

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy outlines the commitment of Discovery schools to safeguard and promote our pupils' welfare, safety and health by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive climate. Our work is underpinned by the Trust values of **Belonging, Ambition and Equity**, which guide all safeguarding practice and ensure every pupil feels safe, supported and able to thrive.

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Document History

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V1.0	10 th August 2021	Megan Williams – Safeguarding Lead	<p>New policy prepared in line with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping children safe in education - September 2022 • Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018 • Ofsteds Review of Sexual Abuse and Colleges – June 2022
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V5.0	18/08/2025	Zack Minton Trust Head of Safeguarding	<p>Policy updated to be in line with:</p> <p>Section 2 - Updated link to KCSIE 2025 to reflect guidance</p> <p>Section 8 - Added information including: Misinformation, Disinformation (including fake news) and Conspiracy theories in line with paragraph 135 of KCSIE25</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8.1 - Changed 'Google Bard' to 'Google Gemini'. • Added a prompt for schools to outline any further procedures in place for dealing with safeguarding concerns related to AI. • Added: 'Our school's requirements for filtering and monitoring also apply to the use of AI, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.' <p>Section 13 - Changed 'autism spectrum disorder' to 'autism' to reflect language in KCSIE25 and SEND code of practice</p> <p>Section 18 - Added artificial intelligence guidance to the list of policies</p>

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Children's Advice Support and Prevention Team (Tier 4 same-day referrals)

Telephone: 0116 454 1004

Email: CASP-team@leicester.gov.uk

Address Early Help and Social Care
91 Granby Street, Leicester, LE1 6FB

CHANNEL referral (extremism / radicalisation):	101 prevent.team@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk Refer someone to the Prevent Team Leicestershire Police
CCE/CSE Consultation Line	0116 454 1004 CASP-team@leicester.gov.uk

All other referrals including Early Help (Children & Family Wellbeing) Service	http://lrsb.org.uk/childreport http://lrsb.org.uk/childreport
Early Help queries and Consultation Line	0116 454 1004 early-help@leicester.gov.uk
Inclusion Service (Children Missing in Education)	0116 454 1004
United Against Violence and Abuse Helpline UAVA Professionals Advice and Referrals	0808 802 0028 0116 255 0004

1. Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

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

2. Fairness, Impartiality, and Bias Prevention

Discovery Trust is committed to handling all safeguarding matters in a fair, impartial, and objective manner. We actively disrupt unconscious and confirmation bias in decision-making, ensuring every case is considered on its facts. Victims will always be supported without fostering "victim think", and alleged perpetrators will be treated fairly, proportionately, and with dignity. All safeguarding decisions must be clearly recorded with rationale and reviewed through DSL supervision and Trust quality assurance processes.

3. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), the Maintained Schools Governance Guide and Academy Trust Governance Guide. We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school
- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18
- Statutory guidance on FGM, which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains schools' duties under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- The Human Rights Act 1998, which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

- The Equality Act 2010, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race). This means our governors and headteacher should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils with regard to these characteristics. The Act allows our school to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there's evidence that they're being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence; homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying; or racial discrimination
- The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (referred to in this policy as the "2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations") and Childcare Act 2006, which set out who is disqualified from working with children.
- This policy also meets requirements relating to safeguarding and welfare in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

4. Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- 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

Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix 1 explains the different types of abuse.

Neglect is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery) is where children share nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams.

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

The following 3 safeguarding partners are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

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- The local authority (LA)
- Integrated care boards (previously known as clinical commissioning groups) for an area within the LA
- The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area

Victim is a widely understood and recognised term, but we understand that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described that way. When managing an incident, we will be prepared to use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with.

Alleged perpetrator(s) and **perpetrator(s)** are widely used and recognised terms. However, we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children) as, in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what's appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

Sexual Harassment and Behaviours of a Sexual Nature

Sexual harassment refers to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating another person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. This includes verbal, non-verbal, physical, and online behaviours.

Behaviours of a sexual nature may be inappropriate or harmful depending on age and context, and include sexual comments, jokes, or taunts; unwanted touching; sexual gestures or staring; the sharing of sexual images; and online sexualised communications.

5. Equality statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, both online and offline, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. In line with our values of **Belonging, Ambition and Equity**, we will ensure that every child has equal access to protection and support, that barriers to disclosure are actively reduced, and that our culture is one where all children feel they truly belong.

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or health conditions (see section 10)
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language (EAL)
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after (see section 12)
- Are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated

6. Roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, trustees and advisory board members across our trust and is consistent with the procedures of the 3 safeguarding partners. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities.

The trust and school play a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of a whole-trust approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and sexual violence/harassment. This will be underpinned by the school's:

- Behaviour policy
- Pastoral support system
- Planned programme of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), which is inclusive and delivered regularly, tackling issues such as:
 - Healthy and respectful relationships
 - Boundaries and consent
 - Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
 - Body confidence and self-esteem
 - How to recognise an abusive relationship (including coercive and controlling behaviour)
 - The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and FGM and how to access support
 - What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why they're always unacceptable

6.1 All staff

All staff will:

- Read and understand part 1 and annex B of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), and review this guidance at least annually
- Sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to say that they have reviewed the guidance
- Reinforce the importance of online safety when communicating with parents and carers. This includes making parents aware of what we ask children to do online (e.g., sites they need to visit or who they'll be interacting with online)
- Provide a safe space for pupils who are LGBTQ+ to speak out and share their concerns

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff code of conduct, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies, the behaviour policy, the online safety policy and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
- The early help assessment process (sometimes known as the common assessment framework) and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment

- The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals
- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child-on-child abuse, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM, radicalisation and serious violence (including that linked to county lines)
- The importance of reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- The fact that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home, at school and online
- The fact that children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bi or trans (LGBT) can be targeted by other children
- What to look for to identify children who need help or protection

6.2 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

The DSL is a member of the senior leadership team. The DSL at Mowmacre Hill Primary School is Isaac Howarth, Headteacher. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding in the school. This includes online safety and understanding our filtering and monitoring processes on school devices and school networks to keep pupils safe online.

During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

The DSL can be contacted out of school hours on dsl@dsatmowmacrehill.org.

When the DSL is absent, the deputies will act as cover.

If the DSL and deputies are not available Zack Minton, Head of Safeguarding, will act as cover (for example, during out-of-hours/out-of-term activities).

The DSL will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so
- Contribute to the assessment of children
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority children's social care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly
- Have a good understanding of harmful sexual behaviour
- Have a good understanding of the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.

The DSL will also:

- Keep the headteacher informed of any issues (if the DSL isn't the headteacher)
- Liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate

- Discuss the local response to sexual violence and sexual harassment with police and local authority children's social care colleagues to prepare the school's policies
- Be confident that they know what local specialist support is available to support all children involved (including victims and alleged perpetrators) in sexual violence and sexual harassment, and be confident as to how to access this support
- Be aware that children must have an 'appropriate adult' to support and help them in the case of a police investigation or search

The full responsibilities of the DSL and deputies are set out in their job description.

6.3 The board of trustees

The board will:

- Facilitate a whole-trust approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of, and underpin, all relevant aspects of process and policy development
- Be aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and our school's local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
- Appoint a senior board level (or equivalent) lead to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full governing board. This is always a different person from the DSL
- Ensure all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, and that such training is regularly updated and is in line with advice from the safeguarding partners
- Ensure that the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and review their effectiveness. This includes:
 - Making sure that the leadership team and staff are aware of the provisions in place, and that they understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of safeguarding training
 - Reviewing the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards, and discussing with IT staff and service providers what needs to be done to support the school in meeting these standards
- Make sure:
 - The DSL has the appropriate status and authority to carry out their job, including additional time, funding, training, resources and support
 - Online safety is a running and interrelated theme within the whole-trust approach to safeguarding and related policies
 - The DSL has lead authority for safeguarding, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place
 - The trust has procedures to manage any safeguarding concerns (no matter how small) or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold (low-level concerns) about staff members (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors). Appendix 3 of this policy covers this procedure
 - That this policy reflects those children with SEND, or certain medical or physical health conditions, can face additional barriers to any abuse or neglect being recognised
 - Where another body is providing services or activities (regardless of whether or not the children who attend these services/activities are children on the school roll):

- Seek assurance that the other body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies/procedures in place, and inspect them if needed
- Make sure there are arrangements for the body to liaise with the school about safeguarding arrangements, where appropriate
- Make sure that safeguarding requirements are a condition of using the school premises, and that any agreement to use the premises would be terminated if the other body fails to comply

The chair of the board of trustees will act as the 'case manager' if an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher where appropriate (see appendix 3).

All trustees and advisory board members will read Keeping Children Safe in Education in its entirety.

Section 15 has information on how trustees and advisory board members are supported to fulfil their role.

6.4 Advisory boards

Advisory Board members will review the school-specific elements of the policy after the trust level policy has been reviewed and approved.

They will also hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of the policy.

We will appoint a member of each advisory board to act as the lead safeguarding role, to liaise with the school DSL on local safeguarding issues and report to the safeguarding trustee.

The chair of the advisory board will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher where appropriate (see appendix 3).

6.5 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers:
- Are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction
- Understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect
- Communicating this policy to parents/carers when their child joins the school and via the school website
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate (see appendix 3)
- Making decisions regarding all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL on this
- Ensuring the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable
- Making sure each child in the Early Years Foundation Stage is assigned a key person
- Overseeing the safe use of technology, mobile phones and cameras in the setting

6.6 Virtual school heads

Virtual school heads have a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment and progress of pupils with a social worker.

They should also identify and engage with key professionals, e.g., DSLs, special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs), social workers, mental health leads and others.

7. Confidentiality

Our school's approach to confidentiality and data protection can be accessed on our school's website using the following link to a separate policy: [School Policies – Mowmacre Hill](#).

Please note that when sharing of information in regard to safeguarding, our school considers the following points.

- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding
- Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children
- The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe
- If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if: it is not possible to gain consent; it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent; or if to gain consent would place a child at risk
- Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests
- If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment:
 - There's no definitive answer, because even if a victim doesn't consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there's another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies
- The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children
- The DSL should consider that:
 - Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)
 - The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care
 - Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. While the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the police remains
- Regarding anonymity, all staff will:
 - Be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system

- Do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved
- Consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities
- The government's information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information
- If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the DSL (or deputy)
- Confidentiality is also addressed in this policy with respect to record-keeping in section 14, and allegations of abuse against staff in appendix 3

8. Recognising abuse and taking action

All staff are expected to be able to identify and recognise all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation and shall be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Is disabled
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education health and care (EHC) plan)
- Is a young carer
- Is bereaved
- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including being affected by gangs and county lines and organised crime groups and/or serious violence, including knife crime
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, care or home
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- Is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate online content (for example, linked to violence), or developing inappropriate relationships online
- 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
- Is suffering from mental ill health
- Has returned home to their family from care
- Is at risk of so-called ‘honour’-based abuse such as female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage
- Is a privately fostered child
- Has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending
- Is missing education, or persistently absent from school, or not in receipt of full-time education
- Has experienced multiple suspensions and is at risk of, or has been permanently excluded

Staff, volunteers and Advisory Board must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue.

