



Ferndown Upper School

Child Protection Policy

Adopted by the Governing Body:
September 2026

Named Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Nominated Safeguarding Governor/Trustee	Chair of Governors/ Trustees
Jo Taylor	Jackie Cheeseman Rebecca Stirling Amy Clements Nadia Abdulgani Jason Collins Claire Lock (SENCO) Andy Jones Amy Armour (T Levels)	Andy Gilbert	Clive Dedman

Personnel with designated responsibility in relation to allegations against staff

Designated Senior Manager (this would normally be the Head teacher)	Deputy Designated Senior Manager	Chair of Governors/Trustees	Nominated Governor/Trustee
Phil Jones	Jo Taylor	Clive Dedman	Andy Gilbert

At this school we are committed to keeping our pupils safe. Our first priority is your child's welfare, and we will usually discuss with you any concerns we have about your child. There might be rare occasions, however, when we must provide information to or consult other agencies such as Children's Social Care before we contact you. This will include situations where we judge that to tell you first will or might put your child at risk of significant harm.

Our responsibilities are set out in this policy. It reflects statutory guidance and the Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures, which can be found on the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board website. <https://pdscp.co.uk/dorset/> . If you have any questions about this, please speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If you are worried about a child – please contact the school through the child's pastoral manager at FUS, through safeguarding@fernup.dorset.sch.uk or <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/worried-about-a-child>

Child Protection Policy

The child protection policy for Ferndown Upper School is based on a template provided by the Dorset Safeguarding and Standards Team; it reflects the Pan-Dorset Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures (on the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board website) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2026.

This policy consists of three main documents:

- A. The overarching safeguarding policy (statement of principles)
- B. Detailed child protection procedures and
- C. Child protection summary sheet. The latter is printed separately and provided routinely for those adults who will not have the opportunity to read this policy in its entirety but will have unsupervised contact, even as a 'one-off', with pupils on a temporary or intermittent basis such as supply, peripatetic or visiting professionals.

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Section A: Safeguarding Policy

Ferndown Upper School recognise(s) that the welfare of the child is paramount: the needs and wishes of each child will be put first and operates with the best interests of the child at heart. Throughout this document, 'child' refers to a young person under the age of 18.

We take seriously our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all the children and young people in our care.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2023, HM Government statutory guidance, defines safeguarding as:

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

The Governing Body will act in accordance with Section 175 / Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and the supporting statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in this school.

All staff employed by the school and all adults involved in regulated activity have enhanced DBS checks with Children's Barred List information checked.

The Governing Body has strategic leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements and is accountable for ensuring that the school meets its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding and that all policies, procedures and training are in place and effective at all times.

The school will carry out section 128 checks on their governors. Associate members do not need to have an enhanced DBS check.

It is a Dorset Safeguarding Standard (recommended by the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board) that governors receive an annual report from the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Nominated Governor to help monitor compliance with statutory responsibilities.

The Dorset Standards also include that each school and college complete and submits to the Safeguarding Children Board an annual audit of its safeguarding and child protection arrangements, including an action plan.

All children have the right to be safeguarded from harm or exploitation whatever their

- age
- health or disability
- gender or sexual orientation
- race, religion, belief or first language

- political or immigration status

Governors, staff and regular volunteers in this school understand the importance of taking appropriate action and working in partnership with children, their parents/carers and other agencies to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- afford protection for all pupils
- enable staff and volunteers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- promote a culture which makes this school a safe place to learn and in which all children feel safe and able to speak up knowing concerns will be treated seriously and knowing they can express their views and give feedback.

This policy applies to the Headteacher, all staff, including supply and peripatetic staff, regular volunteers (i.e., those who come into school once a week or more or 4 times in a 30-day period), governors or anyone working on behalf of the school.

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- always acting in their best interests
- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- involving them in decisions which affect them
- never tolerating bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice based bullying or discriminatory bullying), homophobic behaviour, racism, sexism, misogyny / misandry or any other forms of discrimination, including through use of technology
- ensuring the curriculum, including the RHSE curriculum, affords a range of preventative education opportunities to learn about keeping themselves safe and preparing for life in modern Britain, particularly when using technology
- exercising our duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 by ensuring all staff attend 'Prevent' training in respect of radicalisation and extremist behaviour and by assessing the risk of our pupils being drawn into terrorism
- supporting attendance and taking action if a child is absent from school regularly
- appointing a senior member of staff from our leadership team as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and ensuring this person has the time, funding, training, resources and support to perform the role effectively
- appointing at least one Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure there is always someone available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns
- appointing a Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are Looked-After (in care) and PLAC and to work closely with the Virtual School Headteacher to discuss how pupil premium plus additional funding can support the progress of these children
- ensuring that staff working with Looked-After Children have information appropriate to their role regarding, for example, the child's care arrangements, legal status and contact with birth parents and will also have the responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care.
- Supporting children who are or are perceived to be lesbian, gay or bisexual through trusted adults and create a culture where young people can speak out or share concerns with staff – at FUS this is through Rainbow Alliance and Pastoral.

- making sure all staff and volunteers are aware of and committed to the safeguarding policy and child protection procedures and also understand their individual responsibility to take action
- ensuring that all those named above (i.e., DSLs and Deputy DSLs; Designated Teacher; Headteacher, all staff, supply teachers and regular volunteers) have training appropriate to their roles as set out in statutory guidance or recommended by the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board
- identifying any concerns early and providing appropriate help to prevent them from escalating, including working with parents/carers and other agencies as appropriate. At Ferndown Upper School we use support from our pastoral managers, the Family Partnership Zone, in school counsellors and ELSA mentor.
- we share information about child safeguarding concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving children and their parents/carers appropriately
- acknowledging and actively promoting that multi-agency working is the best way to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm
- FUS works alongside and co-operates with the three local safeguarding partners through regular meetings and dialogue to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children. FUS also attend PCG meetings, YAR meetings and Team Around School meetings with local safeguarding partners and other local organisations.
- taking the right action, in accordance with Dorset Safeguarding Children Board inter-agency safeguarding procedures, if a child discloses or there are indicators of abuse
- keeping clear, accurate and contemporaneous safeguarding and child protection records
- recruiting staff and volunteers (including host families) safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made in accordance with statutory guidance and legal requirements and also making sure that at least one appointment panel member has undertaken safer recruitment training
- providing effective management for staff through induction, support and regular update training appropriate to role
- adopting a code of conduct for all staff and volunteers which includes acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications including the use of social media
- ensure staff have an understanding of expectations applicable to their roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, including around the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI).
- ensuring our online safety process includes appropriate filters and monitoring systems and regularly review their effectiveness
- ensuring staff and volunteers understand about 'whistle blowing' and
- ensuring staff know how to escalate concerns about pupils or staff if they think the right action has not been taken to safeguard children
- promoting a culture in which staff feel able to report to senior leaders with what they consider to be unacceptable behaviour or breaches of the school Code of Conduct by their colleagues, having faith that they will be listened to and appropriate action taken
- dealing appropriately with any allegations (that do and do not meet harm threshold) /concerns (however small) about the behaviour of staff or volunteers in accordance with the process set out in statutory guidance.

Children potentially at greater risk of harm

Any child may benefit from early help, but all staff should be alert to those that are more susceptible to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan);
- has a mental health need;
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, care or from home;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- has returned home to their family from care;
- is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage;
- is a privately fostered child; and
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.
- Where students have experienced multiple suspensions or is at risk of permanent exclusion

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

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse, neglect, exploitation and complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

The DSL will hold this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. This should be considered as a matter of routine. Where children need a social worker, this should inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services). Further information is in Annex C of KCSIE 2026.

This child protection policy forms part of a suite of policies and other documents that relate to the wider safeguarding responsibilities of the school. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the:

- Child Protection procedures (within this document)
- Staff behaviour policy (code of conduct)
- Online safety policies for pupils and staff, which include use of mobile technology – (Teaching online safety in schools – June 2019)
- Safer recruitment policy and procedures
- Procedures to handle allegations against members of staff and volunteers, including referring to the Disclosure and Barring Service (when appropriate)
- Whistle blowing policy
- Attendance policy and procedures to respond appropriately when children are missing education
- Anti-bullying procedures
- SEND policy
- Children with health needs that cannot attend school policy
- Supporting students in school with medical conditions policy

Section B: Child Protection Procedures

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
- Staff are properly trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues.

These procedures should be read in conjunction with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part One: Information for all School and College Staff' 2026. The Governing Body has agreed that all staff in school will read Part 1 and not the summarised content in Annex A. Part 1 and Annex A are also available in different languages through LGfL

FUS's culture is that **"safeguarding is everyone's responsibility"** and maintains an attitude of **"it could happen here"**.

1. What is Child Protection?

1.1 Child protection is one very important aspect of safeguarding. It refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

2. What is significant harm?

2.1 The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention by statutory agencies in family life in the best interests of children. There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Sometimes it might be a single traumatic event but more often it is a compilation of significant events which damage the child's physical and psychological development. Decisions about significant harm are complex and, in each case, require discussion with the statutory agencies: Children's Social Care and Police.

3. Purpose of these procedures

3.1 These procedures explain what action should be taken if there are concerns that a child is or might be suffering harm. A 'child' is a person under 18 years, but the principles of these procedures apply to all pupils at this school, including those over 18.

4. Responsibilities and roles

4.1 All adults in the school have an individual responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by taking appropriate action. This includes taking action where there are child protection concerns.

4.2 Governing bodies are accountable for ensuring their school has an effective child protection policy which should be reviewed annually and available publicly, such as on the school website.

4.3 The statutory safeguarding guidance for schools: 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' states that all schools and colleges should have 'a senior board level (or equivalent) lead to take leadership responsibility' for safeguarding.

The person who takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding on the governing / proprietor body of this school is: Anne East.

4.4 This school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL (and any deputies) is most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture. This is the person who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding. The DSL should have details of the local authority Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support the care leaver. Any concerns about children should be discussed with / reported to the DSL who will decide what action to take including referring to Children's Social Care or Police as appropriate. More information about the DSL role can be found in Annex C of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead in this school is: Jo Taylor.

The school also has several Deputy Safeguarding Leads.

The Deputy Safeguarding Lead(s) are Andy Jones, Jason Collins, Claire Lock, Nadia Abdulgani, Amy Clements, Rebecca Stirling and Jackie Cheeseman. Amy Armour is DDSL for T Level students whilst off-site and completing visits. Jackie Cheeseman is lead DDSL.

The School's website contains support through their Pastoral, Safeguarding and How to get help pages. This includes a Student Worry Button to report concerns.

4.5 In addition, Dorset Children's Social Care can provide advice and guidance on safeguarding and child protection matters.

See Appendix 1 for contact details.

4.6 All action is taken in line with the following guidance:

- DfE guidance (2026) – Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) – published by HM Government
- Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures & Guidance, accessed through the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board website www.dorsetlscb.co.uk
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – Government Guidance (2015)
- Mental health and behaviour in schools' guidance
- NPCC – when to call the police guidance

4.7 The school's designated teacher is Amanda Starling and Deneen Kenchington

4.8 The designated teacher on commencement of sections 4 to 6 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, has the responsibility to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after (as above) and those children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from the state care outside England and Wales.

4.9 A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have skills knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children it is important that all

agencies work together, and prompt action is taken on concerns to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.

4.10 The Designated teacher must have appropriate training and the relevant qualifications and experience.

5. What is child abuse?

5.1 It is generally accepted that there are four main forms of abuse. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing the ill treatment of others and the impact of children seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse. Staff understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside of the home and online. The following definitions are from Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

i) Physical abuse

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

ii) Emotional abuse

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

iii) Sexual abuse

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

iv) Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance use. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Staff should consider whether children are at risk of abuse and exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms including sexual abuse, domestic abuse, criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.

v) Serious violence

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime – including child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation (see section 9 in the policy)

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

All staff should be aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to manage these.

Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines.

5.2 It is accepted that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse, and that some children are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any one time. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.

