statutory guidance.

The designated teacher is appropriately trained and has the relevant qualifications and experience to carry out this role.

As part of their role, the designated teacher will:

- Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- Promote a whole-school culture where the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are understood and supported
- Work with virtual school heads to promote educational achievement, including discussing how pupil premium plus funding can best be used to support pupils and meet the needs identified in their personal education plans (PEPs)
- Ensure that staff understand the impact of trauma, attachment and adverse childhood experiences on learning and behaviour
- Monitor attendance, progress and attainment of looked-after and previously looked-after children and take appropriate action where needed

## **13. Pupils who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Gender Questioning**

The school recognises that pupils who are, or are perceived to be, lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning may be at increased risk of:

- Bullying (including prejudice-based bullying)
- Social isolation
- Poor mental health



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### **13.1 School Approach**

The school will:

- Provide a safe and inclusive environment
- Challenge discriminatory behaviour and language
- Promote respect through the curriculum and school ethos
- Ensure pupils feel able to speak to a trusted adult

### **13.2 Safeguarding Considerations**

Staff will:

- Be alert to safeguarding concerns affecting these pupils
- Recognise that risks may be linked to mental health or peer relationships
- Report any concerns to the DSL

### **13.3 Supporting Gender Questioning Pupils**

When supporting gender questioning pupils, the school will:

- Take a cautious and individualised approach
- Consider the child's wider needs, including mental health and neurodiversity
- Work in partnership with parents or carers, unless doing so would place the child at risk
- Encourage families to seek appropriate clinical advice
- Follow relevant Department for Education guidance

### **13.4 Safeguarding Culture**

The school recognises that risks can be increased where pupils do not have trusted adults to talk to.

We aim to:

- Reduce barriers to reporting concerns
- Ensure pupils feel safe, supported and listened to
- Promote a culture where all pupils can speak openly

## **14. Complaints and Concerns about School Safeguarding Policies**

The school takes all safeguarding concerns and complaints seriously. We are committed to ensuring that any concerns about safeguarding practice, staff conduct or the safety of pupils are raised, investigated and addressed promptly and appropriately.

### **14.1 Complaints Against Staff**

Complaints against staff that are likely to require a child protection investigation will be handled in accordance with the school's procedures for managing allegations against staff, as set out in Appendix 3.

This includes situations where a member of staff has:



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- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved in a way that may have breached professional standards (low-level concerns)

Such concerns will be:

- Reported immediately to the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors if the concern relates to the Headteacher)
- Referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate
- Managed in line with statutory guidance and local procedures

#### **14.2 Other Safeguarding Complaints**

The school will respond appropriately to all safeguarding-related complaints, including those relating to:

- The behaviour of pupils
- The safety of the school environment or premises
- The implementation of safeguarding policies
- The actions or decisions taken by the school in relation to safeguarding

The school will:

- Take all complaints seriously
- Investigate concerns promptly and fairly
- Work with relevant agencies where appropriate
- Keep clear records of concerns, actions and outcomes

Where a complaint relates to safeguarding, it will be prioritised and may be referred to children's social care, the police or other agencies where necessary.

Parents and carers can raise concerns through the school's complaints procedure. However, safeguarding concerns will always be dealt with in line with safeguarding procedures first.

#### **14.3 Whistleblowing**

The school encourages all staff to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice or potential failures in safeguarding arrangements.

This includes concerns about:

- Safeguarding practices or procedures
- The behaviour of colleagues
- Failure to follow safeguarding policies
- Actions that place children at risk

Staff can report concerns:



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- To the Headteacher
- To the DSL
- To the Chair of Governors (if the concern involves senior leaders)

If staff feel unable to raise concerns internally, they can contact external agencies, including:

- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline (0800 028 0285)

The school will:

- Treat all concerns seriously
- Investigate concerns promptly and appropriately
- Protect staff who raise concerns in good faith

No member of staff will suffer detriment for raising a genuine concern.

Further information is set out in the school's whistleblowing policy.

## **15. Record Keeping**

The school maintains accurate, secure and confidential records in line with statutory requirements.

All safeguarding concerns, disclosures and actions must be recorded promptly and accurately on the school's safeguarding system, CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System).

### **15.1 Recording Safeguarding Concerns**

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions and actions must be recorded in writing.

This includes:

- Concerns raised by staff, pupils or parents
- Decisions made and the rationale for those decisions
- Actions taken, including referrals to external agencies
- Outcomes of any safeguarding intervention

If staff are unsure whether to record a concern, they should consult the DSL.