Please note – in this and subsequent sections, you should take any references to the DSL to mean “the DSL (or deputy DSL)”.

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

Make a referral to children's social care and/or the police **immediately** if you believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm or is in immediate danger. **Anyone can make a referral.**

Tell the DSL (see section 5.2) as soon as possible if you make a referral directly.

The following link to the GOV.UK webpage is for reporting child abuse to your local council:

<https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>

8.2 If a child makes a disclosure to you

If a child discloses a safeguarding issue to you, you should:

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset
- Tell the child they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not tell them they should have told you sooner
- Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not promise to keep it a secret
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible in the child's own words. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it
- Sign and date the statement and pass it on to the DSL. Alternatively, if appropriate, make a referral to children's social care and/or the police directly (see 7.1), and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so. Aside from these people, do not disclose the information to anyone else unless told to do so by a relevant authority involved in the safeguarding process

Bear in mind that some children may:

- Not feel ready, or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected
- Not recognise their experiences as harmful
- Feel embarrassed, humiliated or threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation and/or language barriers

None of this should stop you from having a 'professional curiosity' and speaking to the DSL if you have concerns about a child

8.3 If you discover that FGM has taken place, or a pupil is at risk of FGM

Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs".

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

Possible indicators that a pupil has already been subjected to FGM, and factors that suggest a pupil may be at risk, are set out in appendix 4 of this policy.

Any teacher who either:

- Is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or

- Observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth

Must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a mandatory statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it.

Unless they have been specifically told not to disclose, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate.

Any other member of staff who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **pupil under 18** must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine pupils.

Any member of staff who suspects a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out or discovers that a **pupil aged 18 or over** appears to have been a victim of FGM should speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

Leicester and Leicestershire procedures for reporting can be found on the following link: [Procedures \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)

8.4 If you have concerns about a child (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger)

Figure 1 below, before section 7.7, illustrates the procedure to follow if you have any concerns about a child's welfare.

Where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local authority children's social care. You can also seek advice at any time from the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000. Share details of any actions you take with the DSL as soon as practically possible.

Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' below). Share any action taken with the DSL as soon as possible.

Early help assessment

If an early assessment help is appropriate, the DSL will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. We will discuss and agree, with statutory safeguarding partners, levels for the different types of assessment, as part of local arrangements.

The DSL will keep the case under constant review and the school will consider a referral to local authority children's social care if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.

If an early assessment help is appropriate, the Family Support Worker, DDSL will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an interagency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an Early Help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. We will discuss and agree, with statutory safeguarding partners, levels for the different types of assessment, as part of local arrangements. The DSL will keep the case under constant review and the school will consider a referral to local authority children's social care if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed. Early Help

assessments are conducted by Rhea Sills, Family Welfare Officer, with the support of Leicester City Council's Early Help team.

Referral

If it is appropriate to refer the case to local authority children's social care or the police, the DSL will make the referral or support you to do so.

If you make a referral directly (see section 7.1), you must tell the DSL as soon as possible.

The local authority will decide within 1 working day of a referral about what course of action to take and will let the person who made the referral know the outcome. The DSL or person who made the referral must follow up with the local authority if this information is not made available, and ensure outcomes are properly recorded.

If the child's situation does not seem to be improving after the referral, the DSL or person who made the referral must follow local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the child's situation improves.

Referrals to social care are made through Leicester City Council's Children's Advice, Support and Prevention Team by calling 0116 454 1004. The duty social worker will take information from the DSL or deputy. A decision will be made whether or not to complete a multi-agency referral form (MARF). If a practitioner disagrees with how multi-agency working is conducted with regards to:

- Thresholds into services
- Outcomes of assessments
- Decision making
- Roles and responsibilities of workers
- Service provision
- Information sharing and communication

The practitioner will follow the procedure for resolving practitioner disagreements and escalation of concerns: [Resolving Practitioner Disagreements and Escalation of Concerns](#)

8.5 If you have concerns about extremism

If a child is not suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger, where possible speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or seek advice from local authority children's social care. Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' above). Inform the DSL or deputy as soon as practically possible after the referral.

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include [Channel](#), the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team.

The DfE also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which school staff and advisory board members can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a pupil. You can also email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk. Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.

In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger
- Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
- See or hear something that may be terrorist-related

8.6 If you have a concern about mental health

Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff will be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action by following the steps in section 7.4.

If you have a mental health concern that is **not** also a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL to agree a course of action.

Procedures for responding to concerns about mental health are aligned with DfE guidance [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#)

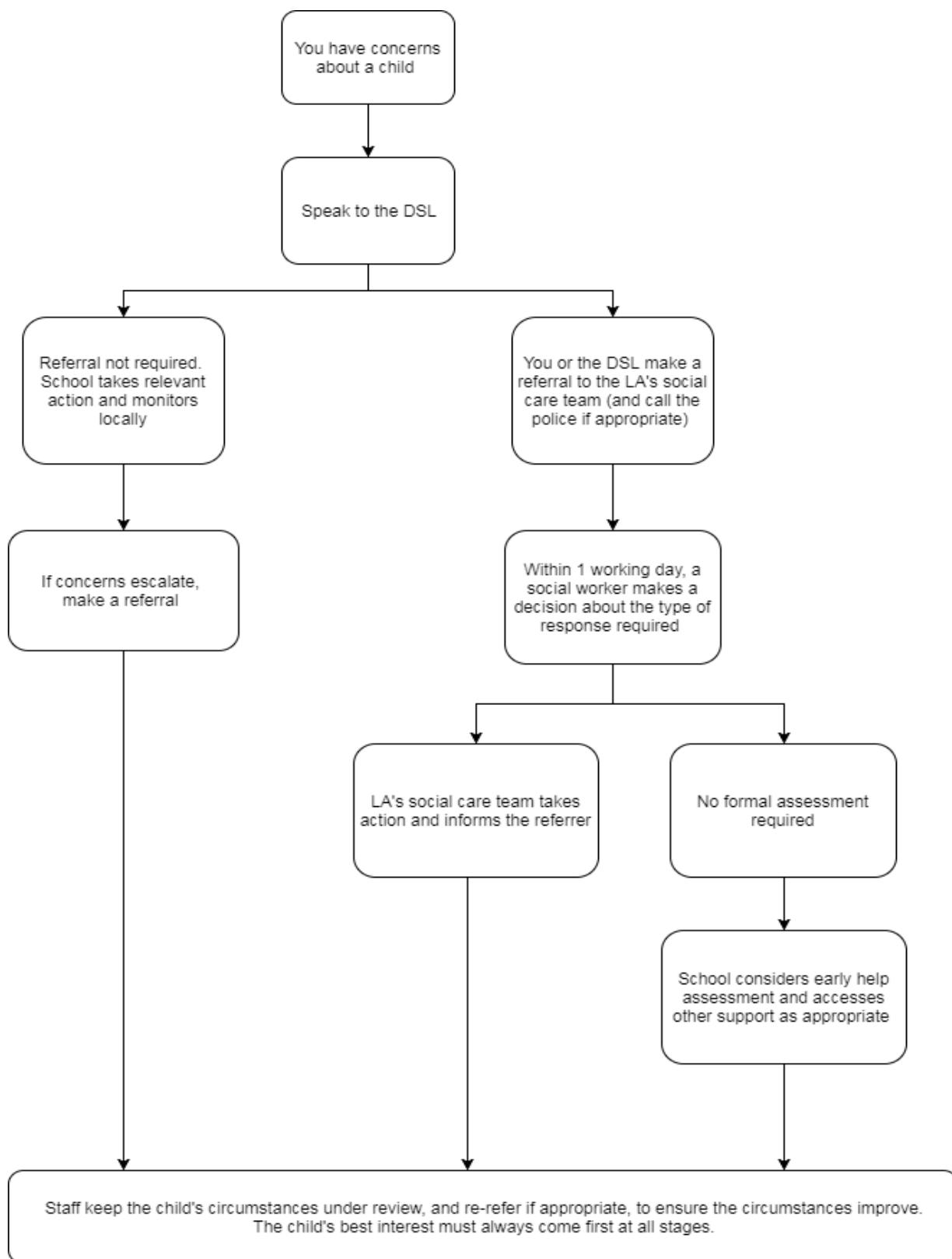
Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff will be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action by following the steps in section 7.4. If you have a mental health concern that is not also a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL to agree a course of action. Staff are regularly trained in how to identify mental health concerns. The school uses Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) to support children with mental health needs. All staff are able to make a referral to our ELSAs. The DSL is also trained as a mental health first aider. Mental health concerns are logged on CPOMS and reviewed at least weekly by the Wellbeing Team. Referrals for access to mental health services will be made by the SEMH Champion. If a practitioner disagrees with how multi-agency working is conducted with regards to:

- Thresholds into services
- Outcomes of assessments
- Decision making
- Roles and responsibilities of workers
- Service provision
- Information sharing and communication

The practitioner will follow the procedure for resolving practitioner disagreements and escalation of concerns: [Resolving Practitioner Disagreements and Escalation of Concerns](#)

Figure 1: procedure if you have concerns about a child's welfare (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger)

(Note – if the DSL is unavailable, this should not delay action. See section 7.4 for what to do.)



8.7 Concerns about a staff member, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor

If you have concerns about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor), or an allegation is made about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor) posing a risk of harm to children, speak to the headteacher as soon as possible. If the concerns/allegations are about the headteacher speak to the chair of trustees/advisory board.

The headteacher/chair of trustees/chair of local advisory board will then follow the procedures set out in appendix 3, if appropriate.

Where you believe there is a conflict of interest in reporting a concern or allegation about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor) to the headteacher report it directly to the local authority designated officer (LADO).

If you receive an allegation relating to an incident where an individual or organisation was using the school premises for running an activity for children, follow our school safeguarding policies and procedures, informing the LADO, as you would with any safeguarding allegation.

Where appropriate, the school will inform Ofsted of the allegation and actions taken, within the necessary timescale (see appendix 3 for more detail).

8.8 Allegations of abuse made against other pupils

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”, as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for pupils.

We also recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse. However, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our school’s behaviour policy, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put pupils in the school at risk
- Is violent
- Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes)

See appendix 4 for more information about child-on-child abuse.

Procedures for dealing with allegations of child-on-child abuse

If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil:

- You must record the allegation and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it
- The DSL will contact the local authority children’s social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed. This will include considering school transport as a potentially vulnerable place for a victim or alleged perpetrator(s)
-

- The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate

If the incident is a criminal offence and there are delays in the criminal process, the DSL will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required) while protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator. We will ask the police if we have any questions about the investigation.