5.3 Technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. Children can abuse other children online and this can take the form of abusive, harassing and misogynistic messages, the consensual and non-consensual making and / or sharing of indecent images (nude or semi-nudes), especially around group chats, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content.

5.4 Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and or alcohol misuse, unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education and consensual and non-consensual making and / or sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk.

6. Recognising child abuse – signs and symptoms

6.1 Keeping Children Safe in Education is clear: 'All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may need help or protection'.

6.2 Recognising child abuse is not always easy, and it is not the responsibility of school staff to decide whether child abuse has taken place or if a child is at significant risk. They do, however, have a clear individual responsibility to act if they have a concern about a child's welfare or safety or if a child talks about (discloses) abuse. They should maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and always act in the best interests of the child.

6.3 Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse, exploitation and neglect. If staff are unsure, they should **always** speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy). Any concerns about a child's welfare, should be acted upon immediately.

6.4 All school and college staff should be aware that abuse, exploitation, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another. Staff are trained to be vigilant and raise concerns with the DSL

6.5 All staff should be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

Appendix 2 details examples of possible indicators of each of the five kinds of abuse.

7. Child-on-child abuse

7.1 All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via **child-on-child abuse**. Children can abuse other children. All staff should be clear about their school's policy and procedure about child-on-child abuse.

Child-on-child abuse can happen both inside and outside of school and online.

This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to;

- Bullying (including cyber bullying, prejudice based bullying and discriminatory based bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- Sexual abuse, including violence, such as rape, assault by penetration (for example rape or penetration with an object) and sexual assault which include non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.
- Sexual assault is defined as:
- A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (NOTE - Schools and colleges should be aware that

sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault).

- This may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production or, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including online elements which facilitate, threaten and/or encourages harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment or sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Consensual and non-consensual making and / or sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
- Upskirting - which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
- Initiation/hazing type violent rituals

7.2 Staff should not dismiss abusive behaviour as 'normal', 'part of growing up', 'just having a laugh' or 'just banter' between young people and should not develop high thresholds before acting. This develops a culture of unacceptable behaviours, misogyny and an unsafe environment for children that normalises abuse and discourages victims from coming forward. Any concerns must be reported.

7.3 There may be delays to a criminal process, but schools and colleges should not wait for the outcome before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator, perpetrator and other children in the school or college.

7.4 Schools need to manage the balance between supporting the victim and ensuring the alleged perpetrator / perpetrator has an education and safeguarding support themselves. Appropriate support should be ongoing basis to the victim. On occasion safeguarding separation may be used to keep all students safe following an incident whilst allowing education to continue for all involved. This can include an off-site direction for a fixed period of time.

Incidents of sexing will be investigated and managed. In the first instance the school will investigate to see what has happened between the two young people. The police will be involved if it is deemed appropriate. (See August 2016 guidance from UKCCIS: 'Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young support with issues they may encounter

- Incidents of sexual touching, harassment and violence will be investigated, and appropriate sanctions and mediation will be used. Where appropriate, in some situations the police will be involved in the incidents.
- We have a separate policy on mobile phone use – digital policy

8. Child-on-child harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence (Part 5 KCSIE 2026)

8.1 Sexual harassment and sexual violence (HSB) can occur between two children of any age or sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual harassment and sexual violence exist on a continuum of harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) and may overlap. They can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

8.2 The school's initial response to all reports and concerns of child SVSH, including those that happen outside of school or online, is very important.

The response to a concern from a child is important. It is essential that **all** victims are reassured and that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. Children should never be made to feel ashamed for making a report. Support should also be in place for siblings of intra familial harm.

8.3 Ultimately, any decisions are for the school or college to make on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL or deputy taking a lead role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as Family Help, Children Social Care and the police as required. Support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. For disclosures of sexual harassment and violence it might be helpful to have two staff members present. A key consideration is also that staff do not view or forward illegal images.

8.4 Reports of sexual harassment and sexual violence are likely to be complex and require difficult decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. Pre-planning and effective policies will provide schools and colleges with the foundation for a calm, considered and appropriate response to any reports.

8.5 Following a report of sexual violence, the DSL (or deputy) should make an immediate risk and needs assessment, considering;

- The victim
- The alleged perpetrator
- Perpetrator
- All the other children (if appropriate adult students and staff)

8.6 Schools need to consider the following options for managing a report of sexual harassment or sexual violence:

- Manage internally
- Family Help
- Safeguarding children – referral to children social care
- Reporting to the Police – in parallel to children's social care

8.7 If children require safeguarding and a referral to Children's Social Care is made the process for managing sexually harmful behaviour can be found in the inter-agency safeguarding procedures on the DSCB website. In brief, a multi-agency meeting should be convened by Children's Social Care following a referral and an action plan agreed.

8.8 A school risk and needs assessment will be put in place, preferably by way of a meeting, which will consider;

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed
- The nature of the alleged incident
- The ages of the children involved
- The developmental stages of the children involved
- Any power imbalance between the children
- Is the incident a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse?
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children and school staff?
- Contextual safeguarding

All staff should act in the best interests of the child.

Pupils engaging in under-age sexual activity

8.9 Sexual activity where one of the partners is under the age of 16 is illegal, although prosecution of young people who are *consenting partners of a similar age* is not usual. Designated Safeguarding Leads will exercise professional judgement when deciding whether to refer or take advice from social workers, **considering** such things as any imbalance of power, wide difference in ages or developmental stages etc.

8.10 Where a child is under the age of 13 penetrative sex is classified as rape under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 so must be reported to social workers in every case.

8.11 The inter-agency safeguarding procedures, on the DSCB website, have more information about under-age sexual activity.

9. Child sexual exploitation/Child criminal exploitation

9.1 This form of abuse involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (e.g., food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money, mobile phones) as a result of their performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual acts. It can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; e.g., being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

9.2 All staff are trained to know what to do if a child tells them they are being abused. Recognition of child sexual exploitation is part of staff training. We note that any child or young person may be at risk of this form of abuse, regardless of family background or other circumstances, and can experience significant harm to physical and mental health. *The DSL has achieved Level 3 CSE training and is available to other staff for consultation.*

9.3 Due to the grooming methods used by abusers, it is common for young people not to recognise they are being abused and may feel they are 'in a relationship' and acting voluntarily. *The school raises awareness of child sexual exploitation through assemblies conducted by the police and family partnership zone.*

9.4 “County Lines” is becoming widely recognised and used to describe criminal exploitation of young people using the internal trafficking of young people for the purpose of criminal exploitation. Young people are groomed using the same techniques as above, with them completing a task on behalf of another individual or group of individuals which is of a criminal nature.

Children are “trafficked” as part of the exploitation. They have their transport arranged for them for the purpose of selling drugs, firearms or sex.

Young people will go missing for extended periods of time, be absent from education and moving away from their friendship groups.

9.5 Any concerns about child sexual exploitation/criminal exploitation will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will take appropriate action which might include completing a risk and needs assessment form. The form and more detailed local procedures are in the inter-agency safeguarding procedures on the DSCB website.

10a. children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual

A child or young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself a risk factor for harm; however, they can sometimes be vulnerable to discriminatory bullying. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are. Schools and colleges should consider how to address vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying and take steps to prevent it, including putting appropriate sanctions in place.

10b. Children Questioning Gender

FUS follows guidance from KCSIE 26 sections 252-282 – this is copied into Appendix in this policy to support any student who is questioning gender.

10c. Mental Health

All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

As a school we promote good mental wellbeing, identify concerns early where possible, provide targeted support and refer to specialists when needed.

Calls can be made to 111, requesting mental health option, to seek guidance by students, families and the school.

FUS supports the mental health and well-being of pupils through its safeguarding curriculum and pastoral teams, alongside external agencies and support and guidance from external agencies. Social and emotional well-being and mental health, alongside resilience, are continually promoted in school through lessons, activities and conversation, through well-being cards and through the school website.

Self-harm, eating disorders and suicidal ideation are potential safeguarding concerns. Any concerns around these should be raised through My Concern and treated as safeguarding concerns initially whilst external support is sought.

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

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

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, reporting it to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy through My Concern or in person.

11. Forms of abuse linked to culture, faith or belief

All staff in this school will promote mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Some forms of abuse are linked to these and staff should strive to suspend professional disbelief (i.e., that they 'could not happen here') and to report promptly any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will seek further advice from statutory agencies, prior to contacting parents/carers.

11.1 Female Genital Mutilation

FGM is illegal and involves intentionally altering or injuring female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It can have serious and long-lasting implications for physical health and emotional well-being. Possible indicators include taking a girl out of school / country for a prolonged period or talk of a 'special procedure' or celebration. In addition to reporting any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, teachers (along with regulated health and social care professionals) have a statutory duty to report personally to the Police if they discover that female genital mutilation has or appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions.

11.2 Forced Marriage is also illegal and occurs where one or both people do not or, in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is not the same as arranged marriage. Young people at risk of forced marriage might have their freedom unreasonably restricted or being 'monitored' by siblings. There might be a request for extended absence from school or might not return from a holiday abroad. We recognise that school staff can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

11.3 Honour or faith-based abuse (including FGM and forced marriage) is a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community. It can exist in all communities and cultures and occurs when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code. Abuse of this kind can be motivated by religious or faith-based beliefs, as well as cultural ones. Females are predominantly, but not exclusively, the victims and the violence is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family or community members. All forms of honour or faith-based violence are abuse, regardless of the motivation, and should be referred accordingly. However, there are some significant differences in the immediate response required as involving families in cases of forced marriage is dangerous:

- It may increase the risk of serious harm to the victim. Experience shows that the family may punish them for seeking help;

- Relatives, friends, community leaders and neighbours should not be used as interpreters – despite any reassurances from this known person.

11.4 Radicalisation, extremism and terrorism

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to:

1. Negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or
2. Undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights or
3. Intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in 1 or 2.

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

In this school we recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation and extremism is no different from safeguarding against any other vulnerability.

Our safeguarding curriculum promotes respect, tolerance and diversity, with a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia and harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence. Children are encouraged to share their views and to understand that they are entitled to have their own different beliefs which should not be used to influence others.

We recognise that children with low aspirations are more vulnerable to radicalisation and therefore we strive to equip our pupils with confidence, self-belief, respect and tolerance as well as setting high standards and expectations for themselves.

Children are taught about how to stay safe when using the Internet and are encouraged to recognise that people are not always who they say they are online. They are taught to seek adult help if they are upset or concerned about anything they read or see on the Internet.

Any concerns about pupils becoming radicalised or being drawn into extremism will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will *not* speak to parents/carers or other family members at this stage but will take prompt advice from the Police.

11.5 Prevent

Prevent is about safeguarding people and communities from the threat of terrorism and violent extremism. Prevent is part of CONTEST, the Government's counter-terrorism strategy. It aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

The Prevent strategy: Responds to the ideological challenge we face from terrorism and aspects of extremism, and the threat we face from those who promote these views;

- Provides practical help to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. It ensures they are given appropriate advice and support
- Works with a wide range of sectors (including education, criminal justice, faith, charities, online and health) where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to deal with.
- Prevent covers all forms of terrorism and extremism and some aspects of non-violent extremism.

The Home Office works with local authorities, a wide range of government departments, and community organisations to deliver the Prevent strategy. The police play a significant role in Prevent, in much the same way as they do when taking a preventative approach to other crimes.

- The main aim of Prevent is to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism.
- At the heart of Prevent is safeguarding children and adults. Providing early intervention to protect and divert people away from being drawn into terrorist activity is crucial.
- Prevent addresses all forms of extremism but continues to ensure resources and effort are allocated on the basis of threats to our national security.

Any individuals who are identified as being vulnerable to radicalisation are referred to a multi-agency Channel Panel. This ensures the appropriate interventions are put in place to protect the individual. Like child protection, Channel is a multi-agency safeguarding programme run in every local authority in England and Wales. It works to support vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism. It provides a range of support such as mentoring, counselling, assistance with employment etc. Where pupils at this school are being discussed, the DSL or Headteacher will attend the Panel meetings.