### **15.2 Content of Records**

Records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- Details of how the concern was followed up
- Actions taken and decisions made
- The outcome of the concern

### **15.3 Storage and Security**

Safeguarding records:



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- Are kept in a separate child protection file for each child
- May be held in electronic and/or paper format
- Are stored securely and accessed only by authorised staff
- Are treated as confidential and shared on a need-to-know basis

The school ensures that records are:

- Protected from unauthorised access
- Stored in line with data protection requirements
- Accessible to relevant staff when needed

#### **15.4 Retention of Records**

Safeguarding records are retained in line with the school's records retention schedule and statutory guidance.

Records will be kept for a reasonable period after a child leaves the school.

#### **15.5 Transfer of Records**

When a pupil transfers to another school:

- The DSL will ensure that safeguarding records are transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file
- This will take place:
  - Within 5 days for an in-year transfer, or
  - Within the first 5 days of a new term

Where concerns are complex or significant:

- The DSL will liaise directly with the receiving school's DSL
- Relevant information will be shared to ensure appropriate support is in place

#### **15.6 Information Sharing**

The school shares safeguarding information with relevant agencies where appropriate, including:

- Children's social care
- Police
- Health services

Information sharing is:

- Lawful and proportionate
- In line with safeguarding procedures and data protection legislation
- Focused on protecting the child

#### **15.7 Additional Record-Keeping Requirements**



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- Appendix 2 outlines record-keeping for recruitment and pre-employment checks
- Appendix 3 outlines record-keeping for allegations against staff

## 16. Training

The school ensures that all staff, governors and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding training so they can identify concerns, take appropriate action and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively and confidently.

### 16.1 All Staff

All staff will receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including:

- The school's safeguarding systems and procedures
- The role of the DSL and deputies
- Whistleblowing procedures
- Online safety, including filtering and monitoring expectations
- How to identify signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation

This training will:

- Be regularly updated and at least annually
- Be aligned with the whole-school safeguarding approach
- Be in line with advice from the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP)
- Reflect current safeguarding risks and emerging issues

All staff will:

- Read and understand Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Receive regular safeguarding updates through:
  - Staff meetings
  - Briefings
  - Emails and bulletins

Staff will also receive training on the Prevent duty to help them identify and respond to concerns related to radicalisation and extremism.

Teachers will be supported to meet the Teachers' Standards, including:

- Maintaining a safe learning environment
- Understanding the needs of all pupils

Contractors and volunteers will receive safeguarding information and training appropriate to their role.

### 16.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputies

The DSL and any deputy DSLs will:



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- Undertake formal safeguarding and child protection training at least every 2 years
- Update their knowledge and skills regularly and at least annually

This may include:

- Attending training events
- Reviewing safeguarding updates and guidance
- Networking with other DSLs

The DSL (and any Prevent lead) will also complete enhanced Prevent training.

The DSL will ensure that:

- Safeguarding training is effectively delivered across the school
- Staff receive appropriate updates and support

### **16.3 Governors**

All governors will receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction, which is regularly updated.

This ensures they:

- Understand their safeguarding responsibilities
- Can provide strategic oversight and challenge
- Are assured that safeguarding arrangements are effective

The Chair of Governors will receive additional training to manage allegations against the Headteacher where required.

### **16.4 Safer Recruitment – Interview Panels**

At least one member of any interview panel will have completed safer recruitment training, which includes:

- Understanding KCSIE requirements
- Safer recruitment processes
- Identifying safeguarding risks during recruitment

Further details are set out in **Appendix 2**.

### **16.5 Supervision and Support**

Staff who work with children and families will receive appropriate supervision and support. This will:

- Provide opportunities for reflection and discussion
- Support staff wellbeing
- Promote effective safeguarding practice
- Allow confidential discussion of sensitive issues

## **17. Monitoring Arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Headteacher/DSL.



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At each review, the policy will be:

- Approved by the governing body
- Updated to reflect changes in legislation and guidance
- Reviewed in light of safeguarding practice and local procedures

### **18. Links with Other Policies**

This policy should be read alongside the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints policy
- Health and safety policy
- Attendance policy
- Online safety policy
- Artificial intelligence (AI) policy
- Mobile phone policy
- Equality policy
- Relationships and sex education (RSHE) policy
- First aid policy
- Curriculum policy
- Designated teacher for looked-after children policy
- Privacy notices
- Whistleblowing policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- IT acceptable use policy



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## **Appendix 1: Types of Abuse**

These definitions are based on statutory guidance set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

Abuse, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by a single definition or label. In many cases, multiple issues will overlap.