- The DSL will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required) while protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator. We will ask the police if we have any questions about the investigation. When an allegation of child-on-child abuse is raised, it will be investigated by the DSL or deputy. During an investigation, the DSL or deputy investigating will record information in an objective timely manner on CPOMS. The person recording will record information, decisions and their rationale and actions.

We understand that an on-going investigation can be distressing for some children, and the school will use its resources, including ELSAs and Family Welfare Officer to support all families and children during and after an investigation

Creating a supportive environment in school and minimising the risk of child-on-child abuse

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents.

To achieve this, we will:

- Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images
- Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensure pupils are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems (as described in section 7.10 below)
- Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
- Be alerted to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with safeguarding partners
- Support children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. We will do all we can to make sure the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed
- Consider intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment
- Ensure staff are trained to understand:
- How to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports

- That even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”
- That if they have any concerns about a child’s welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
 - Children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to
 - A friend may make a report
 - A member of staff may overhear a conversation
 - A child’s behaviour might indicate that something is wrong
- That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation
- That a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
- The important role they have to play in preventing child-on-child abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it
- That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns
- That social media is likely to play a role in the fall-out from any incident or alleged incident, including for potential contact between the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and friends from either side

The DSL will take the lead role in any disciplining of the alleged perpetrator(s), where needed. We will provide support at the same time as taking any disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action can be taken while other investigations are going on, e.g., by the police. The fact that another body is investigating or has investigated an incident doesn’t (in itself) prevent our school from coming to its own conclusion about what happened and imposing a penalty accordingly. We will consider these matters on a case-by-case basis, taking into account whether:

- Taking action would prejudice an investigation and/or subsequent prosecution – we will liaise with the police and/or LA children’s social care to determine this
- There are circumstances that make it unreasonable or irrational for us to reach our own view about what happened while an independent investigation is ongoing

8.9 Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (‘sexting’)

Your responsibilities when responding to an incident

If you are made aware of an incident involving the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images/videos (also known as ‘sexting’ or ‘youth produced sexual imagery’), you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must **not**:

- View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a pupil to share or download it (if you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL)
- Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it
- Ask the pupil(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL’s responsibility)
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the pupil(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers
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- . Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved

You should explain that you need to report the incident and reassure the pupil(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

Initial review meeting

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff – this may include the staff member who reported the incident and the safeguarding or leadership team that deals with safeguarding concerns. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- . Whether there is an immediate risk to pupil(s)
- . If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children's social care
- . If it is necessary to view the image(s) in order to safeguard the young person (in most cases, images or videos should not be viewed)
- . What further information is required to decide on the best response
- . Whether the image(s) has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown)
- . Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images or videos from devices or online services
- . Any relevant facts about the pupils involved which would influence risk assessment
- . If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual
- . Whether to contact parents or carers of the pupils involved (in most cases parents/carers should be involved)

The DSL will make an immediate referral to police and/or children's social care if:

- . The incident involves an adult
- . There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to SEN)
- . What the DSL knows about the images or videos suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
- . The imagery involves sexual acts and any pupil in the images or videos is under 13
- . The DSL has reason to believe a pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming)

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with the headteacher and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care. The decision will be made and recorded in line with the procedures set out in this policy.

Further review by the DSL

If at the initial review stage, a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL will conduct a further review to establish the facts and assess the risks.

They will hold interviews with the pupils involved (if appropriate).

If at any point in the process there is a concern that a pupil has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

Informing parents/carers

The DSL will inform parents/carers at an early stage and keep them involved in the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the pupil at risk of harm.

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Referring to the police

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through dialling 101.

Recording incidents

All incidents of sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, and the decisions made in responding to them, will be recorded. The record-keeping arrangements set out in section 14 of this policy also apply to recording these incidents.

Curriculum coverage

Pupils are taught about the issues surrounding the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes as part of our relationships and sex education and computing programmes. Teaching covers the following in relation to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes:

- What it is
- How it is most likely to be encountered
- The consequences of requesting, forwarding or providing such images, including when it is and is not abusive and when it may be deemed as online sexual harassment
- Issues of legality
- The risk of damage to people's feelings and reputation

Pupils also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:

- Specific requests or pressure to provide (or forward) such images
- The receipt of such images

This policy on the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes is also shared with pupils so they are aware of the processes the school will follow in the event of an incident.

8.10 Reporting systems for our pupils

Where there is a safeguarding concern, we will take the child's wishes and feelings into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

We recognise the importance of ensuring pupils feel safe and comfortable to come forward and report any concerns and/or allegations.

To achieve this, we will:

- Put systems in place for pupils to confidently report abuse
- Ensure our reporting systems are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for pupils
- Make it clear to pupils that their concerns will be taken seriously, and that they can safely express their views and give feedback

Pupils can report concerns through a range of methods, including:

- Speaking directly to any trusted adult, DSL or Deputy DSL
- Using our worry boxes located in classrooms and key pupil areas
- Submitting a safeguarding concern via the online reporting button on the school website

These systems are promoted through assemblies, RSHE curriculum, posters in pupil areas, and safeguarding briefings. Pupils are reassured that all reports will be taken seriously and acted upon.

9. Online safety and the use of mobile technology

We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

To address this, Discovery aims to:

- Have robust processes in place (including filtering and monitoring) to ensure the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers and governors
- Protect and educate the whole school community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (which we refer to as 'mobile phones')
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole school community
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate

The 4 key categories of risk

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following categories of risk:

- **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as 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** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g., consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams

To meet our aims and address the risks above, we will:

- Educate pupils about online safety as part of our curriculum. For example:
 - The safe use of social media, the internet and technology
 - Keeping personal information private
 - How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
 - How to report any incidents of cyber-bullying, ensuring pupils are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than a victim
- Train staff, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying, the risks of online radicalisation, and their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring. All staff members will receive refresher training as required and at least once each academic year
- Educate parents/carers about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and during parents' evenings. We will also share clear procedures with them, so they know how to raise concerns about online safety

- Make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their mobile phone and cameras, for example that:
- Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use, but will limit such use to non-contact time when pupils are not present
- Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras
- Make all pupils, parents/carers, staff, volunteers, Trustees and advisory board members aware that they are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the internet in school, use of the school's ICT systems and use of their mobile and smart technology
- Explain the sanctions we will use if a pupil is in breach of our policies on the acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones
- Make sure all staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware that staff have the power to search pupils' phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation
- Put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems to limit children's exposure to the 4 key categories of risk (described above) from the school's IT systems.
- Carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks faced by our school community
- Provide regular safeguarding and children protection updates including online safety to all staff, at least annually, in order to continue to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard effectively
- Review the child protection and safeguarding policy, including online safety, annually and ensure the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly

This section summarises our approach to online safety and mobile phone use. For full details about our schools' policies in these areas, please refer to our online safety and mobile phone policies which can be found on our website: [School Policies – Mowmacre Hill](#).

10. Artificial intelligence (AI)

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini.

Mowmacre Hill Primary School recognises that AI has many uses, including enhancing teaching and learning, and in helping to protect and safeguard pupils. However, AI may also have the potential to facilitate abuse (e.g. bullying and grooming) and/or expose pupils to harmful content. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

Mowmacre Hill Primary School will treat any use of AI to access harmful content or bully pupils in line with this policy and our behaviour policy.

Staff must carry out an **AI-specific risk assessment** before introducing any new AI tool in the school, ensuring risks are considered against the DfE's **Filtering and Monitoring Standards**. The DSL will monitor AI-related concerns logged on CPOMS, ensuring that misuse is managed consistently with other safeguarding concerns.

Our school's requirements for filtering and monitoring also apply to the use of AI, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

11. Notifying parents and carers

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with the child's parents or carers. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure.

Other staff will only talk to parents or carers about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL.

If we believe that notifying the parents or carers would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the local authority children's social care team before doing so.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents or carers of all the children involved. We will think carefully about what information we provide about the other child involved, and when. We will work with the police and/or local authority children's social care to make sure our approach to information sharing is consistent.

The DSL will, along with any relevant agencies (this will be decided on a case-by-case basis):

- Meet with the victim's parents or carers, with the victim, to discuss what's being put in place to safeguard them, and understand their wishes in terms of what support they may need and how the report will be progressed
- Meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss support for them, and what's being put in place that will impact them, e.g., moving them out of classes with the victim, and the reason(s) behind any decision(s)

12. Pupils with special educational needs, disabilities, or health issues

We recognise that pupils with SEND, or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and are 3 times more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration
- Pupils being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other pupils
- The potential for pupils with SEN, disabilities or certain health conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges

We offer extra pastoral support for these pupils. This includes:

Any abuse involving pupils with SEND will require close liaison with the DSL (or deputy) and the SENCO).

13. Pupils with a social worker

Pupils may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. We recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

The DSL and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

Where we are aware that a pupil has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the pupil's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. For example, it will inform decisions about:

- Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks
- The provision of pastoral and/or academic support

14. Looked-after and previously looked-after children

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

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

We have appointed a designated teacher, Donna Wilson, SENDCO, who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children and previously looked-after children in line with statutory guidance.

The designated teacher is appropriately trained and has the relevant qualifications and experience to perform the role.

As part of their role, the designated teacher will:

- Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- Work with virtual school heads to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including discussing how pupil premium plus funding can be best used to support looked-after children and meet the needs identified in their personal education plans

15. Pupils who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning

We recognise that pupils who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning (LGBTQ+) can be targeted by other children. (See our behaviour policy for more detail on how we prevent bullying based on gender or sexuality.)

We also recognise that LGBTQ+ children are more likely to experience poor mental health. Any concerns should be reported to the DSL. LGBTQ+ children will be supported through the school's mental health support, which includes access to mental health first aiders or possibly ELSAs.

When families/carers are making decisions about support for gender questioning pupils, they should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice. This should be done as early as possible when supporting pre-pubertal children.

When supporting a gender questioning pupil, we will take a cautious approach as there are still unknowns around the impact of social transition, and a pupil may have wider vulnerability, such as complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases, autism and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

We will also consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with their parents/carers (other than in rare circumstances where involving parents/carers would constitute a

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significant risk of harm to the pupil). We will also include any clinical advice that is available and consider how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying.

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

16. Complaints

16.1 Complaints against colleagues

Complaints against staff that are likely to require a child protection investigation will be handled in accordance with our procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against staff (see appendix 3).

16.2 Other complaints

Complaints which have a safeguarding element, e.g. related to pupils or premises, will be investigated in line with the school's safeguarding procedures. Any necessary actions or risk assessments will be put in place and monitored by the DSL.

Elements of the complaint which are not related to safeguarding will be handled under the school's complaints policy: [School Policies – Mowmacre Hill](#).