Channel is about early intervention to protect vulnerable people from being drawn into committing terrorist-related activity and addresses all types of extremism.

Staff and governors in this school have either attended a WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) session or have completed on-line Prevent training. Further links for additional support Annex B KCSIE 2026.

Further support for schools: <https://www.educateagainsthate.com/school-leaders/>

To refer email MASH@dorset.pnn.police.uk

12. Children who are absent from education

12.1 We recognise that a child absent from education for a prolonged period and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning to a range of safeguarding concerns including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation – particularly County Lines.

12.2 Therefore all staff will follow the school's procedure for dealing with unauthorised absence and children absent from education procedures, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify vulnerable pupils and to help prevent the risks of missing education in future.

Students with continuous absence from school will be expected to attend Reception to meet with a staff member on a weekly basis for a safeguarding and welfare check. The parent will need to remain in the car / outside of school to allow a 1:1 discussion. Home visits may also take place with no prior warning. Staff will attend in pairs for each home visit.

12.3 Actions could include involving other professionals and, if any of the criteria are met, informing the local authority where a pupil's name has been removed from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points.

In line with the DfE updated (September 2016) statutory guidance on children missing education we have a separate policy governing unauthorised attendance and children who are absent from education.

There is more information about specific safeguarding issues including links to websites in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2026.

Emergency contacts - Where reasonably possible the school/college should hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. This goes beyond the legal minimum and is good practice to give the school or college additional options to contact a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

12.4 Elective Home Education

When a parent / carer expresses their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, the school will work with the parent to ensure this is the right choice, flagging students' need to be in "receipt of suitable education" including any other professionals involved with the child, including SEND or vulnerable support.

Before the final decision is made, a two-week period is given to ensure the best interest of the child are in place.

The LA are then informed of any deletion from admission register (in line with Education Regulations 2006 (updated 2016)).

13. Responding to the child who discloses (talks about) abuse

All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns. It is also important staff build up a trusted relationship with children which facilitates communication.

All staff and volunteers will:

- Listen carefully to what is said
- Avoid showing shock or disbelief
- Reassure child that they are being taken seriously and they will be supported and kept safe
- Observe the child's demeanour
- Find an appropriate opportunity to explain that the information will need to be shared with others. They will not promise to keep the information confidential or a 'secret'
- Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace and not interrupt if the child is freely recalling events. They will not stop him/her to find a 'witness' as this could inhibit the child from saying more
- Avoid asking questions or pressing for more information. Ask for clarification only. If questions are necessary, they should be framed in an open manner and not 'lead' the child in any way: Tell me.... Explain.... Describe...
- Reassure the child, if necessary, that s/he has done the right thing by talking about it
- Explain what will happen next and with whom the information will be shared
- Not ask the child to repeat the disclosure to anyone else in school – including the DSL - or ask him/her or any other children who were present to write a written account or 'statement'

14. Taking action

14.1 If in exceptional circumstances, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken.

14.2 Where physical injuries have been observed; these will be carefully noted but not photographed. The staff member will not ask to see injuries that are said to be on an intimate part of the child's body.

14.3 Any disclosure or indicators of abuse will be reported verbally to the DSL or Deputy straightaway or, where they are not available, and concerns are immediate, ensure a referral

is made without delay to Children's Social Care, through Family Support and Advice Line, the Children's Advice and Duty Service.

14.4 Where the child already has an allocated social worker, that person or a manager or duty worker in the same team must be contacted promptly.

14.5 A written record will then be made (ideally on a standard school 'concern' form) of what was said, including the child's own words, as soon as possible and given to the DSL.

14.6 If the child can understand the significance and consequences of making a referral to social workers, they will be asked for their views. It will be explained that whilst their views will be considered, the school has a responsibility to take whatever action is required to ensure the child's safety and that of other children.

14.7 The DSL will decide whether to contact parents at this stage, judging whether to do so, it is necessary to consider if contacting the parents/carers is likely to place the child at risk of harm from their parent's/carers actions or reactions - for example in circumstances where there are concerns that a serious crime such as sexual abuse, domestic abuse or induced illness has taken place. If in any doubt, the DSL or staff member will call the Children social care first and agree when parents/carers should be contacted and by whom. The reason for the decision not to contact parents first will be recorded in the child's school child protection file.

14.8 A child protection referral from a professional cannot be treated as anonymous.

14.9 Where there is no disclosure by a child, but concerns are accumulating, such as in relation to neglect or emotional abuse, the DSL will ensure that all information is brought together and that s/he makes a professional judgement about whether to refer to outside agencies.

14.10 The Dorset Safeguarding Children Board's 'Threshold Document' should be used to help clarify the pathway required for a child: whether concerns will be managed within the school; or with the help of other agencies as part of Family Help; or whether they require specialised support such as a social work assessment or referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

14.11 A member of staff who reports concerns to the DSL should expect some feedback, although confidentiality might mean in some cases that this is not detailed. If the member of staff is not happy with the outcome s/he can press for reconsideration and if following this, s/he still believes the correct action has not been taken, will refer the concerns directly to children social care.

15. Responding to concerns reported by parents or others in the community

15.1 Occasionally parents or other people in the local community tell school staff about an incident in or accumulation of concerns they have about the family life of a child who is also a pupil at the school.

15.2 If the incident or concern relates to *child protection*, the information cannot be ignored, even if there are suspicions about the motives of the person making the report. Members of staff will therefore pass the information to the DSL in the usual way.

15.3 It is preferable if the parent / community member who witnessed or knows about the concerns or incident makes a call to Children's Social Care themselves as they will be better able to answer any questions. They can ask for their name not to be divulged if a visit is made to the family.

15.4 If the parent / community member refuses to make the referral, the DSL will clarify that s/he (the DSL) has a responsibility to do so and will also need to pass on to social workers how s/he is aware of the information.

15.5 This process also applies to parents / community members who are also school staff. As professionals who work with children, they cannot be anonymous when making the referral but can ask for the situation to be managed sensitively and, if necessary, for their identity to be withheld from the family if it will cause difficulties in their private life.

16. Remember

16.1 Any suspicion or concern that a child or young person may be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, **MUST** be acted on. Doing nothing is not an option. Any suspicion or concerns will be reported without delay to the DSL or a Deputy. During term time the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or a Deputy should always be available (during school or college hours) for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. However, if for whatever reason they are not available, the staff member will discuss their concerns as soon as possible with either

- another senior member of staff or
- Family Support and Advice Line
- MASH - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

Anyone can make a referral, not just the DSLs.

16.2 It is important that everyone in the school is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for making a judgement about whether abuse has occurred and should not conduct an 'investigation' to establish whether the child is telling the truth. That is a task for social workers and the Police following a referral to them of concern about a child. The role of school staff is to act promptly on the information received.

16.3 This applies regardless of the alleged 'perpetrator' / perpetrator: whether the child raises concerns about a family member or someone outside school, a member of staff or another child/pupil.

16.4 A careful record will be made of what has been seen/heard that has led to the concerns and the date, time, location and people who were present. As far as possible, staff should record verbatim what was said and by whom. The record will be passed to the DSL.

16.5 The DSL will keep a record of the conversation with the duty worker and other social workers, noting what actions will be taken and by whom, giving the date and time of the referral. The referral will be confirmed in writing on the inter-agency referral form (available on the DSCB website) as soon as possible and at least within 48 hours. Any pre-existing assessments such as through the Common Assessment Framework should be attached.

16.6 A school child protection file will be started in the child's name on My Concern, where the child is not already known to social workers. If a file already exists, the new information will be added to the chronology on My Concern.

See Appendix 3 for detailed record keeping guidance.

17. Response from Children's Social Care to a school referral

Referral

Once a referral is received by the team, a manager will decide on the next course of action within one working day. When there is concern that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, this will be decided more quickly, and a strategy discussion held with the Police and Health professionals and other agencies as appropriate (section 47 Children Act 1989).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be told within three working days of the outcome of the referral. If this does not happen s/he will contact the duty worker again.

Dorset - BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership

Assessment

All assessments should be planned and co-ordinated by qualified social worker. They should be holistic, involving other professionals, parents/carers and the children themselves as far as practicable. Assessments should show analysis, be focused on outcomes and usually take no longer than 45 working days from the point of referral. School staff have a responsibility to contribute fully to the assessment.

S47 Enquiries (regarding significant harm)

The process of the investigation is determined by the needs of the case, but the child/young person will always be part of that process and sometimes without parents' knowledge or permission. On occasions, this will mean the child/young person is jointly interviewed by the Police and social workers, sometimes at a special suite where a video-recording of the interview is made.

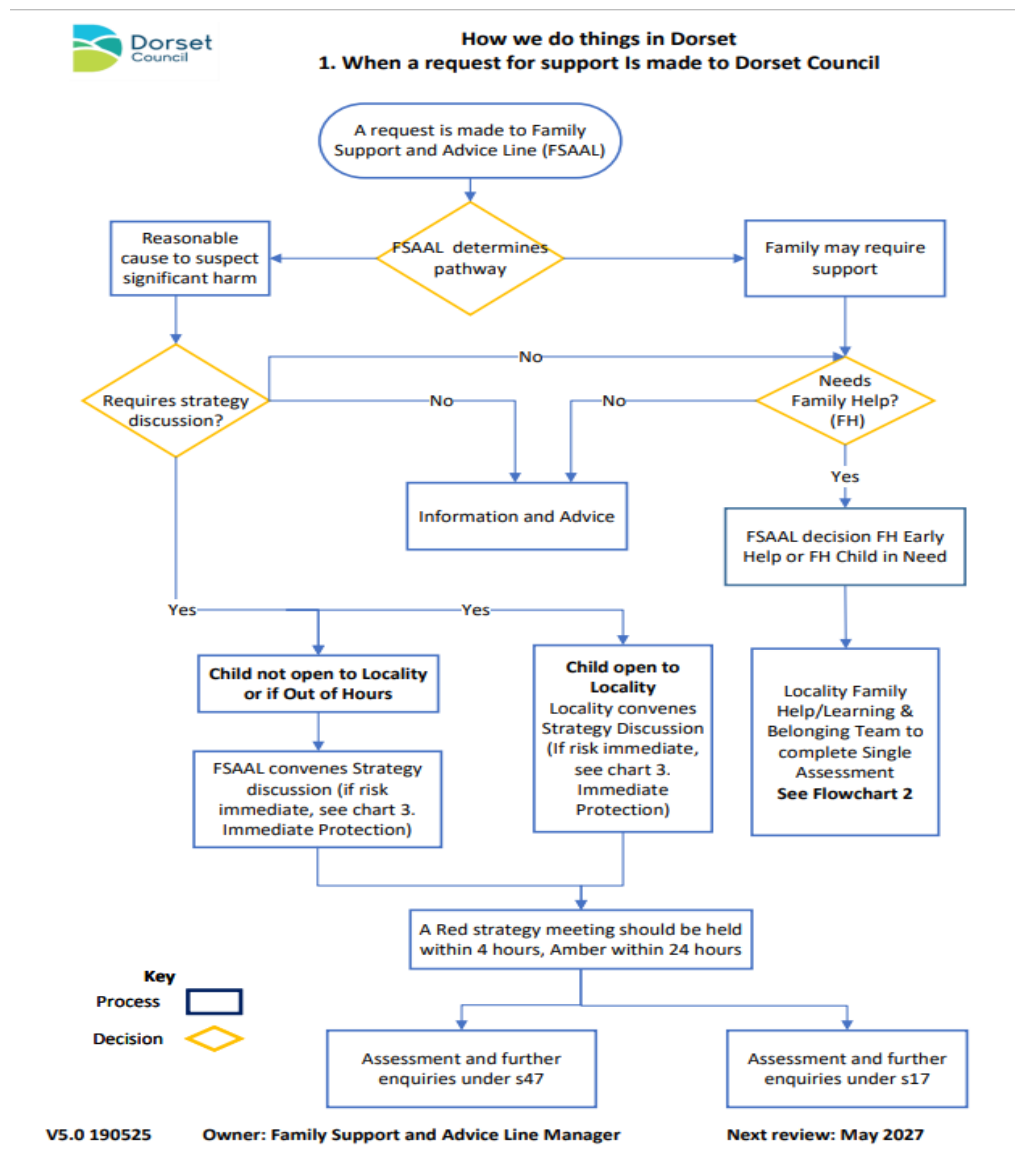
The DSL team should be aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult.