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve:

- Hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding
- Drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer:

- Fabricates the symptoms of, or
- Deliberately induces illness in a child

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse is present in all types of maltreatment, although it may occur alone.

It may involve:

- Conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate
- Valuing a child only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Not allowing the child to express their views, deliberately silencing them or making fun of what they say or how they communicate
- Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations
- Overprotection or limiting exploration and learning
- Preventing participation in normal social interaction
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyberbullying)
- Exploitation or corruption of children

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

This may involve:

Contact activities:

- Assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex)
- Non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing or touching outside of clothing



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Non-contact activities:

- Involving children in looking at or producing sexual images
- Watching sexual activities
- Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- Grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including online)

Sexual abuse:

- Can be carried out by adults or other children
- Is not limited to male perpetrators

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy due to maternal substance misuse.

After birth, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of unsuitable caregivers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

Neglect may also include:

- A lack of responsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs



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## **Appendix 2: Safer Recruitment and DBS Checks – Policy and Procedures**

### **Safer Recruitment Policy**

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff, volunteers and governors to share this commitment.

We will ensure that our recruitment and selection practices are robust and in line with statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025 (Part 3).

### **Recruitment and Selection Process**

To ensure we recruit suitable individuals to work with children, all staff involved in recruitment will receive appropriate safer recruitment training.

The following procedures are in place:

#### **Advertising**

All job advertisements will clearly state:

- The school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- That safeguarding checks will be undertaken
- The safeguarding responsibilities of the role
- Whether the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

#### **Application Forms**

Application forms will:

- Include a statement that it is an offence to apply if barred from working with children
- Include a link to:
  - This safeguarding policy
  - The school's policy on the employment of ex-offenders

#### **Shortlisting**

Shortlisting will:

- Be carried out by at least two people
- Identify gaps in employment and inconsistencies
- Explore any concerns

Shortlisted candidates will:

- Complete a self-declaration of criminal history and suitability
- Declare:
  - Criminal convictions
  - Barred list status
  - Prohibition from teaching



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- Overseas offences
- Social care involvement
- Childcare disqualification (where applicable)
- Sign a declaration confirming accuracy

The school may carry out online searches on shortlisted candidates as part of due diligence.

### **References**

References will:

- If possible be obtained before interview
- Be verified directly with referees
- Not be accepted if open ("to whom it may concern")
- Not be provided by the candidate

We will:

- Confirm employment history
- Clarify concerns
- Compare references with application information
- Establish reasons for leaving previous roles

All concerns must be resolved before appointment.

### **Interview and Selection**

The interview process will:

- Explore gaps in employment
- Assess safeguarding attitudes and suitability
- Test understanding of safeguarding responsibilities
- Record decisions clearly

### **Pre-Appointment Checks**

All offers of employment are conditional upon satisfactory completion of checks.

The school will:

- Verify identity
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check (with barred list where applicable)
- Obtain a barred list check where required
- Verify right to work in the UK
- Verify qualifications
- Check prohibition from teaching



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- Verify mental and physical fitness
- Carry out overseas checks where applicable

We will:

- Record all checks on the Single Central Record (SCR)
- Not retain DBS certificates for longer than 6 months

### **Regulated Activity**

Regulated activity includes:

- Teaching, training, supervising or caring for children regularly
- Work that provides regular contact with children
- Personal or intimate care

### **Existing Staff**

Checks will be repeated where:

- Concerns arise about suitability
- Role changes involve regulated activity
- There is a break in service of 12 weeks or more

The school will refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where required.

### **Agency and Third-Party Staff**

The school will:

- Obtain written confirmation of checks from agencies
- Verify identity on arrival

### **Contractors**

Contractors will:

- Have appropriate DBS checks depending on role
- Not work unsupervised without checks
- Be subject to identity verification

### **Trainee Teachers**

The school will:

- Carry out checks for salaried trainees
- Obtain written confirmation from providers for fee-funded trainees

### **Volunteers**

The school will:

- Never leave volunteers unsupervised without checks



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- Carry out DBS checks where appropriate
- Complete a risk assessment where checks are not required

### **Governors**

All governors will:

- Have an enhanced DBS check (without barred list)
- Have a barred list check if in regulated activity

Additional checks may include:

- Section 128 checks (where applicable)
- Identity and right to work

### **Alternative Provision**

Where pupils attend alternative provision, the school will:

- Obtain written assurance that safeguarding checks have been completed

### **Work Experience**

The school will:

- Ensure safeguarding arrangements are in place
- Consider DBS checks depending on risk

### **Host Families**

Where pupils stay with host families:

- DBS checks will be obtained (UK-based)
- Equivalent assurances will be sought for overseas arrangements



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## **Appendix 3: Allegations of Abuse Made Against Staff**

### **Allegations Against Staff (Including Low-Level Concerns) Policy**

This appendix is based on Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and applies to all concerns about adults working in or on behalf of the school, including staff, supply teachers, volunteers and contractors.