16.3 Whistleblowing

Our whistle-blowing policy that covers concerns regarding the way the school safeguards pupils – including poor or unsafe practice, or potential failures – can be found here: [School Policies – Mowmacre Hill](#).

17. Record keeping

We will hold records in line with our records retention schedule.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL. Records will include:

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

Concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate child protection file for each child.

Any non-confidential records will be readily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

Safeguarding records relating to individual children will be retained for a reasonable period of time after they have left the school.

If a child for whom the school has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that their child protection file is forwarded as soon as possible, securely, and separately from the main pupil file.

To allow the new school/college to have support in place when the child arrives, this should be within:

- **5 days** for an in-year transfer, or within
- **The first 5 days** of the start of a new term

In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child.

In addition to the storing of any safeguarding issues:

- All records are electronically stored on CPOMS
- These records are secure and can only be accessed by appropriate colleagues with the correct permissions
- Files will only be accessed when needed

The school may be required in specific situations, to share information with one or more of the three safeguarding partners. On these occasions any information shared will be done confidentially and securely using password protected documents.

In addition:

- Appendix 2 sets out our policy on record-keeping specifically with respect to recruitment and pre-appointment checks
- Appendix 3 sets out our policy on record-keeping with respect to allegations of abuse made against staff

18. Training

18.1 All staff

All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistle-blowing procedures and online safety, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect.

This training will be regularly updated and will:

- Be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole-school safeguarding approach and wider staff training, and curriculum planning
- Be in line with advice from the 3 safeguarding partners
- Include online safety, including an understanding of the expectations, roles and responsibilities for staff around filtering and monitoring
- Have regard to the Teachers' Standards to support the expectation that all teachers:
- Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe environment
- Have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils

All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.

Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including online safety, as required but at least annually (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings).

Contractors who are provided through a private finance initiative (PFI) or similar contract will also receive safeguarding training.

Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

18.2 The DSL and deputies

The DSL and deputies will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years. In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments).

They will also undertake Prevent awareness training.

18.3 Board Members

All Board members receive training about safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) at induction, which is regularly updated. This is to make sure that they:

- Have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities, such as providing strategic challenge
- Can be assured that safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support the school to deliver a robust whole-school approach to safeguarding

As the chair of the Advisory Board, the chair will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, they receive training in managing allegations for this purpose.

18.4 Recruitment – interview panels

At least 1 person conducting any interview for any post at the school will have undertaken safer recruitment training. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

See appendix 2 of this policy for more information about our safer recruitment procedures.

Early years providers:

18.5 Staff who have contact with pupils and families

All staff who have contact with children and families will have supervisions which will provide them with support, coaching and training, promote the interests of children and allow for confidential discussions of sensitive issues.

19. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by [DSL name/job role] and approved by the full Advisory Board. In addition, safeguarding practice will be quality-assured through termly DSL supervision, annual self-audits, peer safeguarding reviews, and trust-wide monitoring visits. Outcomes from these processes will be reported to the Board of Trustees to demonstrate impact.

20. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Health and safety
- Attendance
- Online safety
- Mobile phone use
- Equality
- Relationships and sex education
- First aid
- Curriculum
- Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Privacy notices
- Safer recruitment
- Whistleblowing
- IT acceptable use
- Anti Bullying
- AI Guidance
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) Policy

Appendix 1 – Types of abuse

Abuse, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by 1 definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

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

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse 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
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve:

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- 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 caregivers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

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

Appendix 2 – Recruitment and Selection Policy



Recruitment and Selection Policy

All organisations employing adults to work with children and young people must have a consistent and thorough process of safer recruitment to ensure those recruited to undertake this work are suitable.

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Version	Version Date	Author	Summary of Changes
V1.0	June 2020	Director of Operations	New Policy – LTS updated
V1.1		Director of Operations	Updated flowchart – appendix 1
V1.2	June 2021	Director of Operations	Reordered section 5.4 in line with process changes.
V2.0	June 2021	Director of Operations	Added section 3.4 personal relationships
V2.1	July 2022	Director of Operations	Full Review of policy. Updated in line with new KCSIE (September 2022) and LTS template Policy 2021.
V2.2	August 2023	HR Manager	Full Review of policy Section 3 – changed to personal connections. Section 4 – New section recognising a collaborative approach to vacancies across the Trust. Section 5 – formatting change Section 5.4 – additional wording ‘Where a role is identified as harder to fill and/or is at great competition in the market, shortlisting should take place as and when candidates who meet the criteria submit their application. The relevant wording should be included in the advertisement so that candidates are aware’ Section 5.4 – removed online searches – included as its own section later in the policy. Section 5.7 was previously missing, new details added. Section 7 – amended to reflect SAMpeople, and additional wording added around the need for all efforts to be made to obtain pre-employment checks and it could delay start dates without the right checks in place. New Section 8 added detailing DBS checks New Section 9 added detailing Reference checks New Section 10 added detailing Right to Work checks New Section 11 added detailing Overseas checks New Section 12 added detailing ID Verification checks New Section 13 added detailing Prohibition to Teach checks New Section 14 added detailing Section 128 checks New Section 15 added detailing Health checks New Section 16 added detailing Qualification checks New Section 17 added detailing Online Search checks Updated flow charts to reflect SAMpeople

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support Discovery Schools Trust referred hereafter as Trust, in adopting appropriate mechanisms for safer recruitment and selection processes and to set out best practice for the organisation, taking account of relevant legislation, the requirements of regulatory inspections (i.e. Ofsted) and the Trusts commitment to Equality and Diversity and safer recruitment.

Having a Recruitment and Selection Policy also ensures potential candidates applying for vacant posts are given the right message about the Trust's commitment to recruiting suitable people.

Potential employees and existing employees must be properly examined for competency, experience, qualifications, and appropriate attitudes in relation to work with vulnerable groups.

For the purposes of this policy the Trust, Workplace and Schools will be referred to as "schools", and Head Teacher/Senior Leader will be referred to as "Head Teacher" throughout the document.

22. Equal Opportunities

Everyone involved in recruitment and selection processes must be mindful of the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that anyone wishing to apply for a position within the organisation has an equal opportunity to do so.

2.1 Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments must be put in place for any candidate who has identified that they have a disability and require adjustments to be made to enable them to fully participate in the process. The candidate should be consulted with well in advance of any adjustments required/made, these may include (but are not limited to):

- Ensuring access to the building and all relevant rooms is accessible, for example ramps are put in place.
- providing a skills test printed in large font;
- providing additional time to complete a test or prepare a presentation.

2.2 Criminal Convictions

Having a criminal record does not automatically prevent a person from being employed within the Trust and applicants should not be treated unfairly if they have a previous conviction. Whilst a criminal record cannot be disregarded, the workplace location must seek advice to ensure a fair and consistent approach when considering an applicant's suitability for the role they are applying for.

23. Personal Connections

Any known personal connection to a current employee, Trustee or local Advisory Board member must be declared by the applicant at the time of application. Applicants must be made aware of this requirement at the outset of the process and failure to comply with this requirement, if subsequently identified, could result in immediate dismissal. Such employees must then not be involved in:

- the recruitment processes;
- providing a reference or acting as a referee for that person where possible;
- making decisions relating to pay in respect of that individual;
- making decisions related to or the management of the employee's performance;
- any conduct issues that arise that may involve the employee.

The recruitment panel should also check the application forms as candidates must also declare whether they have a personal connection with any current members of staff.

24. Recruitment – A Collaborative Approach

Our recruitment policy prioritises a collaborative approach when individual schools within the Trust have similar vacancies. We firmly believe in the strength of unity and cooperation across our schools. To ensure a seamless and efficient recruitment process, we may advertise roles for the Trust without specifying a specific school location.

This collaborative approach will allow us to identify and attract the most qualified and diverse candidates, while also ensuring consistency in our selection criteria and candidate evaluation. By working together as a Trust, we harness the collective expertise of our schools to make informed and equitable hiring decisions that benefit not only the individual school but also the other recruitment mission of our Trust.

25. The Recruitment Process

A flowchart is provided in [Appendix 1](#) which outlines the process.

4.1 STEP 1: Review the vacancy.

Recruitment takes place either because of an existing post becoming vacant or the creation of a new post owing to changing organisational needs. **The workplace seeking to fill one of these roles must first get approval using the Trust Business Case form.**

It is good practice to consider the following points:

- Is this a new post or an existing post?
- If an existing post, is this post still required?
- Can the school afford to recruit to the post within both current and future budgets?
- Has a business case to recruit been completed?
- Are the working hours/times/grade of the post still appropriate;
- Is there an up-to-date Job Description and Person Specification (see below);
- Is recruitment to a permanent/fixed term/full time/part time position?
- Do you require supply cover in place whilst recruiting to a permanent position;

4.2 STEP 2: Prepare a Recruitment Plan

The Office Manager / Recruiting Manager needs to ensure there is a realistic timetable is prepared for the recruitment process and includes time to:

- a) Agree a “Recruitment Panel”, comprising of at least two panel members. At least one panel member **must** have received Safer Recruitment training.
- b) Create/review the job description & person specification to ensure they are both fit for purpose.
- c) If a new post, does this need to be evaluated to check the grade (for a non-teaching post).
- d) Prepare the job advertisement (part salaries should be clearly stated on the advert)
- e) Prepare any additional recruitment literature that will be sent out to applicants, i.e. the Job Pack
- f) Diary dates set aside for any potential informal visits to the school/workplace.
- g) Agree dates for:
 1. When the advert will be published and the duration of the advertising period.
 2. Closing date for the advert.
 3. Shortlisting meeting.
 4. Inviting candidates to interview.
 5. Applying for employment references.
 6. The selection/interview days i.e. venue, candidate activities, panel questions;
 7. Start date for successful applicant.

NB. All members of the panel should participate in every stage of the recruitment process.

4.3 STEP 3: Advertising the Job

When compiling the Job Advert for HR to advertise on behalf of the school, the following should be included:

- a) A message about the culture of the school and the type of person needed for the role.
- b) Details of the key knowledge and skills required to undertake the role AND the safeguarding responsibilities of the post as per the job description and personal specification.
- c) A strap line outlining the school’s commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people making it clear that safeguarding checks will be taken, for example:

“This school is committed to Safeguarding Children and Young People.”

- d) A statement that the post holder will be subject to a DBS Disclosure check, for example:

“As this post is required to work in ‘Regulated Activity’ an enhanced DBS with a Barred list check is essential”.

- e) For roles designated as “Regulated Activity” it is essential that the information sent to candidates makes it clear that references will be sought in advance of the interview.

- f) Whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974.
- g) The closing date by which all completed applications should be submitted via the My New Term (MNT) portal.