The Child Protection Conference

If, following the s47 enquiries, the concerns are substantiated and the child is judged to be at risk of significant harm, a Child Protection Conference (CPC) will normally be convened. The CPC must be held within 15 days of the first strategy discussion and school staff will be invited to attend - normally the DSL or Headteacher. This person will produce a written report in the correct format (a pro forma is available on the DSCB website). This will be shared with the child/young person and his/her family before the conference is held. A copy will also be sent to the person chairing the initial CPC at least 24 hours in advance.

More information is in the inter-agency safeguarding procedures ('Child Protection Conferences') on the DSCB website.

If the DSL disagrees with the decisions made by social workers regarding the outcome of the referral, the conclusions of the assessment or any actions taken, the matter should be discussed and if necessary escalated to more senior managers (under the escalation policy available on the DSCB website), *particularly* if the child's situation does not appear to be improving.



18. Responding to allegations or concerns about staff, supply staff, other staff, volunteers or contractors

18.1 Rigorous recruitment and selection procedures, including due diligence to a candidates online presence (Safer Recruitment policy) and adhering to the school's code of conduct and safer practice guidance will hopefully mean that there are relatively few allegations against or concerns about staff, supply staff, volunteers or contractors. However, if a member of staff, or any other person, has any reason to believe that another adult has acted inappropriately has a safeguarding concern, they will act by reporting to the Headteacher (not the DSL if this is a different person). This includes if the staff member has safeguarding concerns or safeguarding allegations that might indicate they have behaved or may behave in a way that indicates they would pose a transferrable risk of harm to children. Even though it may seem difficult to believe that a colleague may be unsuitable to work with children, the risk is far too serious for any member of staff to dismiss such a suspicion without acting.

18.2 We recognise that some allegations may meet the harms threshold and some may not and be 'low level concerns. Each concern is dealt with appropriately.

18.3 If the allegation/concern is about the Headteacher the person with concerns will contact the Chair of Governors or the Local Authority Designated Officer (also known as the LADO) in the Local Authority Safeguarding and Standards Team. See Appendix 1 below for contact details.

18.4 All cases of allegations against staff, supply staff or volunteers, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors, will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay and follow the correct procedures as set out in the separate school policy. This must comply with Part Four of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2026 – section one and section two.

18.5 In some circumstances schools and colleges will have to consider an allegation against an individual not directly employed by them, where its disciplinary procedures do not fully apply, for example, supply teachers provided by an employment agency or business (referred to in this section as 'the agency'). Whilst schools and colleges are not the employer of supply teachers, they should ensure allegations are dealt with properly.

18.6 In no circumstances should a school or college decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the local authority designated officer (LADO) to determine a suitable outcome. Governing bodies and proprietors should discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, whilst they carry out their investigation.

18.7 Agencies should be fully involved and co-operate in any enquiries from the LADO, police and/or children's social services. The school or college will usually take the lead because agencies do not have direct access to children or other school staff, so they will not be able to collect the facts when an allegation is made, nor do they have all the relevant information required by the LADO as part of the referral process. Supply teachers, whilst not employed by the school or college, are under the supervision, direction and control of the governing body or proprietor when working in the school or college. They should be advised to contact their trade union representative if they have one, or a colleague for support. The allegations management meeting which is often arranged by the LADO should address issues such as

information sharing, to ensure that any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account by the school during the investigation.

18.8 When using an agency, schools and colleges should inform the agency of its process for managing allegations. This should include inviting the agency's human resource manager or equivalent to meetings and keeping them up to date with information about its policies.

18.9 When the teacher's employer dismisses or ceases to use their services because of serious misconduct, they must consider whether to refer the case to the Secretary of State via the Teaching Regulation Agency.

19. Children with special educational needs, who are disabled or have certain health conditions

19.1 Research shows that children with special educational needs and who are disabled or have certain health conditions, are especially vulnerable and more susceptible to abuse and adults who work with them need to be vigilant and take extra care when interpreting apparent signs of abuse or neglect.

19.2 Additional barriers can exist for adults who work with such children, in respect of recognising abuse and neglect. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- Being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- Children with SEN and who are disabled can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying – without outwardly showing any signs; and
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing and reporting these challenges
- Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in school or the consequence of doing so

19.3 These child protection procedures will be followed if a child with special educational needs or who is disabled discloses abuse or there are indicators of abuse, exploitation or neglect. There are no different or separate procedures for such children. There can be extra pastoral / TA support for children with SEN and disabilities to ensure appropriate support for communication.

19.4 Staff responsible for intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner always and in accordance with the school's intimate care policy.

At Ferndown Upper School students with communication issues would be supported by a teaching assistant with whom they feel able to communicate.

20. Safer Working Practice / Safeguarding concerns about a staff member

20.1 All adults who come into contact with children at this school will behave at all times in a professional manner which secures the best outcomes for children and also prevents allegations being made. Detailed advice on safer working practice can be found in the school's Code of Conduct.

20.2 We promote a culture whereby members of the school community should feel able to raise with the Headteacher any concerns or allegations (however big or small) about staff conduct. If it is about the Headteacher, this should be raised with the Chair of Governors. If the reporter feels that the issue has not been addressed, they should contact someone outside of the school, such as the Chair of Governors or the LADO. (See Appendix 1 below for contact details.)

Staff members also all have a safeguarding card to support this referral process.

20.3 Use of school premises

Where the school premises are hired out, the school should ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe.

The Governing Body must ensure that the hiring body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place and included in any transfer of control agreement.

21. Training

21.1 Child protection (including online training with specific information on filtering and monitoring) will be part of induction for all staff and regular volunteers new to the school. They will be given a copy of this policy, the Code of Conduct, details about the role of the DSL through safeguarding card and part one of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education: information for all school and college staff'

21.2 This will be followed up by basic child protection training that equips individuals to recognise and respond appropriately to concerns about pupils.

21.3 A proportional risk-based approach will be taken regarding the level of information provided to all temporary staff and volunteers. As a minimum, they will be provided with, and will be expected to follow, the child protection summary sheet that forms part of this policy.

21.4 Staff who do not have designated responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including the Headteacher, will undertake suitable refresher training at appropriate intervals. The DSCB recommends this is at least every three years.

21.5 All staff will have training in preventing radicalisation and extremism ('Prevent') – either by attending a Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) or completing an on-line course, followed by a discussion with the DSL. The DSL is the Prevent Lead and will attend WRAP.

21.6 In addition, all staff members will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates from the DSL as required, but at least annually. This will include learning from local and national serious cases when the learning becomes available.

21.7 When DSLs and Deputies take up the role, they will attend enhanced (Level 3) training provided through the DSCB multi-agency course. They must be updated at 2 yearly intervals after that.

21.8 In addition, their knowledge and skills will be updated regularly - at least annually. These individuals are expected to take responsibility for their own learning about safeguarding and

child protection by, for example: taking time to read and digest newsletters and relevant research articles; attending training offered by DSCB on matters such as domestic abuse, attachment and child sexual and criminal exploitation; completing on-line training on FGM; attending local DSL forums etc.

21.9 Designated Teachers for Looked-After Children (mandatory for maintained schools and academies; good practice in independent schools which have or likely to have Looked-After Children) will undertake appropriate training. In Dorset this is provided by the Virtual School for Children in Care. VSH are to champion attendance, attainment and progress.

21.10 Kinship Care is included in staff training for Designated Teacher and DSL. See Appendix 1 for contact details.

Private fostering

Private fostering occurs when a child under the age of 16 (under 18 for children with a disability) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home.

A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer. Such arrangements may come to the attention of school and college staff through the normal course of their interaction, and promotion of learning activities, with children.

Where the arrangements come to the attention of the school or college (and the school or college is not involved in the arrangements), they should then notify the local authority to allow the local authority to check the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child. Schools and colleges who are involved (whether or not directly) in arranging for a child to be fostered privately must notify local authorities of the arrangement as soon as possible after the arrangement has been made.

Notifications must contain the information specified in Schedule 1 of The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 and must be made in writing. 417. Comprehensive guidance on private fostering can be found in Private fostering: local authorities.

21.10 Headteachers and at least one governor will complete safer recruitment training (mandatory in maintained schools; best practice in others) either through a multi-agency taught session or by completing the NSPCC on-line course.

21.11 Governing bodies should ensure that all governors receive appropriate safeguarding training and child protection (including on-line) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in school are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training should be regularly updated.

21.12 Governing bodies should be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including Public Sector Equality Duty) and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

22. Online Safety

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. Our whole school approach to online protects and educates students and staff in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any concerns where appropriate. This includes meeting the governments filtering and monitoring standards for schools through email and online searches. Staff are also trained in cyber-security.

Governors should ensure online safety is a running and interrelated theme through safeguarding.

Four key areas of risk are content, contact, conduct and commerce are covered through our digital policy, alongside the procedures and curriculum to support safeguarding online – through school and school closure.

Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, extreme sexual or physical violence, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories,

Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes,

Conduct: online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images, including those generated using AI and online bullying, and

Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group

Regular 360 reviews are completed to ensure our online safety remains up to date and current.

23. PE Changing Rooms

Staff will not be static or full time in the changing rooms; however, they will be visible and audible to students during changing i.e., popping in and checking, hurrying up etc.

Students are expected to move with the majority to the practical location to ensure health and safety and behaviour in a range of locations.

Where staff are a different gender to those changing, they will open the door and shout instructions inside but not enter the room.

24. Raising concerns about safeguarding practice in our school

24.1 In this school we promote a culture where any staff or volunteers feel able to raise with the Headteacher any concerns / allegations (however big or small) about safeguarding or child protection practice.

24.2 Any issues which they have not been able to resolve with the Headteacher should be reported to the governors in the first instance. If they are still not satisfied, they should

approach the Director for Children's Services or, if the issue relates to the conduct of or allegation against a member of staff, should contact the Local Authority designated officer (also known as the LADO).

24.3 Staff should refer to the school's whistle-blowing policy for more information or can use the NSPCC whistle blowing helpline: 0800 0280285.

25. Contextual Safeguarding

25.1 What is contextual safeguarding?

All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of school or college and/or can occur between children outside of school environments.

All staff especially the DSL or deputy should consider the context within which such incidents and or behaviour occur. This is contextual safeguarding and means assessments should consider such factors, so it is important that schools and colleges provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the context of the abuse.

26. Organisations or Individuals using school premises

If the school receives an allegation to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using the school premises for the purposes of running activities for children (e.g., community groups, sports groups) this should be followed this up using the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing LADO.

Section C: Child Protection Summary for all Visiting Professionals to FUS

As an adult working directly with children in this school you have a duty of care towards all pupils. This means you must act at all times in a way that is consistent with their safety and welfare. It is your responsibility to keep your child protection training up to date; you might be asked for evidence of this.

All visitors are required to read and sign the following agreement upon entering FUS:

Welcome to Ferndown Upper School, we request you adhere to the following guidance.

For your safety and security, we have the following guidelines:

- All visitors must sign in and out through Reception.
- Smoking or use of an e-cigarette is prohibited on our site.
- In the event of a fire or emergency please follow signage or instructions from your host.
- Use of cameras or video recording technology is prohibited unless consent has been approved.

Safeguarding at FUS

If you see or hear anything that concerns you whilst visiting the school, please speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Jo Taylor) or a member of the safeguarding team.

Details and pictures of our Designated Safeguarding Leads are displayed in Reception and throughout School, with a QR code for quick access to email safeguarding@fernup.dorset.sch.uk.