#### **Section 1: Allegations That May Meet the Harm Threshold**

This section applies where it is alleged that a current member of staff, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; and/or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, including behaviour that may have taken place outside school

If there is any doubt about whether a concern meets the harm threshold, the school will consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The school will deal with all allegations quickly, fairly and consistently, in a way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A case manager will lead the process. This will usually be the Headteacher, or the Chair of Governors where the allegation concerns the Headteacher.

The school will apply these procedures with common sense and judgement.

If an allegation relates to an incident that occurred while an individual or organisation was using the school premises to run activities for children, the school will follow its safeguarding procedures and inform the LADO.

#### **Suspension**

Suspension will **not** be the default response. It will only be considered where:

- there is reason to suspect that a child or other children may be at risk of harm; or
- the allegation is so serious that it may justify dismissal

Before suspending an individual, the school will consider whether there are reasonable alternatives, including:

- redeployment within the school so the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned
- providing an additional adult to supervise contact
- redeploying the individual so they do not have unsupervised access to children
- moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making clear that this is not a punishment and after consultation with parents/carers
- temporary redeployment to another role or location



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The case manager will seek advice from the LADO, personnel adviser, police and/or children's social care, as appropriate.

### **Outcomes of Allegation Investigations**

The following definitions will be used:

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation; this does not imply guilt or innocence
- **Unfounded:** there is no evidence or proper basis to support the allegation

### **Procedure for Dealing with Allegations**

In the event of an allegation that may meet the harm threshold, the case manager will:

- conduct initial enquiries, in line with local procedures, to establish the facts and determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation
- discuss the allegation with the LADO to agree the nature, content and context of the allegation and a course of action
- involve the police before consulting the LADO only where this is necessary because there is an immediate risk to children or evidence of a possible criminal offence, and notify the LADO as soon as possible afterwards
- inform the accused individual of the allegation and likely course of action as soon as possible, subject to advice from the police and/or children's social care
- consider, with advice from relevant agencies, whether suspension is necessary or whether alternative arrangements can be put in place
- discuss any concerns about the welfare of other children in the community or the individual's family with the DSL, and make a referral to children's social care where necessary
- if suspension is necessary, record the rationale, including why alternatives were not suitable, and confirm the suspension in writing within 1 working day
- appoint a named contact for the staff member concerned
- if no further action is required, record the decision and rationale, and agree with the LADO what information should be shared and with whom
- if further action is required, take the agreed steps and liaise with relevant agencies
- provide effective support for the individual concerned, including a named representative to keep them informed and access to appropriate welfare support, professional association/trade union support, counselling or occupational health where appropriate
- inform the parents/carers of the child or children involved as soon as possible, subject to agreement with the police and/or children's social care where relevant



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- remind parents/carers of the need for confidentiality while investigations are ongoing
- keep parents/carers informed of progress in relation to their child, without sharing unnecessary information about the staff member
- make a referral to the DBS where the criteria are met

If the school is informed that the Secretary of State has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, the school will immediately suspend that individual from teaching pending the outcome of the Teaching Regulation Agency investigation.

Where the police are involved, the school will, wherever possible, ask at the start of the investigation for consent to use statements and evidence in the school's disciplinary process if needed later.

### **Additional Considerations for Supply Teachers and Contracted Staff**

Where an allegation concerns a supply teacher or contractor not directly employed by the school, the school will:

- not cease to use the individual without first finding out the facts and liaising with the LADO
- discuss with the agency or employer whether suspension or redeployment is appropriate
- take the lead in gathering information and providing it to the LADO
- work with the agency to ensure all relevant safeguarding information is taken into account
- inform the agency of the school's allegations procedures and keep them updated as necessary
- invite the agency's HR representative or equivalent to relevant meetings where appropriate

### **Timescales**

The school will deal with allegations as quickly and effectively as possible and will aim, where reasonably practicable, to meet the following timescales:

- cases that are clearly unsubstantiated or malicious should be resolved within **1 week**
- where formal disciplinary action is not required, action should be taken within **3 working days**
- where a disciplinary hearing is required and no further investigation is needed, it should be held within **15 working days**

These are objectives rather than absolute deadlines. Where they cannot be met, action will be taken as soon as possible thereafter.