The advert should be placed in such a way that the best range of prospective candidates can access it which best reflects the community that the school serves. Below are several options of where the Office Manager / Recruiting Manager can advertise their vacancy:

- My New Term (MNT);
- School's own website (API Link);
- Eteach/TES (in extenuating circumstances – as agreed with the HR Manager);
- Local press;
- LCC Website – contact ESC helpdesk for further details;
- Job Centre Plus – further information is available on the Job centre plus website;
- Social media.
- If advertising posts for overseas workers, additional rules apply in terms of the recruitment process and advertising the role. Check with HR if considering employing individuals from overseas.

4.4 STEP 4: Shortlisting

As soon as possible after the closing date, each member of the recruitment panel should receive a shortlisting pack (via the agreed method) which should include a copy of all the application forms (MNT - Part 1 – information for shortlisting and interviewing), a job description and personnel specification and the shortlisting grid in order to carry out the shortlisting exercise. Where a role is identified as harder to fill and/or is at great competition in the market, shortlisting should take place as and when candidates who meet the criteria submit their application. The relevant wording should be included in the advertisement so that candidates are aware.

All members of the panel should:

- a) Take part in the shortlisting process.
- b) Complete a separate shortlisting grid for each individual candidate. This promotes fairness and consistency whilst also providing an audit trail
- c) Check whether any gaps in employment history have a reasonable and acceptable explanation (see Safer Recruitment Requirements in the associated guidance document).
- d) Check that any additional information sent with the application is not considered as part of this process, unless this information was expressly requested by the recruitment panel, i.e a supporting letter outlining the individual's suitability for the role.
- e) Ensure that all essential criteria (to be assessed by the application form) have been satisfied. Where this is not the case, the applicant may not be shortlisted.
- f) Ensure all notes from the shortlisting process are stored in line with retention criteria.

Declaration of Criminal Conviction(s):

- Applicants will no longer be asked about any criminal record at the point of application. This check will be carried out once short-listing has taken place and the candidate invited to interview via the MNT portal.
- The Criminal Records Self-Disclosure form will become live once the candidate has accepted the invite and they will be asked to complete the form online. Where an applicant declares they have a criminal conviction, the form should be available for the Chair of the panel, who will consider the content at the end of the interview process.
- Following the interview, where the preferred candidate has declared a criminal conviction(s), the Chair will inform the panel. If the panel decide that the conviction(s) is relevant, further information should be sought from the candidate at the end of the interview and before an offer of employment is made.
- The Criminal Records Self-Disclosure form will need a hard copy signature even if it has been signed electronically through MNT.

4.5 STEP 5: Invitation to Interview

Following the shortlisting process, arrangements should be made to contact those individuals shortlisted, inviting them for interview. The MNT portal allows letters to be generated through the system and provides templates for this purpose. This letter should detail the following:

- a) That the applicant has been selected to attend a recruitment process.
- b) The location, date and times of the interview.
- c) Outline the interview process, detailing any tests or assessments the candidates will be required to undertake.
- d) The requirement to bring relevant identification documentation to the interview day, such as DBS disclosures where available, proof of qualifications, proof of identity. Only originals of the required documentation can be accepted.
- e) The requirement to provide original documents verifying any qualifications essential for the job.
- f) The requirement to complete a Criminal Records Self-Disclosure form.

If a candidate advises that they are unable to attend for interview on the date specified, the panel has discretion to reschedule their interview date, however, the interview panel **must** remain the same.

4.6 STEP 6: Interview Preparation

It is essential for the recruitment panel to meet prior to the interviews to agree the format of the interview process. The panel must decide.

- What tasks or activities they will ask the candidates to perform, i.e. in tray exercises, presentations or teaching a class.
- Which questions to ask – all questions should be agreed in advance, and these should include a safeguarding question and a question on equal opportunities.
- Agreement should be made on how the panel will explore any gaps in employment history and any other concerns identified during shortlisting process.

It is important that the methods used to test candidates are appropriate and proportionate to the duties of the role they are applying for and designed in such a way that the candidate is able to demonstrate their suitability for the role.

The chair of the panel is responsible for ensuring that arrangements are made for the smooth running of the interview process, including:

- All relevant documentation is prepared and distributed to panel members prior to interview.
- The suitability of the venue - taking into consideration any additional or special requirements such as access or any additional adjustments requested by the candidates.
- Any car parking spaces, refreshments etc. are arranged.
- Arranging the checking of the candidate's identity documents.
- Arranging checking and copying of any additional documentation required at interview.
- Ensuring the interview timetable allows sufficient time between interviews for overruns, breaks and panel discussion.

4.7 STEP 7: The Interview

The format, style and duration of the interviews are matters for the Head teacher/Director and recruiting manager to decide but the following should be adhered to:

- Briefing: All candidates will be given relevant information about the school/central department to enable the candidate to make further enquiries about the advertised job.
- A face-to-face interview takes place prior to any appointment. Before the interviews the selection panel will agree on the line of questioning to be followed and will ensure that similar questions are put to each candidate.
- Interviews should assess the merits of each candidate against the requirements in the person specification and the job description. Interviews must also explore each individual's suitability to work with children by assessing attitudes and behaviours.
- No questions should be asked which would discriminate directly or indirectly on grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, religious belief, disability or age.
- The interview will also deal with the issues of child protection with each candidate.

Before the interviews the recruitment manager/Head teacher/Department lead will decide a procedure for evaluating the candidates at the end of the interviews. The notes taken and documentation used in this evaluation process will form part of the formal record of why candidates were or were not selected and will be retained for six months; after that time they will be destroyed.

Before the interviews the recruitment manager/Head teacher/Department lead will decide the structure of the interview, determining which area each interviewer will cover and the approximate time allocation.

A robust selection process should not rely solely on the interview. A range of selection activities should be designed in order to help assess who is the most suitable candidate for the job as the interview alone may not sufficiently demonstrate the skills, values, behaviours, knowledge and abilities. For teachers and teaching support roles, it is legitimate to involve pupils in the process. Pupils should not take part in assessing candidate suitability but can contribute to the panel's assessment of the ability to interact with children.

4.8 STEP 8: Decision Making – Appointing the Preferred Candidate

All aspects of the selection process should be considered when making decisions to appoint a new employee, the successful candidate should have:

- Met all the essential criteria on the job description.
- The highest aggregated score, taking into account their scores for any additional tasks that they have been asked to complete as part of the selection process.

It is also helpful for the panel to decide on a reserve candidate in case the first candidate declines the job offer.

4.9 STEP 9: Informing the Successful Applicant

The chair of the panel should contact the successful candidate within 5 working days to advise them of their appointment.

A **conditional** offer should be made to the successful candidate, and it should be explained that the post is not confirmed until all of the pre-employment checks are satisfactorily completed, these include:

- a) A check to ensure the candidate has the Right to Work in the UK.
- b) A satisfactory outcome of the medical questionnaire.
- c) A satisfactory DBS with a barred list check (where appropriate – see [appendix 2](#));
- d) **Two satisfactory written references.** The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. References should always be obtained and scrutinised and any concerns resolved satisfactorily before the appointment is confirmed.

It is good practice that all the other candidates be informed they have been unsuccessful and offered the opportunity to obtain feedback on their application or performance at interview. It is best practice to speak to unsuccessful applicants in person, usually via a phone call, but if the chair of the panel has been unable to reach a candidate, they should receive a written outcome stating that they have been unsuccessful.

26. Recruitment Documentation Retention, Recording and Sharing Information.

Interview notes for all candidates (both successful and unsuccessful) must be retained for a period of 6 months in case they are required in connection with an Employment Tribunal claim or have been requested by a candidate under the Data Protection Act. After this stage the documents for unsuccessful candidates must be destroyed.

Confidentiality will be maintained in relation to the information obtained during the process and about the selection process itself.

27. Pre-employment Checks

Pre-employment checks are an essential aspect of the recruitment process and should be conducted on both newly appointed employees **and** internal candidates (including those who have **TUPE transferred** into the organisation) prior to commencement in post. All checks undertaken must be accurately recorded on **SAMpeople**. Any paperwork received as part of the checks that is photocopied will need to be verified as a true copy of the original, the person verify the photocopied document against the original will need to print name, sign and date.

All efforts must be made to obtain all pre-employment checks prior to the commencement of employment particularly in relation to references, online checks and DBS checks. Where this is not

possible, appointments should be delayed until satisfactory checks are received, or arrangements made for supervision of the employee until such time that they are received. A written record should be made and retained when a decision is taken to allow an individual to commence employment where a DBS check has been requested but remains outstanding (following a risk assessment).

In addition, and importantly, details of all checks undertaken should also be recorded on the School's **Single Central Record**.

For agency and third-party supply staff, schools must also include on their single central record that written confirmation has been received from the agency/business supplying the individual that they have carried out relevant checks, obtained the appropriate certificates, the dates that confirmation was received and whether any enhanced DBS certificate check has been provided in respect of the individual.

28. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

DBS Disclosures provide details of a person's criminal record including convictions, cautions, reprimands, and warnings held on the Police National Computer.

DBS Disclosures should be sought for staff who are employed by the Trust and volunteers who undertake 'regulated activity' (i.e., regularly teach, train, instruct, care for, or supervise children which is unsupervised).

Online DBS applications should be completed by all successful applicants who require a DBS check.

Volunteers and casual workers will be encouraged to engage with the DBS applicant update service.

It is a requirement of the Department for Education that all School Advisory Board Members will require a DBS check including barred lists. Individual schools are responsible for carrying out these checks.

A positive disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service is a certificate that shows cautions, warnings, or convictions. It may show spent convictions and unspent convictions, and for Enhanced checks, it will also show other information that a policy force deems relevant to disclose based on the nature of the job that the individual will be employed to do.

Before a decision is reached on whether to offer or confirm employment to an individual, the individual should be offered the opportunity to discuss the contents of the disclosure with a relevant senior person. A balanced decision to appoint should be based on:

- Whether they are barred from appointment.
- Whether the conviction is relevant to the position.
- The circumstances surrounding the offence, and any explanations provided by the applicant.
- The seriousness of the offence.
- The length of time since the offence occurred.
- Whether there is a pattern of the offending behaviour, or whether it was a one-off.
- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed.

Further discussions should take place based on the following:

- Whether the applicant disclosed the convictions, cautions, warnings or reprimands at application or at interview stage.
- What level of supervision the post-holder will receive
- Whether the post involves responsibility for finance or items of value
- Whether the nature of the role allows the applicant to potentially re-offend.

The Head Teacher / Director of the Central Team will make the overall decision about whether to employ the person. All positive disclosures must be discussed with HR. Disclosures which raise child protection issues must be discussed with the Trust's designated Head of Safeguarding. Where a decision to appoint is taken the information will be recorded and be stored on the person's file.

If an applicant has made a false declaration on the application form, or anywhere else about convictions and cautions (or lack of them), they may render the offer of a contract of employment void.