If you are concerned about a member of staff's behaviour or practice:

- Speak to the Headteacher
- If it's about the Headteacher, contact Chair of Governors by email through Clerk to the Governors (clerk@fernup.dorset.sch.uk)
- If you are still concerned – contact LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) (lado@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) 01305 221122

Remember – share any concerns, don't keep them to yourself.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

A copy of this safeguarding information is on the reverse of your visitors' badge.

Useful Contacts

1) For all referrals from professionals (concerns about children, which require a social work assessment)

Call Dorset's Family Support and Advice Line, 01305 228558
Children's Advice & Duty Service Email MASH@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

2) For families and members of the public please call 01305 228866

3) Out of Hours Service 01202 657279

4) Dorset Safeguarding and Standards Team 01305 221122

The team comprises Children's Services managers and advisors including:

- The Education Safeguarding Standards Advisor who offers advice and support to schools in relation to safeguarding and child protection issues
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (the LADO) to whom allegations against adults who work with children in education establishments must be reported

LADO 01305 221122

5) Dorset Virtual School for Children in Care

01305 228350

6) Dorset Governor Services (for governor safeguarding training)

01305 224382

7) For children that live in Bournemouth, Christchurch or Poole contact:

01202 735046

Email MASH@BCPcouncil.gov.uk

Out of Hours Service

Further information on Safeguarding

For further information on safeguarding, please see Annex B of KCSIE 25

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

This includes:

Child abduction and community safety incidents

Children and the court system – including leaflets to support witnesses aged 5-11 and 12-17.

Children who are absent from education

Children with family members in prison

CCE and CSE

County Line

Modern Slavery and National Referral Mechanism

Cybercrime

Domestic abuse

Homelessness

Honour-based abuse – including forced marriage and FGM

Preventing radicalisation and the Prevent Duty and Channel

Additional support

Child-on-child abuse

SVSH (as well as part 5 of KCSIE 2026)

Upskirting

Possible Indicators of Abuse

The following information is not designed to turn school staff into experts, but it will help them to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse. The examples below are not meant to form an exhaustive list; Designated Safeguarding Leads, and other staff will find it helpful to refer to Government advice 'What to do if you are worried about a child being abused' (2015) and the inter-agency safeguarding procedures on the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board website.

i) Domestic abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Children can also experience this through their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Our school is part of Operation Encompass. This is a police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people who experience Domestic Abuse.

Operation Encompass means that the police will share information about Domestic Abuse incidents with our school soon after they have been called to a domestic incident.

All Key Adults (DSL/DDSL) have attended an Operation Encompass local briefing as well as national online training.

Our parents are fully aware that we are an Operation Encompass school through a parent mail.

The Operation Encompass information is stored in line with all other confidential safeguarding and child protection information.

The Key Adult has also led briefings for all school staff and Governors about Operation Encompass, the prevalence of Domestic Abuse and the impact of this abuse on children. We have also discussed how we can support our children following the Operation Encompass notification.

The Safeguarding Governor will report on Operation Encompass in the termly report to Governors. All information is anonymised for these reports.

The Key Adult has used the Operation Encompass Toolkit to ensure that all appropriate actions have been taken by the school.

ii) **Physical Abuse**

Most children will collect cuts and bruises in their daily lives. These are likely to be in places where there are bony parts of the body, like elbows, knees and shins. Some children, however, will have bruising which is less likely to have been caused accidentally. An important indicator of physical abuse is where bruises or injuries are unexplained, or the explanation does not fit the injury or there are differing explanations. A delay in seeking medical treatment for a child when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern. Bruising may be noticeable on children with different skin tones or from different ethnic groups and specialist advice may need to be taken.

Patterns of bruising that are suggestive of physical child abuse can include:

- bruising in children who are not independently mobile
- bruises that are seen away from bony prominences
- bruises to the face, back, stomach, arms, buttocks, ears and hands
- multiple bruises in clusters
- multiple bruises of uniform shape
- bruises that carry the imprint of an implement used, hand marks, fingertips or a belt buckle

Although bruising is the commonest injury in physical abuse, fatal non-accidental head injury and non-accidental fractures can occur without bruising. Any child who has unexplained signs of pain or illness must be seen promptly by a doctor.

Other physical signs of abuse can include:

- cigarette burns
- adult bite marks
- broken bones
- scalds

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

- fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts

- flinching when approached or touched
- reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- missing school
- running away from home

iii) Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, and often children who appear otherwise well cared for may be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. *Children who live in households where there is domestic abuse often suffer emotional abuse.* Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix/play with other children.

The physical signs of emotional abuse can include:

- a failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in other circumstances, e.g., in hospital or away from parents' care
- sudden speech disorders
- developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- neurotic behaviour, e.g., sulking, hair twisting, rocking
- being unable to play
- fear of making mistakes
- self-harm
- fear of parents being approached

iv) Sexual Abuse

Adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers. It is important to remember that children can also be sexually abused by other children (i.e., those under 18)

Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour which may cause concern, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children who talk about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to, taken seriously and appropriate action taken promptly.

The physical signs of sexual abuse can include:

- pain or itching in the genital/anal areas
- bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas
- sexually transmitted disease
- vaginal discharge or infection
- stomach pains
- discomfort when walking or sitting down
- pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse can include:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, e.g., becoming aggressive or withdrawn

- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- having nightmares
- Missing / absent from school
- running away from home
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
- sexual drawings or language
- bedwetting
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- alcohol / substance / drug use
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- not being allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults or other children

v) Neglect

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise yet have some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children and young people.

The physical signs of neglect can include:

- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- being constantly dirty or smelly
- loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- inappropriate dress for the conditions

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect can include:

- complaining of being tired all the time
- not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- having few friends
- mentioning being left alone or unsupervised

It is important that adults in school recognise that providing compensatory care might address the immediate and presenting issue but could cover up or inhibit the recognition of neglect in all aspects of a child's life. Compensatory care is defined as 'providing a child or young person, on a regular basis, help or assistance with basic needs with the aim of redressing deficits in parental care'. This might involve, for example, providing each day a substitute set of clothing because those from home are dirty, or showering a child whose personal hygiene or presentation is such that it is affecting his/her interaction with peers. It does not include isolated or irregular support such as giving lunch money or washing a child who has had an 'accident'. If any adult in school finds s/he is regularly attending to one or more aspects of a child's basic needs, then this will prompt a discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The general rule is: the younger the child, the higher the risk in terms of their immediate health. However, serious neglect of older children and adolescents is often overlooked, on the assumption that they can care for themselves and have made a 'choice' to neglect themselves. Lack of engagement with services should be a potential indicator of neglect.

School staff should be mindful of the above and discuss any concerns with the

DSL who will take the appropriate action in accordance with the inter-agency neglect guidance on the DSCB website.

vi) Serious Violent Crimes (SVC)

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime.

These may include:

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

All staff should be aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to manage these.

Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines.

vii) More detailed information on other safeguarding issues:

Upskirting:

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

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

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity.

Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

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

The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online. More information includes definitions and indicators are included in Annex B

County lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”.

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual harassment and violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children’s homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism¹⁰³ should be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered without the full and free consent of one or both the parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their 18th birthday, even if violence etc are not used.

Appendix 3: Record Keeping: Best Practice
To be read and followed by all DSLs and DDSLs

1. Introduction

1.1 The importance of good, clear child welfare and child protection record keeping has been highlighted repeatedly in national and local Serious Case Reviews.

1.2 It is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)'s responsibility to ensure that child protection files, access, storage and transfer meet the required professional standards as detailed in this document.

1.3 The common law of confidentiality, Data Protection and Human Rights principles must be adhered to when obtaining, processing or sharing personal or sensitive information or records. In summary, the Data Protection Act requires that records should be securely kept, accurate, relevant, up to date and kept for no longer than is necessary for the purpose for which they were made.

1.4 Any electronic record keeping system should comply with the general standards set out below. FUS use the 'My Concern' system. Records should include a clear comprehensive summary of the concern; details of how the concern was followed up and resolved; a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

2. Record to be made by an adult receiving a disclosure of abuse (when a child talks about abuse)

2.1 This record should be made as soon as possible **after** the individual hearing the disclosure has reported it verbally to the DSL. The facts, not opinions (unless of relevance), should be accurately recorded in a non-judgemental way. It is important to remember that expressing an opinion as to whether the child is telling the truth is not helpful and can prejudice how a case proceeds.

2.2 The record should ideally be on a standard 'concerns' form (LA model available from the Safeguarding and Standards Team or on Nexus) but if this is not used, should include:

- The child's name, gender and date of birth
- Date and time of the conversation
- What was the context and who was present during the disclosure?
- What did the child say? – verbatim if possible
- What questions were asked? – verbatim
- Responses to questions –verbatim
- Any observations concerning child's demeanour and any injuries
- The name of the person to whom the disclosure was reported
- Printed name and job title of the author, followed by signature and date

2.3 The record about a disclosure of abuse should be passed to the DSL and retained in the pupil's child protection file in its original and contemporaneous form (as it could be used as evidence in court proceedings), even if later typed or if the information is incorporated into a report.

2.4 Schools should never ask pupils, regardless of their involvement in a child protection matter (i.e., the subject of an allegation, a witness or the perpetrator, alleged 'perpetrator'), to write out their 'statements' of what has happened. In some cases, this could have the unintended consequence of jeopardising a child protection investigation. This applies regardless of whether the incident(s) took place within or outside school.

3. Records kept by the Designated Safeguarding Lead

3.1 As stated at 2.2 above it is useful and recommended practice for school staff to have one standard pro forma for recording all 'welfare' and child protection concerns.

3.2 The concern form should be passed to the DSL who will make a judgement about what action needs to be taken, in accordance with local inter-agency safeguarding procedures, using the Threshold Tool, if necessary. The decision about any action, whether a referral is made to Social Care, will be recorded clearly by the DSL.

3.3 Concerns that initially seem trivial may turn out to be vital pieces of information later, so it is important to give as much detail as possible. A concern raised may not progress further than a conversation by the DSL with the parent, or, at the other end of the scale, could lead to matters being heard in a court.

3.4 All 'lower level' / pastoral concerns about a child's welfare, which will generally have been discussed with parents/carers, are kept in the child's main file. Alternatively, some schools have adopted their own systems of collating such welfare concerns, but whichever system is in place, these records should not be labelled 'child protection'.

3.5 It is never good practice to keep pupil welfare records in a diary or day-book system. Often it is only when a number of seemingly minor issues relating to an individual pupil over a period of time are seen as a whole that a pattern can be identified indicating a child protection concern.

4. Starting a school child protection file

4.1 A schoolchild protection file does not necessarily mean that the pupil is or has been the subject of a child protection conference or plan. 'Child protection file' denotes a high level of school concern that has warranted referral to/ involvement of, and in most cases assessment by, childcare social workers.

4.2 It is the responsibility of the DSL to start a school child protection file when a social worker is or was involved, e.g.: -

- a) A formal referral is made by the school to Children's Social Care on an inter-agency referral form or
- b) Social Care inform the school they have commenced an assessment in relation to a pupil resulting from information from another source or
- c) A child protection file is forwarded to the school by previous school or pre-school attended by the pupil or

a

d) A child who is in care/looked after transfers into the school or

e) A pupil is privately fostered

4.3 It is not good practice to make 'family files'; each child should have his/her own record which includes information specific to him/her, and which will be sent to the next school at the time of transfer, within 5 school days of the child starting. The names of siblings and/or other children who live in the household who also attend the school should be clearly noted on individual files.

4.4 If two (or more) pupils at the school are referred to Social Care for the same concern (for example, an allegation of sexually harmful behaviour), then child protection files will be started on both/all pupils.

4.5 'Document wallet' - type files are not ideal as the papers therein can easily fall out or get 'out of order'.

4.6 School child protection files are never 'closed' or de-categorised. Once a school has started a child protection file, the chronology is maintained so that any future concerns can be considered in the context of past events, even if Social Care ceases involvement.

4.7 Note - If there is an allocated social worker because a child is disabled or a young carer and there are no child protection concerns then a child protection file should not be started.