### **Specific Actions**

#### **Action Following a Criminal Investigation or Prosecution**

The case manager will discuss with the **LADO** whether further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate, taking account of information from the police and/or children's social care.

#### **Conclusion of a Case Where the Allegation is Substantiated**

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed, resigns, or the school ceases to use their services, the school will refer the case to the DBS.

If the individual is a teacher, the school will also consider referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency.



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### **Return to Work**

Where an individual returns to work after suspension, the case manager will consider how best to support that return and how to manage contact with the child or children involved.

### **Unsubstantiated, Unfounded, False or Malicious Allegations**

If an allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO and case manager will consider the next steps.

If they consider that the child or person who made the allegation may be in need of help, or that the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate.

If an allegation is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the school will consider whether disciplinary action is appropriate against the person who made it, taking account of the child's age, understanding and any additional vulnerabilities.

### **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

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

The case manager will seek advice from the LADO, police and children's social care, as appropriate, regarding:

- who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared
- how to manage speculation, leaks and gossip
- what information may be shared with the wider community, where appropriate
- how to manage press interest if it arises

### **Record Keeping**

The case manager will maintain clear and comprehensive records of all allegations that meet the harm threshold and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case.

Where an allegation is found to be malicious or false, the record will be removed from the personnel file, unless the individual gives consent for it to be retained.

For all other allegations, the following will be recorded:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- notes of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome
- a declaration as to whether the information will be referred to in any future reference

A copy of this record will be provided to the individual concerned, where appropriate and in agreement with the police and/or children's social care.

Records will be retained at least until the accused individual reaches normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

### **References**

When providing references, the school will:



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- not refer to allegations that have been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious, nor repeated allegations that have all been found to be so
- include substantiated allegations, where relevant, in a factual manner without opinion

### **Learning Lessons**

After any case where an allegation is substantiated, the case manager will review the circumstances with the LADO to determine whether there are improvements to be made to school procedures or practice.

This review may include consideration of:

- the decision to suspend
- the duration of suspension
- whether suspension was justified
- whether future similar cases could be managed without suspension

For all other cases, the case manager will consider whether improvements can be made.

### **Non-Recent Allegations**

Abuse may be reported no matter how long ago it happened.

The school will report any non-recent allegation made by a child to the LADO in line with local procedures.

Where an adult makes an allegation that they were abused as a child, the school will advise them to report the matter to the police.

### **Section 2: Concerns That Do Not Meet the Harm Threshold**

This section applies to all concerns, including allegations, about adults working in or on behalf of the school, including staff, supply teachers, volunteers and contractors, which do **not** meet the harm threshold set out above.

Concerns may arise from:

- suspicion
- complaint
- a safeguarding concern or allegation raised by another member of staff
- a disclosure by a child, parent or other adult
- pre-employment vetting information

The school recognises the importance of identifying and responding to such concerns promptly in order to safeguard children and promote a culture of openness and accountability.

### **Definition of Low-Level Concerns**

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

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



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Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- being overly friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on a personal device
- engaging with a child one-to-one in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- humiliating pupils

### **Sharing Low-Level Concerns**

The school seeks to create a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which all staff are confident to share low-level concerns appropriately.

This will be achieved by:

- ensuring staff understand what appropriate and inappropriate behaviour looks like
- making clear how concerns should be reported
- encouraging staff to raise concerns about others and to self-refer where appropriate
- responding to concerns in a sensitive, proportionate and timely way
- using concerns to identify and address weaknesses in safeguarding systems

Low-level concerns should normally be reported to the Headteacher. Where the concern relates to the Headteacher, it should be reported to the Chair of Governors.

The Headteacher and DSL will promote a safeguarding culture in which concerns can be raised confidentially and without fear of unfair treatment.

### **Responding to Low-Level Concerns**

If a low-level concern is raised, the Headteacher will:

- gather information where necessary by speaking with the person who raised the concern, unless it was raised anonymously
- speak to the individual involved and any relevant witnesses
- review the information in line with the staff code of conduct and safeguarding procedures
- determine whether the behaviour:
  - is consistent with the staff code of conduct
  - requires management guidance, training or support
  - should be addressed under disciplinary procedures
  - has escalated to meet the harm threshold and therefore requires referral to the LADO

The Headteacher will be the final decision-maker in relation to low-level concerns, although they may consult the DSL.

Low-level concerns will be addressed at an early stage to maintain professional boundaries, support staff and protect pupils.



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### **Record Keeping**

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing.