29. References

In line with Safer Recruitment practices, references must be taken up after shortlisting, for all candidates called to interview, using the Applicant Tracking System. The job description and person specification need to be enclosed with the reference proforma.

All applicants are expected to provide the details of two referees, one of which should be their current or most recent employer. Where they are currently not working with children, but have done in the past, one reference must be from the employer by whom they were most recently employed to work with children.

References from relatives or people writing solely in the capacity of friends must not be accepted.

It is strongly advisable not to rely on testimonials or open references. On receipt of references the author should be telephoned to ensure authenticity of the reference and this should be logged.

On receipt of these reference any anomalies or areas that are vague should be thoroughly investigated further. Where necessary, clarification should be sought by telephone and referees asked to confirm in writing any key extra information provided. A written record of any telephone conversations must be kept on file.

Any information about past disciplinary action, allegations, or concerns (including those with child protection connotations) should be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Where there is a history of repeated concerns or allegations, it is strongly advised that you contact HR for advice.

30. Right to Work Checks

All new appointees are required to provide evidence of the Right to Work in the UK. An offer of employment cannot be confirmed until the original documents have been verified. Under the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 it is a criminal offence to employ anyone who is not entitled to live or work in the UK.

Documents to establish someone's entitlement to work must be evidence from List A (not subject to immigration control/no restrictions on right to stay) or List B (granted leave for a limited period and/or restrictions on Right to Work).

Comprehensive advice on checking documentation can be obtained via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/legal-right-work-uk>

An online Right to Work check should be undertaken where a candidate can apply a share code to obtain the information. A copy of the check should be retained on file and the expiry date of leave to remain dates recorded and diarised for follow up checks to be done.

31. Overseas Checks

Newly appointed staff that have lived or worked outside the United Kingdom must undergo the same checks as all other staff. This includes a DBS Disclosure. Applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK for a minimum of 12 months, in the past 10 years, will need to provide Criminal Convictions Clearance from the country or countries they were residing in, because the DBS cannot generally trace individuals abroad.

If the Trust recruits an individual from overseas, or an individual who has lived or worked aboard in recent years prior to appointment, and needs to check their overseas criminal record, a DBS check may not provide a complete picture of the criminal record. The applicant must contact the relevant Embassy to obtain a disclosure which should have been obtained prior to their departure from the country or not be dated more than 6 months ago at the time of receipt.

There are different rules for each country and this information is available on the Government website.

32. Verification of Identity

The School / Central Team must confirm the applicant's identity to determine that the identify is genuine, and the individual is rightfully using that identify. Proof of identification should include name, date of birth, address and photographic identify. Documents that can be evidenced include:

- A current photographic driving licence or passport
- A full birth certificate.
- Utility bill or financial statement that shows the candidates current name and address (not more than 3 months old)
- Change of name documentation (if applicable).

33. Prohibition to Teach Checks

Teacher prohibition and interim prohibition orders prevent a person from carrying out teaching work as defined in the Teachers' Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012 in schools. A person who is prohibited must not be appointed to a role that involves teaching work as defined by the regulations. A check must be completed against a DfE list: [DfE Sign-in \(education.gov.uk\)](https://www.education.gov.uk)

34. Section 128 Checks

A section 128 direction prohibits or restricts an unsuitable individual from participating in the management of an independent school, including academies and free schools. An individual who is subject to a section 128 direction is unable to:

- Take up a management position within the Trust.
- Be a trustee of the academy.
- Be an Advisory Board Member.
- A fit and proper declaration must be completed for those in management positions.

35. Health Checks

Anybody appointed to a post that involves regular contact with children should have the appropriate health and physical capacity to undertake the duties of that post.

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits all those in the recruitment process from:

- Asking applicants questions relating to their health, attendance record and disability. Asking referees to comment on an applicant's health, attendance, or disability.
- Asking an applicant to complete a pre-employment medical questionnaire prior to having made the applicant a conditional offer of employment.

Once a candidate has been made a conditional offer of employment, the Trust must ensure that candidates complete a medical screening form. Where appropriate, the applicant will be referred to Occupational Health to seek advice.

Where the applicant has a disability the Head Teacher or Director must consider whether there are any reasonable adjustments that can be made to enable the applicant to perform the role and should put these in place.

No employee may start work until medical clearance has been received.

36. Qualifications

Qualifications must be evidence when they are an essential requirement for the post. A copy of the documentation should be retained on the person's record.

37. Social Media Checks

In line with KCSIE 2022 safer recruitment recommendations, the Trust should consider carrying out an online search as part of our due diligence on shortlisted candidates, as part of the shortlisting process. The information should be publicly available online and explored further at interview if necessary.

The Office Manager / HR are responsible for completing the online checks and should record their observations as with all other employment checks. The records should contain information, in a fair and transparent way with no judgement made. Interview notes should include details of any related conversations at interview.

Job advert, job description and application form wording are amended to inform candidates that a check will be made, allowing them to declare any incidents or events in advance of the interview.

There should be consistency in the range of what is searched for, for each shortlisted candidate.

38. Single Central Record

As part of an Ofsted inspection, inspectors will need to view the school or Trust's single central record of recruitment checks. It is therefore important that such a record is kept and maintained.

The single central record must cover the following people:

- All staff (including supply staff whether employed directly or through an agency) who work at the school.
- All other staff who work in regular contact with children in school, including volunteers.
- All members of the Trust Board and Advisory Board

The record must indicate whether the following checks have been completed:

- Identify
- References
- Qualifications legally required to undertake the role (i.e. Teaching Qualifications)
- Right to Work in the UK
- Enhanced DBS
- Barring Lists
- Overseas checks where appropriate

The record should also indicate the date on which each check was completed, or the relevant certificate obtained and who carried out the check.

The responsibility for maintaining the single central record for each school rests with the Head Teacher (responsibility for the Trust Central Team rests with the HR Department). The single central record will be kept and maintained on SAMpeople.

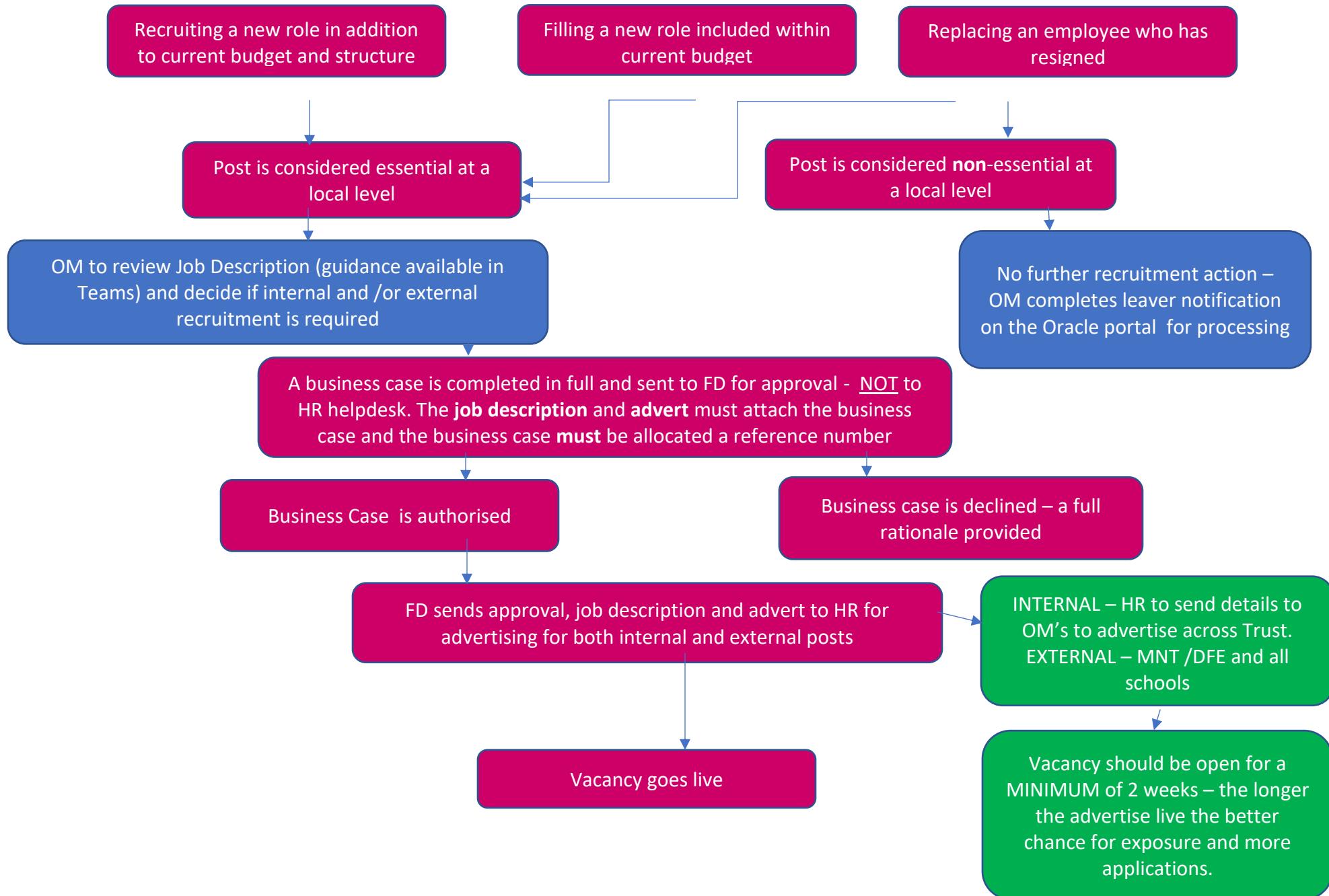
39. Transfer of undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE)