4.8 Children who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans) - Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse and/or neglect and/or exploitation and/or complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and mental health.

Local authorities should share the fact a child has a social worker, and the designated safeguarding lead should hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. This should be considered as a matter of routine. There are clear powers to share this information under existing duties on both local authorities and schools and colleges to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Where children need a social worker, this should inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or to a child absent from education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services).

5. Adopted children

5.1 When a pupil is admitted to a school in Reception class and parents provide the information that s/he was adopted prior to commencing education, this should be recorded with their permission on the main school file in order that appropriate support can be

provided in future if necessary. In these situations, it is not necessary to start a child protection file **unless** the criteria described above (at 4.2a and 4.2b) also apply.

5.2 Some older adopted children will have schoolchild protection files because they were initially in care/looked after and were subsequently adopted. During the period when the child is 'placed for adoption' (prior to an adoption order being made) any file that contains information that identifies both the birth family and the adoptive family must be classed as highly sensitive and this information should only be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis.

5.3 Once the adoption order has been made the DSL in the school that holds the child protection file must overhaul the file. The principle is that there must be nothing that identifies the child's birth name or the birth family. In sifting the file, it is acceptable to destroy documents that will continue to be held by other agencies: for example, child protection conference minutes and LAC review minutes which will be in Social Care records.

5.4 A chronology should be prepared that gives an overview of the information previously held in the file but **without giving the child's birth name or any details which would identify the birth family.**

5.5 The overhauled file should only contain the new chronology and any information that has originated from within school (for example concern forms). This file should now be in the child's new name, contain no information which identifies the birth name or birth family, will be held in the school as long as the child remains or sent onto a new school as described (at 9) below.

5.6 Please note that once a child is adopted, all school records, not just CP files, must be amended so that there is nothing which gives the birth name or identifies the birth family.

6. The format of child protection files

6.1 It is helpful if individual files have a front sheet with key information about the pupil and contact details of parents/carers, social worker and any other relevant professionals.

6.2 If the child is Looked-After the front sheet should include important information about legal status, parental responsibility, arrangements for contact with birth parents and extended family, levels of authority delegated to carers and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child.

6.3 If a pupil is or was subject of a child protection plan or in care/looked after, this should be highlighted in some way to make it immediately obvious to anyone accessing the record.

6.4 It is a multi-agency standard that children's child protection files must have at the front an up-to-date chronology of *significant* incidents or events *and* subsequent actions/outcomes. Maintaining the chronology is an important part of the DSL role; it aids the DSL, Deputy and others to see the central issues 'at a glance' and helps to identify patterns of events and behaviours.

6.5 It should make sense as a 'stand-alone' document: anyone else reading the chronology should be able to follow easily what the concerns are/have been, whether the concerns have

escalated and why, plus the actions taken by the school to support and protect the child. This will be particularly useful for DSLs in receiving schools when pupils transfer, for professionals involved in collating information for Serious Case Reviews and for parents/pupils/ex-pupils if they view the record.

6.6 Once a chronology is started, it should be updated as appropriate even if Social Care later ceases involvement (see 4.6 above).

6.7 The file should be well organised and include, as appropriate, school 'concern forms', copies of correspondence, school reports to and minutes of child protection conferences, documents relating to children in care/'looked after' etc. The DSL will decide which relevant information which pre-dates the starting of the child protection file, such as CAF or other pastoral care documentation, will also be included.

7. Storage

7.1 All records relating to child protection concerns are sensitive and confidential so will be kept in a secure (i.e., locked at all times) filing cabinet, separate from other school files, and accessible through the DSL and deputy DSLs.

7.2 The pupil's general school file should be marked in some way (e.g., a yellow star) to indicate that a child protection file exists. All staff who may need to consult a child's school file should be made aware of what the symbol means and to speak to the DSL if necessary if they see this symbol and have concerns. For example, a member of the office staff who is looking in the main file for a parent's contact details because of unexplained absence might decide to report this to the DSL if they see the indicator, in case the absence is significant.

8. Sharing of and access to child protection records

8.1 It is highly unlikely that all members of staff need to know the details of a child's situation, or that there should be widespread access to the records. Access to, and sharing of, information should be on a need-to-know basis, decided case by case. The DSL is the best person to decide this. Consideration must also be given to *what* needs to be shared. In general, the closer the day-to-day contact with the child, the more likely the need to have some information.

8.2 The child who is the subject of a child protection record has the right to access the file, *unless* to do so would affect his/her health or well-being or that of another person, or would be likely to prejudice a criminal investigation or a Section 47 assessment (which relates to significant harm) under the Children Act 1989.

8.3 Parents (i.e., those with parental responsibility in law) are entitled to see their child's child protection file, with the same exemptions as apply to the child's right to access the record. Note that an older pupil may be entitled to refuse access to the record by his/her parents. As a guide, this applies to pupils who are 12 years of age or above, if they are of normal development or maturity.

8.4 References by name to children other than the pupil who is the subject of the file should be removed when disclosing records, unless consent is obtained from the individual/s

concerned (or their parents/carers on their behalf). Care must be taken to ensure all identifying information is removed from the copy of the record to be shared.

8.5 Always seek advice from your legal advisor or Dorset Data Protection Officer (01305 225175) if there are any concerns or doubt about a child or parents reading records. However, it is generally good practice to share all information held unless there is a valid reason to withhold it, e.g., to do so would place the child or any other person at risk of harm. Any requests to see the child's record should be made in writing to give time for confidential information, such as any details of other pupils, to be removed.

8.6 In respect of requests from pupils or parents for information which wholly or partly consists of an educational record, access should be granted within 15 school days. This might be relevant to 'welfare' concerns in a main school file, for example. Viewing-only access to these records is free but it is reasonable to charge for copies on a sliding scale from £1 - £50 (maximum) depending on the number of pages.

8.7 However, should the request only seek access to a child protection file (which is not classed as a school record), access should be granted within 40 calendar days. A discretionary maximum fee of £10 can be charged for viewing access to or a copy of a child protection record.

8.8 If the record to be disclosed contains information about an adult professional, that information can be disclosed if it relates to the performance by that person of their job or other official duties e.g., a reference to a teacher in their teaching role or a school nurse in their nursing role. However, if the reference refers to that individual's private life, it should be removed (unless this relates to a child protection matter which is relevant to the record to be disclosed).

8.9 Child protection information should not normally be shared with professionals other than those from Social Care, the Police, Health or the Local Authority. Ofsted and other school inspectors can view individual child protection files. Information should not be released to parents' solicitors on request; advice should be sought from the school's legal advisor in such cases.

8.10 Governors, including the Nominated Governor, should not access the records.

9. Transfer of child protection records

9.1 When a pupil transfers to another school (including to a Learning Centre because of permanent exclusion) the DSL should inform the receiving school as soon as possible in person or by telephone that child protection records exist. The original records must be passed on either by hand or sent by recorded delivery, separate from the child's main school file within 5 days of starting. Care must be taken to ensure confidentiality is maintained and the transfer process is as safe as possible.

9.2 If the records are to be posted, they should be copied and these copies retained until there has been confirmation in writing that the originals have arrived at the new school. They can then be shredded.

9.3 Whether child protection files are passed on by hand or posted, there should be written evidence of the transfer (such as a form or slip of paper signed and dated by a member of staff at the receiving school.) This receipt should be retained by the originating school for 6 years (in line with guidance from the Records Management Society).

9.4 If the pupil is removed from the roll to be home educated, the school should pass the child protection file to the LA EHE Administrator and a receipt obtained as described above.

9.5 If a pupil with a child protection record leaves the school without a forwarding address and no contact is received from a new school the DSL should follow Child Missing Education (CME) procedures. If there is reason to suspect the pupil is suffering harm, then the DSL will refer to Social Care in the usual way.

9.6 If a child arrives in the school in an unplanned way and / or there are concerns about them from the outset, it is worth contacting the previous school for a discussion with the DSL. There might be a child protection file that has not been passed on.

9.7 School 'welfare' or pastoral records (i.e., where concerns or issues have been raised but there has been **no** referral to or involvement by a social worker) should also be passed on to the next school for their information and can be included in the main school file, for example. In respect of data protection, parents/carers should be made aware (either individually or through newsletters, for example) that information is transferred in this way to enable the next school to properly support their child. Most parents will understand the reason for this but if for whatever reason a parent disagrees with you passing on non-child protection documents, you should not do so.

10. 'Dual registered' pupils

10.1 Where a pupil is on roll at the school and starts to attend a Learning Centre (LC) or other Alternate Provision (AP) – at the agreement of the Headteacher and linked Governor, the chronology and other relevant information in the child protection file should be copied and passed to the DSL at the LC / AP at the earliest opportunity if appropriate. Because of the nature of such 'bespoke' arrangements for individual pupils, the two DSLs should agree on which one of them will keep the chronology updated and how best to communicate to each other significant events and issues in relation to that pupil.

10.2 Where a school places a pupil within an AP provider, it continues to be responsible for the safeguarding needs of that pupil and should be satisfied that the placement meets the pupils' needs.

This includes the school:

- gain written confirmation from the alternative provider that appropriate staff safeguarding checks have been carried out, as well as written information about any arrangements that may put the child at risk
- have records of the address of the alternative provider and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the child may attend
- regularly review any alternative provision placements to make sure the placement continues to be safe and meets the child's needs. If safeguarding concerns occur, the placement should be immediately reviewed and ended if necessary.

10.3 Dual registered students will be reviewed each 6 weeks and an update shared with the Headteacher and Link Governor

11. Retention of records

11.1 The school should retain the record for as long as the pupil remains in school and then transfer as described above.

11.2 Guidance from the Records Management Society is that when a pupil with a child protection record reaches statutory school leaving age (or where the pupil completed 6th form studies), the last school attended should keep the child protection file until the pupil's 25th birthday. It should then be shredded (and a record kept of this having been done, date, and why).

11.3 The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse has instructed relevant organisations, including schools and colleges, that they should NOT destroy, for the foreseeable future, any of their records that could potentially come within the scope of the inquiry (i.e., any records relating to sexual abuse).

12. Electronic child protection records

12.1 Electronic records must be password protected with access strictly controlled in the same way as paper records.

12.2 They should be in the same format as paper records (i.e., with well-maintained chronologies etc.) so that they are up to date if/when printed, if necessary.

12.3 Electronic files must not be transferred electronically to other schools unless there is a secure system in place but should be printed in their entirety, linked with paper documentation such as conference minutes and transferred as described in section 9 above. When the receipt has been returned to confirm that the file has been received at the new school, the computer record should be deleted.

13. Sharing information with Further Education (FE) Colleges

13.1 A protocol is in place with DSLs at FE colleges: at the start of each academic year, they will send to secondary school DSLs a list of newly enrolled students who have previously attended the school, requesting any relevant information. Secondary school DSLs will use their professional judgement but should always disclose if a young person is in care/looked after, is or has been subject of a child protection plan or is assessed as posing a risk to themselves or other students.

Note this applies only to Dorset schools and FE Colleges with whom the protocol has been agreed.

Appendix 4 – Gender Questioning Children

Copied from KCSIE 26 - points 252-282

252 - In recent years, we have seen a significant increase in the number of children who are questioning the way they feel about being a boy or a girl, including the physical attributes of their sex and the related ways in which they fit into society.

It is not for schools and colleges to initiate any action in this area; this guidance is focused on circumstances where a child or their parent has raised a request relating to social transition to which a school or college is responding.

Schools and colleges should keep in mind that it is common for children to engage in activities that are less typically associated with their sex. For example, at primary school age, girls may play with trucks, or boys may dress in clothes that are perceived as feminine. Sometimes young children also go through a period of questioning their gender but for the majority this will not continue into adulthood, while a small proportion may continue to question their gender and this feeling may intensify into puberty.

Schools and colleges should take time to understand the thoughts and feelings of children who are questioning their gender and should be appropriately professionally curious about the full range of the child's experiences. Schools and colleges should remain aware of the potential vulnerabilities of children who are questioning their gender, including the possibility of complex mental health and psychosocial needs, for example relating to relationships with family, peers or their broader social environment, including discriminatory bullying.