The record will include:

- details of the concern
- the context in which it arose
- any action taken
- the rationale for decisions made

Records will be:

- kept confidential and secure
- stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- reviewed regularly to identify patterns of concerning behaviour
- retained at least until the individual leaves employment at the school

Where a pattern of concerns is identified, the school will decide whether to address this through disciplinary procedures or whether it now meets the harm threshold and must be referred to the LADO.

Where a low-level concern relates to a supply teacher or contractor, the school will notify the employer or agency so that patterns of behaviour can be identified and addressed.

### **References**

Low-level concerns will not be included in references unless:

- the concern, or group of concerns, has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and is found to be substantiated; and/or
- the concern relates to issues that would ordinarily be included in a reference, such as substantiated misconduct or poor performance



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## **Appendix 4: Specific Safeguarding Issues**

This appendix should be read alongside the main body of this policy, especially Section 7: Recognising Abuse and Taking Action. Abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone concerns. In many cases, children may experience more than one risk factor at the same time, and staff should consider the child's circumstances holistically.

All staff should be aware that safeguarding concerns can arise inside and outside the home, inside and outside school, and online. Staff should always maintain a child-centred approach, exercise professional curiosity, and report concerns to the DSL without delay.

The school follows the procedures of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) and will work with external agencies, including children's social care, police, health services and other professionals, where appropriate.

### **1. Assessing Adult-Involved Nude and Semi-Nude Sharing Incidents**

All adult-involved nude and semi-nude image sharing incidents are child sexual abuse offences and must be referred immediately to police and/or children's social care.

These incidents can initially appear to be child-on-child incidents, so staff must be alert to the possibility of adult involvement.

#### **1.1 Sexually Motivated Incidents**

In these cases, an adult offender obtains nude or semi-nude images directly from a child or young person using online platforms. The offender may:

- pose as a child or young person
- make contact through social media, gaming or chat platforms
- move the child to a private or encrypted platform
- groom, pressure or coerce the child into sharing images
- share pornography or abusive material to normalise the behaviour
- blackmail the child into sending more images by threatening to release them

Possible signs may include a child or young person:

- being contacted online by someone they do not know who appears to be another young person
- being quickly drawn into sexualised or explicit communication
- being moved from a public platform to a private or encrypted one
- being pressured to create or send nude or semi-nude images
- being offered gifts, money, gaming credits or other items of value
- appearing anxious, distressed or secretive about online activity
- being threatened or blackmailed after sharing an image

#### **1.2 Financially Motivated Sexual Extortion ("Sextortion")**

This is where an adult offender threatens to release nude or semi-nude images unless the child pays money or does something else to benefit the offender. This may involve:



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- grooming the child into sending images
- hacking a child's account and stealing images
- using manipulated or AI-generated images
- demanding payment or access to bank accounts

Possible signs may include a child or young person:

- being contacted by an unfamiliar account or hacked account
- being moved quickly to a private platform
- being pressured into sending images
- saying they have been hacked
- being extremely distressed after online contact
- being blackmailed for money or bank details

### **1.3 School Response**

If staff suspect adult involvement in an incident involving nude or semi-nude images, they must:

- report it immediately to the DSL
- not investigate
- not view, forward, save or delete images
- reassure the child and explain that the concern will be taken seriously

The DSL will ensure immediate referral to police and/or children's social care.

## **2. Children Who Are Absent from Education**

A child being absent from education, particularly repeatedly or for prolonged periods, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including:

- neglect
- sexual abuse or exploitation
- criminal exploitation
- mental health concerns
- substance misuse
- radicalisation
- FGM
- forced marriage

Some children are at increased risk, including those who:

- are already at risk of harm or neglect
- are at risk of forced marriage or FGM



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- are from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families
- are from service families
- go missing or run away from home or care
- are known to the youth justice system
- cease to attend school unexpectedly
- are from newly arrived migrant families

The school will follow its attendance procedures and procedures for children missing education. This includes:

- monitoring attendance patterns closely
- following up unexplained absence promptly
- liaising with parents/carers and emergency contacts
- considering the child's vulnerabilities and home circumstances
- informing the local authority where required
- making safeguarding referrals where concerns arise

If a staff member believes absence may indicate a safeguarding risk, they must report this to the DSL immediately.

### **3. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

Child Criminal Exploitation is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity. This may be in exchange for something the child needs or wants, for the perpetrator's financial or other advantage, or through violence or threats.