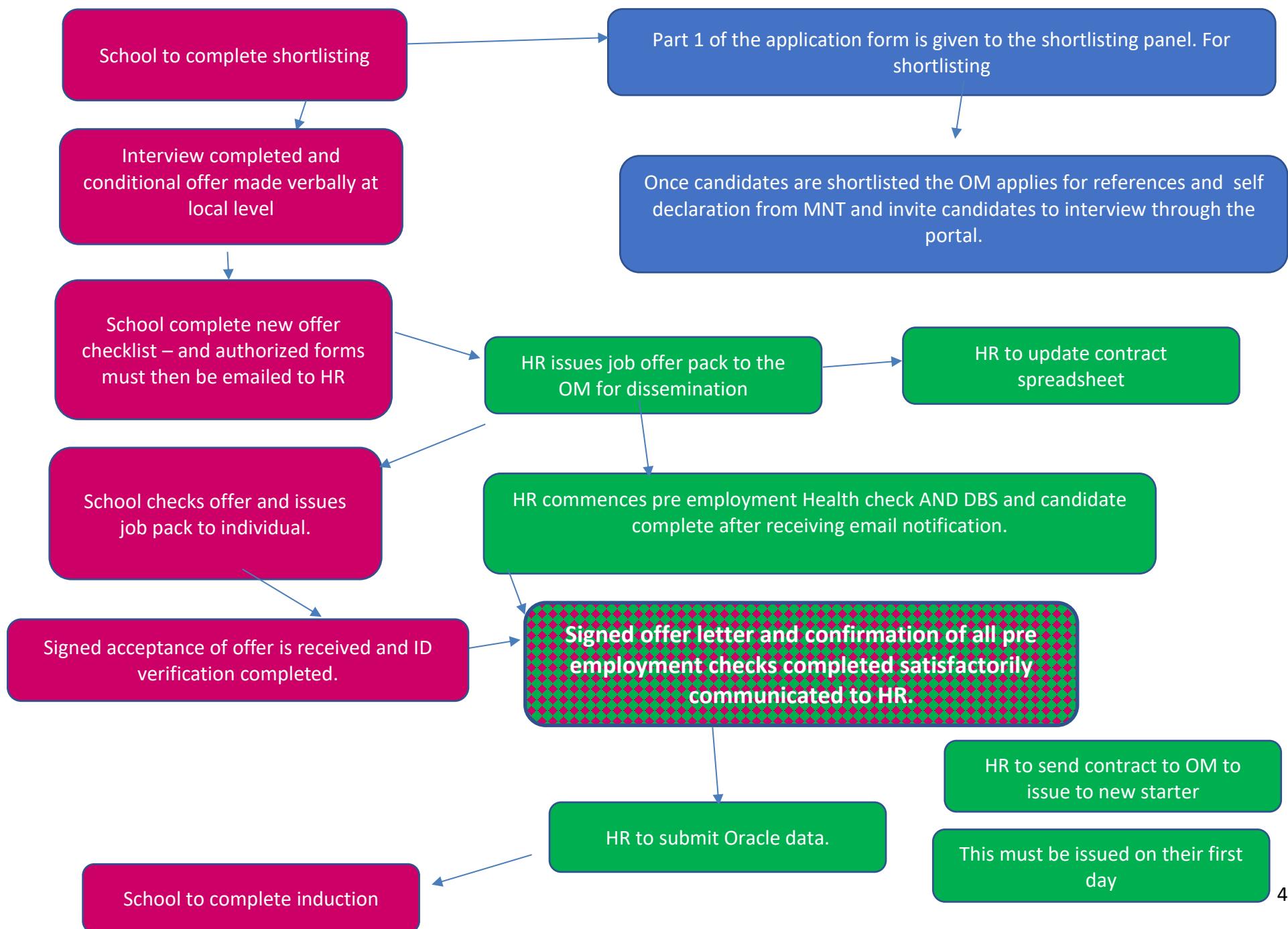
Employees, who are TUPE, transferred into the school, or from a school to academy or from an academy to Multi Academy Trust, must have their documentation checked within 60 days of the transfer. Head teachers should follow the required checking process set out in the associated guidance.

Schools should be aware that sponsor licenses are non-transferable from one employer to another under TUPE Regulations. In such circumstances the school must make an application for either a sponsor license or to extend the existing sponsor license. An application must be made with 20 working days of the move taking place.

If the school does not make a valid application to become a sponsor within 20 working days or does make an application, but this is refused, all of the migrants who have transferred, except those that can be sponsored under any existing licences, will have their leave, or worker authorisation shortened to 60 calendar days.

Recruitment Process Flowchart





Appendix 3 – Allegations against staff (including low-level concerns) policy

Section 1: allegations that may meet the harms threshold

This section is based on ‘Section 1: Allegations that may meet the harms threshold’ in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place both inside and outside of school

If we’re in any doubt as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold, we will consult our local authority designated officer (LADO).

We will deal with any allegation of abuse quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A ‘case manager’ will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of the Advisory Board where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation. The case manager will be identified at the earliest opportunity.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

If we receive an allegation of an incident happening while an individual or organisation was using the school premises to run activities for children, we will follow our safeguarding policies and procedures and inform our LADO.

Suspension of the accused until the case is resolved

Suspension of the accused will not be the default position and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that there might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- Redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned
- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children
- Redeploying the individual to alternative work in the school so that they do not have unsupervised access to children
- Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents/carers have been consulted
- Temporarily redeploying the individual to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school or other work for the academy trust.

If in doubt, the case manager will seek views from the school's personnel adviser and the designated officer at the local authority, as well as the police and children's social care where they have been involved.

Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive, or to cause harm to the subject of the allegation
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)
- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made

Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the case manager will take the following steps:

- Conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation before carrying on with the steps below
- Discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the local authority. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children's social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police *before* consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police)
- Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children's social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies
- Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children's social care services, as appropriate
- Where the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the individual's family, they will discuss these concerns with the DSL and make a risk assessment of the situation. If necessary, the DSL may make a referral to children's social care
- **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details

- **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation
- **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or children's social care services as appropriate
- Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate. Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate. Staff can seek support from Health Assured employee assistance programme or a recognized trade union.
- Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children's social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice
- Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case (only in relation to their child – no information will be shared regarding the staff member)
- Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child

We will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), and any action taken in respect of the allegations. This notification will be made as soon as reasonably possible and always within 14 days of the allegations being made.

If the school is made aware that the secretary of state has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the school will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the school's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

Additional considerations for supply teachers and all contracted staff

If there are concerns or an allegation is made against someone not directly employed by the school, such as a supply teacher or contracted staff member provided by an agency, we will take the actions below in addition to our standard procedures.

- We will not decide to stop using an individual due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with our LADO to determine a suitable outcome
- The governing board will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the individual, or redeploy them to another part of the school, while the school carries out the investigation

- We will involve the agency fully, but the school will take the lead in collecting the necessary information and providing it to the LADO as required
- We will address issues such as information sharing, to ensure any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account (we will do this, for example, as part of the allegations management meeting or by liaising directly with the agency where necessary)

When using an agency, we will inform them of our process for managing allegations, and keep them updated about our policies as necessary, and will invite the agency's HR manager or equivalent to meetings as appropriate.

Timescales

We will deal with all allegations as quickly and effectively as possible and will endeavour to comply with the following timescales, where reasonably practicable:

- Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious should be resolved within 1 week
- If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, appropriate action should be taken within 3 working days
- If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, this should be held within 15 working days

However, these are objectives only and where they are not met, we will endeavour to take the required action as soon as possible thereafter.

Specific actions

Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution

The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services.

Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the school will make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the school will consider whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

Individuals returning to work after suspension

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.

The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the school.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports

If a report is:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate

- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegations

If an allegation is:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO and case manager will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate
- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it

Confidentiality and information sharing

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

The case manager will take advice from the LADO, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises

Record-keeping

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case.

The records of any allegation that, following an investigation, is found to be malicious or false will be deleted from the individual's personnel file (unless the individual consents for the records to be retained on the file).

For all other allegations (which are not found to be malicious or false), the following information will be kept on the file of the individual concerned:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- Notes of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome
- A declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference

In these cases, the school will provide a copy to the individual, in agreement with children's social care or the police as appropriate.

We will retain all records at least until the accused individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

References

When providing employer references, we will:

- Not refer to any allegation that has been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any repeated allegations which have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious
- Include substantiated allegations, provided that the information is factual and does not include opinions

Learning lessons

After any cases where the allegations are *substantiated*, the case manager will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- The duration of the suspension
- Whether or not the suspension was justified
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual

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

Non-recent allegations

Abuse can be reported, no matter how long ago it happened.

We will report any non-recent allegations made by a child to the LADO in line with our local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations.

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

Section 2: concerns that do not meet the harm threshold

The section is based on 'Section 2: Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

This section applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors, which do not meet the harm threshold set out in section 1 above.

Concerns may arise through, for example:

- Suspicion
- Complaint
- Safeguarding concern or allegation from another member of staff
- Disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside the school
- Pre-employment vetting checks

We recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns in a timely manner to safeguard the welfare of children.

Definition of low-level concerns

The term ‘low-level’ concern is any concern – no matter how small – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, **and**
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the designated officer at the local authority

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

- Being overly friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Humiliating pupils

Sharing low-level concerns

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to confidentially share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.

We will create this culture by:

- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others
- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns as per section 7.7 of this policy
- Empowering staff to self-refer
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- Helping to identify any weakness in the school’s safeguarding system

Responding to low-level concerns

If the concern is raised via a third party, the headteacher will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

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

The headteacher will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action, in line with the school’s code of conduct. The headteacher will be the ultimate decision-maker in respect of all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL.

The headteacher will record the concern, method of investigation, rationale for decision and actions on Teams under Mowmacre SLT > Low-level concerns and allegations.

Record keeping

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. In addition to details of the concern raised, records will include the context in which the concern arose, any action taken and the rationale for decisions and action taken.

Records will be:

- Kept confidential, held securely and comply with the DPA 2018 and UK GDPR
- Reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, we will decide on a course of action, either through our disciplinary procedures or, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold as described in section 1 of this appendix, we will refer it to the designated officer at the local authority
- Retained at least until the individual leaves' employment at the school

Where a low-level concern relates to a supply teacher or contractor, we will notify the individual's employer, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

References

We will not include low-level concerns in references unless:

- The concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the designated officer at the local authority and is found to be substantiated; and/or
- The concern (or group of concerns) relates to issues which would ordinarily be included in a reference, such as misconduct or poor performance

Appendix 4 – Specific safeguarding issues

Assessing adult-involved nude and semi-nude sharing incidents

This section is based on annex A of the UK Council of Internet Safety's [advice for education settings](#).

All adult-involved nude and semi-nude image sharing incidents are child sexual abuse offences and must immediately be referred to police/social care. However, as adult-involved incidents can present as child-on-child nude/semi-nude sharing, it may be difficult to initially assess adult involvement.

There are two types of common adult-involved incidents: sexually motivated incidents and financially motivated incidents.

Sexually motivated incidents

In this type of incident, an adult offender obtains nude and semi-nudes directly from a child or young person using online platforms.

To make initial contact, the offender may present as themselves or use a false identity on the platform, sometimes posing as a child or young person to encourage a response and build trust. The offender often grooms the child or young person on social media, in chatrooms or on gaming platforms, and may then move the conversation to a private messaging app or an end-to-end encrypted (E2EE) environment where a request for a nude or semi-nude is made. To encourage the child or young person to create and share nude or semi-nude, the offender may share pornography or child sexual abuse material (images of other young people), including AI-generated material.

Once a child or young person shares a nude or semi-nude, an offender may blackmail the child or young person into sending more images by threatening to release them online and/or send them to friends and family.