Schools and colleges should consider adopting policies across school and college life that maintain flexibility and avoid rigid rules based on gender stereotypes.

Considering requests for support with social transition

Schools and colleges should not initiate any action regarding social transition; this guidance applies where a child or their parent has requested that the school make changes or put support in place in order to facilitate the child presenting as the opposite biological sex ("social transition"). Members of staff should not adopt any changes relating to social transition unless a decision has been made by a school or college and a child's parents or carers have been involved as set out in this guidance.

Schools and colleges should consider whether pupils would be best supported by a policy on social transition which explains the steps that a school or college will go through when a child requests support. When considering any request for support with social transition, schools and colleges should ensure that their decision-making process is documented and records are kept.

In making decisions about supporting social transition, schools and colleges must comply with their distinct but interacting obligations under safeguarding legislation and equality and human rights law, ensuring that any assessment of discrimination is informed by their evaluation of the welfare and best interests of the child and other children.

Schools and colleges should make decisions in line with the following principles and ensure that their decision-making process is documented and records are kept.

Schools and colleges have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. They should consider how best to fulfil that duty towards a child who is questioning their gender, as well as their peers, ensuring that any agreed course of action takes account of the impact on all of those affected.

This means that the first step when considering a child's request for support with social transition will be to consider what is in the best interests of the child and other children, and a decision relating to social transition may not be the same as a child's wishes.

As below, in the vast majority of cases we would expect the school or college to work with parents or carers to determine what is in the best interests of the child as well as considering any clinical evidence or advice and seeking any additional non-clinical professional advice where relevant (for example from the SENCO), including involving the designated safeguarding lead⁵⁶. Schools and colleges should consider everything that could be affecting a child, including whether they have any wider health issues or neurodiversity. In considering the best interests of children, schools and colleges should also take into account the principle below on taking a careful approach.

Schools should be particularly conscious of safeguarding concerns relating to primary aged children. For example, the Cass Review noted evidence that children who socially transition before puberty – and those who transition prior to receiving clinical advice – are more likely to proceed to a medical pathway than those who do not. Schools should also keep in mind that some children who socially transition before puberty will be “living in stealth” meaning other pupils and/or staff may be unaware of their biological sex, and schools should be aware of related safeguarding concerns as in the section below on living in stealth. Parents and carers should be actively involved and their views treated with importance.

Parents and carers have the leading role in the lives of their children, and this area should be no exception. Therefore, where a child who is questioning their gender asks for support from a school or college, schools and colleges should engage parents/carers as a matter of priority. It is important that the views of the child's parents or carers should carry great weight and be properly considered. However, in the rare circumstances where involving parents or carers would constitute a greater risk to the child than not involving them, the school or college should involve their designated safeguarding lead⁵⁸ to determine what action is needed to safeguard the child, before the parents or carers are contacted or any decisions are taken.

The Cass Review is clear that outcomes for children and adolescents are best if they have a supportive relationship with their families and, in the vast majority of cases, we would expect schools/colleges and parents/carers to work together to establish what is best for the child. Involving a child's parents/carers in this way will enable schools and colleges to promote a child's wellbeing and protect them from harm.

Schools and colleges should explore how best to support these conversations, including offering a staff member to be present or to speak to parents or carers on the child's behalf.

The advice above applies in cases where a child has requested support with social transition. In cases where a child confides in a member of staff about their feelings but does not ask the school or college to make changes to how they are treated, there is no reason to break any confidence unless there is a related safeguarding risk. Schools and colleges should follow their usual procedures where a conversation with a child raises concerns about the child's wellbeing or safety, including involving parents or carers where appropriate.

Schools and colleges should take a very careful approach in relation to social transition. The Cass Review acknowledged that there is a lack of good evidence on the long-term impact of social transition on young people, but it is clear that social transition should be viewed as an active intervention that may have significant effects on the child or young person in terms of their psychological functioning and longer-term outcomes.

Primary schools should exercise particular caution, and we would expect support for full social transition to be agreed very rarely. Schools should keep in mind the emphasis in the Cass

Review on early clinical involvement when families are considering social transition for pre-pubertal children, including how to support their children in a non-directive way, whilst also keeping options open and flexible. The Cass Review emphasised that clinical involvement in the decision-making process should include advising on the risks and benefits of social transition as a planned intervention, referencing best available evidence. This is not a role that can be undertaken by staff without appropriate clinical training.

The Cass Review acknowledges that older children will generally have greater agency to make their own decisions. Maintaining flexibility and keeping children's options open will help to avoid a child feeling they are under pressure to commit to a potentially irrevocable pathway when they are young. Schools and colleges should comply with obligations under the Equality Act and Human Rights Act when considering requests for support with social transition. As well as complying with their safeguarding obligations as above, schools and colleges must also comply with their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

In line with the responsibilities of schools and colleges to adhere to the highest standards of safeguarding for the children and young people in their care, alongside obligations under the School Premises (England) Regulations 2012 and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, **schools must not allow pupils into toilets, changing rooms, or boarding or residential accommodation designated for the opposite sex, with no exceptions.** Similarly, where schools have implemented single-sex sports as being necessary for safety reasons, there should be no exceptions and pupils must not be allowed to participate in sports designated for the opposite sex.

In relation to other policies, the school or college will need to consider whether the policy will place a child who is questioning their gender (and other gender-questioning children) at a disadvantage relative to other children. Schools and colleges should consider this both when developing the policy itself and when considering requests to be exempt from such policies. Where the rule or policy does place a gender-questioning child (and other gender questioning children) at a disadvantage compared with those who are not gender-questioning, the school or college should consider the following:

- (1) Does the policy have a legitimate aim? For example, safeguarding or fairness in sport.
- (2) Is the policy a proportionate means of achieving that legitimate aim?

This will involve considering:

- whether there is another way of achieving the same aim. Might a policy be adopted or an exception made that still achieves that aim?
- the impact of the rule, or of making an exception (or not making an exception) on the child themselves and anyone else affected?

The school or college should balance the impact of agreeing the child's request against the impact of refusing their request, taking into account all the relevant factors. This will include taking into account the school or college's judgment about whether supporting social transition is in the child's best interests and the best interests of other children, as above.

When discussing requests with children, schools and colleges to which part 6 of the Equality Act applies should take time to sensitively explain the constraints on social transition set out in this guidance. This includes schools explaining that supporting any degree of social transition will not include allowing access to toilets, changing rooms or boarding or residential accommodation designated for the opposite sex, and will not include allowing children to join PE classes designated for the opposite sex where there are safety reasons for single sex PE.

The school or college should also make sure that children and their families are aware that while the school or college will appropriately sanction any cases of bullying or harassment, and take a strong stand against bullying, the school or college must also be conscious of the rights of pupils and staff in relation to their religion or belief. However, schools and colleges supporting social transition might consider discussing options with pupils and staff such as using names instead of pronouns.

The circumstances of a case and/or the needs of a child may change over time. For example, it may become known that there are safeguarding issues that were not previously apparent (including where a young child is 'living in stealth' - see below), or that a decision has placed an unsustainable pressure on a school or college's resources. In such cases, the school or college may need to review their original decision taking into account the factors set out above, including involving the child's parents or carers. In deciding whether to review a decision, the school or college should involve their designated safeguarding lead immediately.

We expect that as well as revisiting decisions at appropriate points, schools and colleges will in particular want to consider whether previous decisions taken prior to this guidance coming into force remain appropriate, taking into account the impact of making any changes on the child in question and considering the principle above about involving parents or carers.

Having the correct information about a child is important in the context of schools and colleges fulfilling their safeguarding duties, and they should make sure all relevant staff are aware of a child's biological sex in all cases. Schools and colleges are legally required to record a child's biological sex accurately wherever it is recorded.

Schools and colleges should be particularly conscious of the vulnerabilities of children who have fully socially transitioned from an early age and may be living in stealth (that is, school or college friends/staff may be unaware of their biological sex). The Cass Review emphasised that these children are likely to approach puberty in a fearful and anxious state. Schools and colleges should involve the designated safeguarding lead in these cases.

There may be circumstances where a child wants to fully or partially reverse a request that has previously been agreed. The Cass Review highlighted the importance of maintaining flexibility and keeping options open for children who have socially transitioned and recommended that support should be provided to children who wish to de-transition. Schools and colleges should work closely with parents or carers and relevant experts to ensure that children in this position are supported.

Appendix 5 - School Closure

26 School closure

This section is about the Safeguarding provision for pupils being educated both on and off-site during school closure e.g., due to COVID-19.

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy of Ferndown Upper School remains fundamentally the same and continues to have regard for the Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory guidance. These adjustments to operational practice are produced in line with the Government Guidance contained in **Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers**

26.1 Designated Safeguarding Leads

Ferndown Upper School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead ('DSL') and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Jo Taylor

Email address: jotaylor@fernup.dorset.sch.uk

Contact Telephone Number: 01202 871243

Emergency contact number is held in reception for school staff

Staff and parents are directed to Family Support and Advice Line, 101 or 999 in an out of hours emergency – in line with school safeguarding procedure.

In addition, Ferndown Upper School has put in place a measure to ensure that there is a dedicated and trained Safeguarding Team available to co-ordinate if either the DSL or Deputy DSL are unavailable at any time. In the case whereby the DSL or Deputy DSL are unavailable to be onsite, the DSL or Deputy DSL will be available to be contacted via phone, email, Skype or other such media, or online video whilst working from home, using the above contact details. These details for the DSL are with all staff and stored in reception as well.

26.2 Vulnerable students

The DSL and or Deputy DSL will ensure that any child identified as vulnerable who is being educated off site, be that at a cluster school or at home, will have a welfare call carried out. The DSL or Deputy DSL will ensure that the welfare call is recorded in our vulnerable student tracking document and actioned appropriately and when necessary, referred to other agencies.

Ferndown Upper School will respond to any updated advice received from local authorities regarding children with EHCPs, the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need.

26.3 Children not meeting the 'vulnerable definition'

Ferndown Upper School will adopt the same procedure and practice for any child identified as vulnerable, that does fall into the statutory vulnerable category. This will include, as outlined above, a regular welfare call / email, whereby a member of school staff will speak with the child directly and record and action accordingly.

When carrying out welfare calls, it is important that staff speak directly to the child and not through a parent or carer.

26.4 The Role of the Local Authority

Ferndown Upper School is following updated guidance from the Local Authority in response to school closure and is responding to any updates advice received from the three local safeguarding partners.

School staff will continue to work with and support children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children

26.5 Safeguarding Clusters

Ferndown Upper School may host cluster schools. The principles for safeguarding all students remain in place by providing a safe environment and keep children safe. Ferndown Upper School will adhere to our Safer Recruitment Policy and ensure staff and volunteers have been appropriately checked. Where possible, will ensure that we have a trained first aid responder and fire drill coordinator onsite. We will ensure that any transferred staff from other schools understand and receive an induction training into our in-house fire drill, evacuation, lockdown and first aid procedures.

26.6 Operational practice

The way in which Ferndown Upper School operates during school closure is fundamentally different to how we would normally operate, however, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- The welfare of children remains Ferndown Upper School key priority;
- The best interests of children will always continue to come first;
- If anyone in Ferndown Upper School has a safeguarding concern about any child, they will continue to act and act immediately;
- A DSL or deputy will be available, either onsite or remotely;
- Staff will continue to use My Concern to record any concerns.
- Unsuitable people will not be allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children;
- Children will continue to be protected when they are online.

All students are members of tutor group TEAMS, where engagement is checked daily. Through these, as well as newsletter to parents and students, advice is given on staying safe, especially online and how to access help if needed.

These updates are shared with staff, so all staff know how to continue to keep a child safe.

26.7 Attendance

Ferndown Upper School follows national guidance on recording attendance and attendance procedures. An attendance procedure is in place to notify the Local Authority and the DfE in line with daily / weekly requests.