CCE can:

- involve children or adults as perpetrators
- happen once or repeatedly over time
- happen online or offline
- appear consensual when it is not

Examples include:

- county lines activity
- transporting drugs or money
- theft, shoplifting or robbery
- carrying weapons
- forced involvement in gang-related activity
- working in cannabis factories



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- coercing other children

Possible indicators include:

- unexplained gifts, money or possessions
- changes in friendships or association with older individuals or groups
- going missing or returning late
- decline in emotional wellbeing
- substance misuse
- persistent absence from school
- disengagement from education

Any concerns about CCE must be reported to the DSL. The DSL will follow local safeguarding procedures, including referral to children's social care and the police where appropriate.

#### **4. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group uses an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity. It may involve exchange, reward, status, threats or violence.

CSE can:

- be carried out by adults or other children
- happen online or offline
- involve physical contact or non-contact abuse
- be a one-off event or occur over time
- appear consensual to the child when it is not

Examples include:

- being pressured into sexual activity in exchange for gifts, affection, status or protection
- being groomed online
- sharing explicit images
- engaging in sexual activity over webcam or messaging platforms
- being filmed or photographed without full understanding or consent

Possible indicators, in addition to those linked to CCE, include:

- having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- unexplained gifts or money
- repeated missing episodes
- STIs or pregnancy
- sexualised behaviour beyond what is age-appropriate



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- secrecy about online relationships

Staff must report concerns to the DSL. The DSL will refer to children's social care and the police as appropriate.

## 5. Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse occurs when children abuse other children. It can happen:

- inside or outside school
- face to face or online
- as single incidents or repeated behaviour

The school has a **zero-tolerance approach** to sexual violence and sexual harassment. Abuse will never be dismissed as:

- "banter"
- "part of growing up"
- "just a joke"
- "boys being boys"

Child-on-child abuse may include:

- bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying
- abuse in intimate personal relationships
- physical abuse
- sexual violence
- sexual harassment
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images
- upskirting
- initiation or hazing-type violence

Online peer abuse can include:

- sexually abusive or misogynistic messages
- non-consensual sharing of images
- sharing abusive content in group chats
- coercion through social media or gaming platforms

If staff have concerns, they must follow Section 7 of this policy. The school will support victims, alleged perpetrators and other affected children, and will take a contextual and trauma-informed approach where appropriate.



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## 6. Domestic Abuse

Children can witness and be harmed by domestic abuse and/or violence in the home. Domestic abuse may involve:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional or psychological abuse
- coercive or controlling behaviour
- financial abuse
- abuse by family members
- teenage relationship abuse
- child/adolescent to parent violence

Children who see, hear or experience domestic abuse are victims in their own right. The impact can be long-lasting and may affect:

- emotional wellbeing
- development
- behaviour
- attendance
- learning
- mental health

Where Operation Encompass is in place, the school will receive information from the police when a child may have been affected by a domestic abuse incident. The DSL will ensure support is provided in line with the child's needs and records are updated appropriately.

## 7. Homelessness

Being homeless or at risk of homelessness presents a risk to a child's welfare. It may affect safety, attendance, emotional wellbeing and access to education.

The DSL will be aware of local referral routes into the housing authority and will raise concerns as early as possible. Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will also refer to children's social care.

## 8. So-Called 'Honour-Based' Abuse (HBA)

So-called honour-based abuse includes crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of a family and/or community. It can include:

- FGM
- forced marriage
- breast ironing
- violence, coercion or restriction in the name of honour



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HBA often involves a wider network of family or community members and may involve multiple perpetrators. All forms of HBA are abuse and will be treated as such.

Staff must be alert to the possibility that a child may be at risk of, or already experiencing, HBA and must report concerns to the DSL immediately.

## **9. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM is illegal in the UK and is a form of child abuse. Section 7.3 of this policy sets out the school's procedures and the mandatory reporting duty for teachers.

### **9.1 Indicators That FGM May Have Taken Place**

Indicators may include a girl:

- disclosing that FGM has happened
- having a family member disclose it
- having difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- spending longer in the toilet
- experiencing urinary, menstrual or abdominal problems
- avoiding PE or other physical activity
- being absent repeatedly or for a prolonged period
- showing withdrawal, anxiety, depression or a sudden change in behaviour
- being reluctant to undergo medical examination
- speaking about pain or discomfort

### **9.2 Indicators That a Child May Be at Risk**

Risk factors may include:

- family history of FGM
- FGM being practised in the child's community or country of origin
- mother, sister or cousin having undergone FGM
- discussion of a "special procedure" or "becoming a woman"
- plans for extended travel abroad
- unexpected absence
- limited engagement with services
- requests for help because the child fears FGM

These indicators are not exhaustive. Any concerns must be reported immediately.



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## 10. Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where coercion, threats or pressure are used. It is also illegal to cause a child under 18 to marry, even where coercion is not evident.