Potential signs of adult-involved grooming and coercion can include the child or young person being:

- Contacted by an online account that they do not know but appears to be another child or young person
- Quickly engaged in sexually explicit communications, which may include the offender sharing unsolicited images
- Moved from a public to a private/E2EE platform
- Coerced/pressured into doing sexual things, including creating nudes and semi-nudes
- Offered something of value such as money or gaming credits
- Threatened or blackmailed into carrying out further sexual activity. This may follow the child or young person initially sharing the image or the offender sharing a digitally manipulated image of the child or young person to extort 'real' images

Financially motivated incidents

Financially motivated sexual extortion (often known as 'sextortion') is an adult-involved incident in which an adult offender (or offenders) threatens to release nudes or semi-nudes of a child or young person unless they pay money or do something else to benefit them.

Unlike other adult-involved incidents, financially motivated sexual extortion is usually carried out by offenders working in sophisticated organised crime groups (OCGs) overseas and are only motivated by profit. Adults are usually targeted by these groups too.

Offenders will often use a false identity, sometimes posing as a child or young person, or hack another young person's account to make initial contact. To financially blackmail the child or young person, they may:

- Groom or coerce the child or young person into sending nudes or semi-nudes and financially blackmail them
- Use images that have been stolen from the child or young person taken through hacking their account
- Use digitally manipulated images, including AI-generated images, of the child or young person

The offender may demand payment or the use of the victim's bank account for the purposes of money laundering.

Potential signs of adult-involved financially motivated sexual extortion can include the child or young person being:

- Contacted by an online account that they do not know but appears to be another child or young person. They may be contacted by a hacked account of a child or young person
- Quickly engaged in sexually explicit communications which may include the offender sharing an image first
- Moved from a public to a private/E2EE platform
- Pressured into taking nudes or semi-nudes
- Told they have been hacked and they have access to their images, personal information and contacts
- Blackmailed into sending money or sharing bank account details after sharing an image or the offender sharing hacked or digitally manipulated images of the child or young person

Children who are absent from education

A child being absent from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may be absent or become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care

- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse, exploitation and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the school without a new school being named, and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being absent, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority children's social care team, and the police, if the child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

Child criminal exploitation

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity. It may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. It does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be forced to work in cannabis factories, coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Indicators of CCE can include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education
- Not taking part in education

If a member of staff suspects CCE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity. It may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. It may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. Children or young people who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.

CSE can include both physical contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity. It can also happen online. For example, young people may be persuaded or forced to share sexually explicit images of themselves, have sexual conversations by text, or take part in sexual activities using a webcam. CSE may also occur without the victim's immediate knowledge, for example through others copying videos or images.

In addition to the CCE indicators above, indicators of CSE can include a child:

- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse is when children abuse other children. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of school. It can also take place both face-to-face and online, and can occur simultaneously between the 2.

Our school has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. We recognise that even if there are no reports, that doesn't mean that this kind of abuse isn't happening.

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

- Bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (this is sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)

- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- 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
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

Where children abuse their peers online, this can take the form of, for example, abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages; the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups; and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content.

If staff have any concerns about child-on-child abuse, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section 7 of this policy, as appropriate. In particular, section 7.8 and 7.9 set out more detail about our school's approach to this type of abuse.

When considering instances of harmful sexual behaviour between children, we will consider their ages and stages of development. We recognise that children displaying harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced their own abuse and trauma, and will offer them appropriate support.

Domestic abuse

Children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse and/or violence at home where it occurs between family members. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse (abuse in intimate personal relationships between children) and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. It can be physical, sexual, financial, psychological or emotional. It can also include ill treatment that isn't physical, as well as witnessing the ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background, and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. Children who witness domestic abuse are also victims.

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children and affect their health, wellbeing, development and ability to learn.

If police are called to an incident of domestic abuse and any children in the household have experienced the incident, the police will inform the key adult in school (usually the designated safeguarding lead) before the child or children arrive at school the following day.

The DSL will provide support according to the child's needs and update records about their circumstances.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare.

The DSL and deputies will be aware of contact details and referral routes in to the local housing authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity (where appropriate and in accordance with local procedures).

Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will also make a referral to local authority children's social care.

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (including FGM and forced marriage)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including FGM, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

Abuse committed in this context often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

All forms of HBA are abuse and will be handled and escalated as such. All staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA or already having suffered it. If staff have a concern, they will speak to the DSL, who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

FGM

The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to children affected by FGM or at risk of FGM.

Section 7.3 of this policy sets out the procedures to be followed if a staff member discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out or suspects that a pupil is at risk of FGM.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A pupil confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
- A family/pupil already being known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
 - Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
 - Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)
 - Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
 - Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
 - Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE
 - Being repeatedly absent from school, or absent for a prolonged period
 - Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour
 - Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations

- Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
- Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

Potential signs that a pupil may be at risk of FGM include:

- The girl's family having a history of practising FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider)
- FGM being known to be practised in the girl's community or country of origin
- A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out
- A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
 - Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM
 - Having limited level of integration within UK society
 - Confiding to a professional that she is to have a "special procedure" or to attend a special occasion to "become a woman"
 - Talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents/carers stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period
 - Requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM
 - Talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other children about it (although it is important to take into account the context of the discussion)
 - Being unexpectedly absent from school
 - Having sections missing from her 'red book' (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication

The above indicators and risk factors are not intended to be exhaustive.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of 1 or both parties and where violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

It is also illegal to cause a child under the age of 18 to marry, even if violence, threats or coercion are not involved.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the '1 chance' rule, i.e. we may only have 1 chance to speak to the potential victim and only 1 chance to save them.

If a member of staff suspects that a pupil is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the pupil about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the pupil about the concerns in a secure and private place

- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or fmu@fco.gov.uk
- Refer the pupil to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate

Preventing radicalisation

- **Radicalisation** refers to the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence
- **Extremism** is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to:
 - Negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or
 - Undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or
 - Intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results outlined in either of the above points
 - **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 of terrorism 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.

Schools have a duty to prevent children from becoming involved with or supporting terrorism. The DSL, or designated Prevent lead, will undertake in-depth Prevent awareness training, including on extremist and terrorist ideologies. They'll make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk.

We will assess the risk of children in our school from becoming involved with or supporting terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

We will ensure that suitable internet filtering is in place, and equip our pupils to stay safe online at school and at home.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period.

Staff will be alert to changes in pupils' behaviour.

The government website [Educate Against Hate](#) and charity [NSPCC](#) say that signs that a pupil is being radicalised can include:

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance
- Rejecting activities they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion

- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions
- Accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter
- Possessing extremist literature
- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem, or be victims of bullying or discrimination. It is important to note that these signs can also be part of normal teenage behaviour – staff should have confidence in their instincts and seek advice if something feels wrong.

If staff are concerned about a pupil, they will follow our procedures set out in section 7.5 of this policy, including discussing their concerns with the DSL.

Staff should **always** take action if they are worried.

Further information on the school's measures to prevent radicalisation are set out in other school policies and procedures.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur:

- Between 2 children of any age and sex
- Through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children
- Online and face to face (both physically and verbally)

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school.

If a victim reports an incident, it is essential that staff make sure they are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting any form of abuse or neglect. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

When supporting victims, staff will:

- Reassure victims that the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them, not criminalise them
- Regularly review decisions and actions, and update policies with lessons learnt

- Look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, and decide on a course of action where we identify any patterns
- Consider if there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled inappropriate behaviour to occur and whether revising policies and/or providing extra staff training could minimise the risk of it happening again
- Remain alert to the possible challenges of detecting signs that a child has experienced sexual violence, and show sensitivity to their needs

Some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- Challenging inappropriate behaviours
- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them

If staff have any concerns about sexual violence or sexual harassment, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section 7 of this policy, as appropriate. In particular, section 7.8 and 7.9 set out more detail about our school's approach to this type of abuse.

Serious violence

Indicators which may signal that a child is at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime may include:

- Increased absence from school
- Change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- Significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions (this could indicate that the child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation (see above))

Risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence include:

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

Staff will be aware of these indicators and risk factors. If a member of staff has a concern about a pupil being involved in, or at risk of, serious violence, they will report this to the DSL.

Checking the identity and suitability of visitors

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff and to leave their belongings, including their mobile phone(s), in a safe place during their visit.

If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.

Visitors are expected to sign the visitors' book and wear a visitor's badge.

Visitors to the school who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists and school improvement officers, will be asked to show photo ID and:

- Will be asked to show their DBS certificate, which will be checked alongside their photo ID; or
- The organisation sending the professional, such as the LA or educational psychology service, will provide prior written confirmation that an appropriate level of DBS check has been carried out (if this is provided, we will not ask to see the DBS certificate)

All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times.

We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise pupils or staff.

Non-collection of children

If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we will:

For children who are supposed to be dismissed at 3:15pm:

1.) Contact the child's parents/contact person using the contact information held on Arbor

If contact is made with the parent/contact person and estimated time of collection agreed, a member of school staff will wait with the child until they can be collected if the child will be collected before 4:30pm.

2.) If a child will not be collected by 4:30pm, then the DSL will contact CASP on 0116 454 1004.

If a child is to be dismissed from school after 3:15pm, e.g. being dismissed from an after school club, returning later from a school trip or school sporting event:

1.) Contact the child's parents/contact person using the contact information held on Arbor

If contact is made with the parent/contact person and estimated time of collection agreed, a member of school staff will wait with the child until they can be collected if the child will be collected within 1 hour of the child's return to school.

2.) If a child will not be collected within 1 hour of the child's return to school, then the DSL will contact CASP on 0116 454 1004.

In all instances where a child is collected late, if there is a suspected safeguarding concern about why the child was not collected on time, the person contacting parents/contact person, will record their concern on CPOMS.

Missing pupils

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child goes missing, we will:

The staff member who noticed a child is missing must send another person to inform the office a child is missing. The staff member should communicate the name of the child missing and where they were last seen.

The office will contact the Headteacher to relay the information of which child is missing, who noticed they were missing, and where the child was last seen. The Headteacher will co-ordinate the search for the child.

Staff delegated by the headteacher will search areas where the child may be.

The search team will stay in contact via mobile phone.

Once the child is found, all members of the search team will be informed the child is found. Parents will be contacted by the Headteacher and the Headteacher will feedback to parents about the school's response and risk mitigation for the future.

Following a thorough search of the school grounds, if the child is not found, the Headteacher will contact police. The procedure for this is the same as if a child has left the school grounds.

If a child has left the school grounds, then police will be contacted on 101. Parents will also be contacted. School staff may follow the child at a safe distance if the child is found. Staff must be aware that following too closely may unintentionally agitate the child, creating a greater potential for injury on the roads.

Once the child is found, the search team will debrief to analyse how the situation happened, how the risk can be reduced in the future and decide if changes to the missing pupil procedure are necessary.

This appendix is mostly based on the advice in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Annex B also includes information on further issues to be aware of, including child abduction and community safety incidents, children's involvement in the court system, children with family members in prison, county lines, modern slavery, and cybercrime.