In the case of social worker involvement, Ferndown Upper School will liaise where necessary with the child's social worker to agree with the families whether the child in need should be attending the education provision provided. In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school or discontinues Ferndown Upper School will notify their social worker where contact has been unsuccessful.

If a child who is expected in school fails to attend, it will be followed up in accordance with Ferndown Upper School attendance policy and contact will be made with the parent, carer or social worker.

26.8 Children moving schools.

Ferndown Upper School will provide any receiving institution with relevant welfare and child protection information. This will be especially important where children are vulnerable.

For looked-after children, any change in school should be led and managed by the VSH with responsibility for the child. The receiving institution should be aware of the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum the receiving institution should, as appropriate, have access to a vulnerable child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is). This should ideally happen before a child arrives and, where that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable.

Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between SENCOs with oversight of SEND provision for children with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case senior leaders should take responsibility.

Whilst schools and colleges must continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR they do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

26.9 Reporting and monitoring a concern

Whether a child is educated at home, off site at a cluster school or in school, every member of staff and or volunteer hold a duty to report any concern they may have.

Ferndown Upper School continues to adhere to the reporting procedures as outlined in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy through My Concern.

Due to an increase strain on families both financially and emotionally, in response to COVID19, there is an increased requirement for safeguarding vigilance, reporting and monitoring. If a member of staff is reporting a concern remotely, they will follow the usual procedure of recording on My Concern.

26.10 Safer Recruitment, Volunteers and Movement of Staff

Ferndown Upper School continues to follow the Safer Recruitment Policy to ensure that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the school in order to gain access to

children. If Ferndown Upper School recruits' new staff or volunteers, we will uphold our Safer Recruitment practice, taking into account Part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

In response to COVID-19, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) have implemented COVID19: Changes to DBS ID checking guidelines – 24 March 2020 which minimises the need for face-to-face contact. These will be applied through any school closure or updated in line with new guidance.

With the COVID19 altered provision in place children could be at greater risk of abuse from staff or volunteers. Any concern will be reported immediately.

In response to the UK leaving the EU, from 01 January 2021 the TRA Teacher Services system will no longer maintain a list of those teachers who have been sanctioned in EEA member states. Further checks will be carried out.

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

If Ferndown Upper School utilises volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in KCSIE 2026. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in our school especially those in regulated activity.

In the case of a cluster school, Ferndown Upper School will ensure that the temporarily transferring member of staff's DBS record is inspected. A record will be made and upheld on Ferndown Upper School single central record. The single central record will also be used to log details of any risk assessments carried out on volunteers and staff temporarily transferring from another school.

Ferndown Upper School will ensure that even with the cluster school arrangement it will be aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school and to ensure that appropriate checks have been carried out and photographic proof of identity will be held.

Any staff or volunteers new to Ferndown Upper School will complete a safeguarding and online safety induction.

26.11 Allegations or concerns about staff

Ferndown Upper School will continue to adhere to the whistle blowing policy. Staff and volunteers are to follow the advice as stated in the school's safeguarding policy and code of conduct.

26.12 Mental Wellbeing

At this unprecedented time staff, pupils, parents and carers may be experiencing severe stress and anxiety. Everyone reacts differently to events and changes in the way that we

think, feel and behave vary between different people and over time. Teachers should be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home and/or on site. Equally taking into consideration their own working arrangements and workload.

In response to school closure, Ferndown Upper School continues to maintain its excellent safeguarding and pastoral support, with all details on the website at www.fernup.dorset.sch.uk/information/pastoral.

26.13 Child-on-child abuse

In response to closure or partial closure Ferndown Upper School recognise that there may be an increased opportunity for child-on-child abuse to take place. Ferndown Upper School will continue to remain vigilant to signs and symptoms of such abuse taking place and continue to offer support to any victims of this. The principles as set out in KCSIE continue to inform our revised approach.

All pupils at Ferndown Upper School are aware who to speak to if they have a concern.

26.14 Online Safety in Schools

Many pupils will have an increased use of the internet in response to school closure which may put them at an increased risk. Ferndown Upper School will continue to provide a safe online working environment for our pupils. The School continues to operate an appropriate firewall, filtration and monitoring system. Staff are trained and are aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and other online risks. Ferndown Upper School has taken guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre to keep children safe whilst online.

26.15 Online Safety away from School

When asking our pupils to work online Ferndown Upper School places the child's safety at the highest priority. We recognise that in response to COVID19 the majority of pupils will not physically be attending school. This increases their vulnerability and online safeguarding risk factors. Ferndown Upper School staff will be extra vigilant during remote interactions with pupils and report any concerns they may have in accordance with the School reporting system and Safeguarding policy. Where necessary, concerns will be referred to social services and if required the police. Staff and volunteers will be made aware of the importance of keeping themselves safe online.

Ferndown Upper School ensures that any use of online learning tools and systems are in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Where possible, school staff and pupils should work from home using a remote access use. This limits the risk to the child and reputational damage to the school and staff.

For staff, Ferndown Upper School adopts the same principals for online learning as is set out in our staff behaviour policy or code of conduct.

26.16 Pupils, Parents and Carers

For pupils, parents or carers, Ferndown Upper School adopts the same principals for online learning as set out in the pupil behaviour policy.

Ferndown Upper School will maintain continued communication with parents and carers during this time to reinforce the importance of safe online learning. Advice will be given such as, but not limited to:

- Confirmation of online tools and or sites that the school will be using/if using;
- Confirmation of what the child may be asked to do online;
- Confirmation as to who their child will be interacting with online;
- Confirmation as to whether other pupils will be able to access their child via the online platform;
- Allowing the parent or carer the opportunity to voice any concerns;
- The importance of not leaving the child alone during screen time;
- Monitoring the search history;
- Maintaining open communication with the child about online safety; • How to report a concern;
- Ensuring during face-to-face online sessions the child take place in an appropriate central home location.

Parents and Carers at Ferndown Upper School will be provided with links to lists of support services including:

- **Internet matters** - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- **London Grid for Learning** - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- **Net-aware** - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC
- **Parent info** - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- **Thinkuknow** - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- **UK Safer Internet Centre** - advice for parents and carers

Ferndown Upper School appreciates that not every child will have access to computer or internet facilities in the home and is working with families to address this. We will ensure that age-appropriate resources are sent to any child who cannot access an online provision.

Children are able to report any concerns they have online back to the school through emailing their Pastoral Manager or Head of Year.

26.17 Help and Support

Ferndown Upper School has ensured that both parents and pupils have an open line of communication with the school. All children have been made aware how to report a concern remotely and have also been issued with the ChildLine contact details. All students have a wellbeing card with contact details of charities to support them.

26.18 Staff

Ferndown Upper School has ensured that there is an open communication line for all staff through email and TEAMS to department members and SLT.

The Sikh Kirpan – FUS guidance on allowing wearing in school.

Purpose:

This guidance sets out the school's approach to Sikh pupils and staff who wear the kirpan as part of their religious observance. It aims to balance:

- Respect for freedom of religion and belief
- Inclusion and equality
- The health and safety, safeguarding and wellbeing of all members of the school community.

This guidance applies to pupils, staff, governors and visitors who wear the kirpan for religious reasons.

Aims:

The school aims to:

- Promote respect, understanding and harmony within our diverse school community.
- Support pupils and staff in practicing their faith in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Ensure the arrangements for wearing the kirpan are safe, proportionate and consistent.
- Provide clear guidance for staff, pupils and parents.

Background:

For initiated Sikhs (members of the Khalsa who have undergone Amrit Sanchar ceremony) wearing the Five Ks is an important religious obligation:

- Kesh (uncut hair)
- Kangha (comb)
- Kara (steel wristband)
- Kaccha Short trousers or underpants
- Kirpan (sword)
- Some Sikhs regard the Keski (Turban) as being one of the Ks.

For many Sikhs, the kirpan is a sacred article of faith and not a weapon intended for offensive use.

Legal position:

Equality Act 2010 - The school must not discriminate against pupils or staff on the grounds of religion or belief. Sikhism is a protected religion under the Act.

Offensive Weapons legislation - The Offensive Weapons Act 2019 and related legislation make it an offence to possess a bladed article on school premises. However, there is a specific legal defence where the article is possessed or worn for religious reasons. A kirpan worn as part of Sikh religious observance is therefore lawful.

School guidance:

- 1. Safeguarding of all pupils and staff is a priority throughout the school guidance**
- 2. Respect for religious observance**

The school recognises the significance of the Five Ks and will not object to Sikh pupils or staff wearing them, including the kirpan, where this is part of their religious practice.

All members of the school community should be treated with respect and sensitivity in relation to religious dress and symbols.

- 3. Notification and discussion with parents**

Parents/carers should inform the school if a pupil will be wearing a kirpan in school.

The school will meet with the pupil and parents/carers to discuss practical arrangements and ensure that expectations are understood by all parties. This will include completing a risk and needs assessment to ensure the safeguarding of all in school, whilst balancing respect for religious observance.

The school may ask parents/carers or a faith representative to confirm that the pupil has undergone the Amrit Sanchar initiation ceremony, where this is relevant to the request.

4. Safe wearing of the kirpan

The kirpan must be:

- worn discreetly and out of sight;
- securely sheathed at all times;
- wrapped or fastened so that it cannot be drawn easily;
- of a size and sharpness (blunt) appropriate for school.

As a general guideline, the kirpan to be no more than 7.5 cm (3 inches) in total length, with the blunt blade not exceeding 5 cm (2 inches). However, Ferndown Upper School requests a smaller symbolic kirpan or kirpan necklace where possible and these are encouraged where appropriate.

The school reserves the right to discuss and insist upon these alternatives if a particular kirpan is considered unsuitable by the school for the school environment.

Periodically the school may check that the following criteria are being adhered to.

5. Risk assessment

The school will carry out an initial risk assessment in consultation with the pupil and parents/carers. This assessment will consider the size, method of wearing, and suitability of the kirpan for school activities. Regular reviews will take place of the risk assessment, with checks to ensure continuing compliance.

Any agreed arrangements will be recorded and reviewed periodically or if circumstances change.

6. PE, sport and practical activities

For PE, DT, Science practicals or other activities where jewellery or accessories may present a safety risk, the school will make a case-by-case assessment.

Where necessary for safety, pupils may be asked to remove and securely store the kirpan and/or kara for the duration of the activity. A respectful and private arrangement will be agreed in advance with the pupil and parents/carers wherever possible.

Staff should handle such situations sensitively and avoid drawing unnecessary attention to the pupil.

7. Educational visits and external venues

Arrangements for wearing the kirpan on trips and visits will be considered as part of the visit risk assessment.

Where external venues have specific security requirements, the school will liaise with parents/carers and the venue in advance to agree appropriate arrangements.

8. Staff awareness and education

Staff should be made aware of this guidance through safeguarding, equality, or staff training.

The significance of the Five Ks is explored through PSHE, Ethics and tutor time to promote understanding and respect among pupils.

9. Concerns or misuse

If there is a genuine safeguarding or safety concern relating to a kirpan, staff should follow normal safeguarding procedures and seek support from the DSL immediately.

Any response must be proportionate, respectful and based on specific concerns rather than assumptions about Sikh pupils or the kirpan itself.

Consultation and review

The school values its relationship with local Sikh communities and faith leaders and will seek advice where appropriate. This guidance will be reviewed periodically and following any significant legal or policy changes.

Further information

Equality Act 2010 – GOV.UK

Offensive Weapons Act 2019 – GOV.UK

School uniform guidance – GOV.UK

Network of Sikh Organisations

EHRC guidance on religion or belief in schools

References

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Keep Children Safe 2023
- Children's Wellbeing and School's Bill.
- Data (use and access) Act January 2026
- Working together to improve school attendance August 2024
- RSHE 2026
- Gender Questioning Children – pending September 2025
- Alternate Provision Guidance February 2025
- NSPCC Lone Working Guidance – Published 30 September 2019
- CEOP
- UK Safer Internet Centre
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- First Aid policy
- Staff behaviour policy – code of conduct
- Pupil behaviour policy