Staff must be aware of the **“one chance” rule**: there may be only one opportunity to speak to the child safely and take protective action.

Possible indicators may include:

- a child talking about an upcoming marriage they do not want
- family pressure or restrictions
- sudden absence from school
- a planned extended trip abroad
- fear, anxiety or withdrawal
- siblings having been married early

If staff suspect forced marriage, they must:

- speak to the child only in a safe and private space
- not approach the family or community
- report immediately to the DSL

The DSL will activate local safeguarding procedures and seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit where appropriate.

## 11. Preventing Radicalisation

Schools have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism.

### 11.1 Key Definitions

- **Radicalisation**: the process by which a person comes to support terrorism or extremist ideologies
- **Extremism**: promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance
- **Terrorism**: serious violence, damage or disruption designed to influence government or intimidate the public for ideological purposes

The school will assess the risk of pupils being drawn into extremism, taking account of local risks and guidance. The DSL/Prevent lead will undertake appropriate Prevent training and ensure staff have access to relevant training.

Possible indicators may include:

- intolerance of difference
- increased anger or isolation
- fixation on conspiracy theories
- changes in friendship groups or appearance



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- scripted speech or rigid views
- secrecy around online activity
- accessing extremist material
- contact with extremist recruiters
- justification of extremist violence

These signs can also reflect other vulnerabilities, so staff must not jump to conclusions. They must report concerns to the DSL, who will follow the school's Prevent procedures.

## **12. Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur:

- between children of any age and sex
- within groups
- online or face to face
- as isolated incidents or part of a pattern

It is essential that staff:

- take all reports seriously
- reassure victims they are believed and will be supported
- never make a child feel ashamed for reporting
- understand that such behaviour is never acceptable or inevitable

Staff should challenge behaviours such as:

- sexual comments and jokes
- unwanted touching
- grabbing bottoms, breasts or genitalia
- lifting skirts or pulling down trousers
- online sexual harassment

Girls, children with SEND, and children who are or are perceived to be LGBT may be at increased risk. Staff must follow Section 7 of this policy and ensure support is provided appropriately.

## **13. Serious Violence**

Indicators that a child may be at risk of, or involved in, serious violence include:

- increased absence from school
- decline in academic performance
- significant changes in friendships or association with older groups
- signs of self-harm or change in wellbeing



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- unexplained injuries
- unexplained gifts or possessions

Risk factors may include:

- previous child maltreatment
- offending behaviour
- exclusion or persistent absence
- vulnerability to exploitation

Any concerns must be reported to the DSL.

#### **14. Checking the Identity and Suitability of Visitors**

All visitors must:

- verify their identity
- state their reason for visiting
- sign in and wear a visitor badge
- follow school safeguarding procedures

Unknown visitors will not be admitted until credentials have been checked.

Professional visitors must show photo ID and either:

- provide their DBS certificate for checking, or
- be confirmed in writing by their employer as having had the appropriate checks

Other visitors, including speakers, will be supervised unless the school has confirmed appropriate arrangements.

The school will not allow visitors who are known to promote extremist views or who pose a safeguarding risk.

#### **15. Non-Collection of Children**

If a child is not collected at the end of the school day or session, the school will:

- attempt to contact parents/carers immediately
- use emergency contact details if parents/carers cannot be reached
- ensure the child is supervised by appropriate staff at all times
- keep a written record of the incident, actions taken and outcome

If the child is not collected within a reasonable period and the school cannot make suitable contact, the DSL or senior leader will consider whether referral to children's social care and/or the police is necessary, in line with local procedures.



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## 16. Missing Pupils

The school's procedures are designed to ensure that any missing pupil is found and returned to safe supervision as quickly as possible.

If a child goes missing, the school will:

- conduct an immediate search of the school site and relevant areas
- inform the Headteacher/DSL or senior leader immediately
- contact parents/carers as soon as possible
- consider whether police involvement is required without delay
- maintain supervision of other pupils
- record the incident, action taken and outcome
- review the circumstances afterwards to identify any lessons learned

Where the child is particularly vulnerable, or there are safeguarding concerns, the school will act urgently and involve external agencies as required.

## 17. Additional Specific Safeguarding Issues

Staff should also be aware of other safeguarding issues referred to in KCSIE, including:

- child abduction and community safety incidents
- children with family members in prison
- modern slavery
- cybercrime
- children involved in the court system
- county lines

These concerns should be reported to the DSL and responded to in line with safeguarding procedures.

**This policy is available on the school website:**

[Our Lady's Catholic Primary School and Nursery](#)

**Paper copies are available on request from the School Office**