

# Woodchurch High School

*A Church of England Academy*



## **SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**Approved by the Curriculum Committee: Autumn 2025**

**Approved by Full Governors: Autumn 2025**

**Review Date: Autumn 2026**

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## Key Contacts:

Role:	Name/ Details:	Contact:
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Paul Joplin	0151 641 8201
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Andrew Smith	0151677 5257
Nominated Governor for Safeguarding / Child Protection	Beverly Cowley	0151 677 5257
Chair of Trustees	Tony Smith	0151 677 5257
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Kevin Dykes	safeguardingunit@wirral.gov.uk kerrywilliams@wirral.gov.uk
Head of Service Quality & Safeguarding Children	Lynn Campbell	0151 666 4442
Delegated Safeguarding Partner for Education	Nicola Griffiths	Nicolagriffiths2@wirral.gov.uk
Prevent Single Point of Contact	Andrea Bignall	Andrea.Mears@merseyside.police.uk
Prevent Team Merseyside Police	Prevent Team	0151 777 8506
Director of Children's Services	Elizabeth Hartley	0151 606 2000
Integrated Front Door	Mon-Fri, 9am – 5pm  Outside of these hours	Tel: 0151 606 2008  ifd@wirral.gov.uk  Tel: 0151 677 6557

## School Record of Safeguarding Training:

Type of Training:	Date completed:	Next due date:
Whole School Safeguarding Training (Annual)	September 2025	September 2026
Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (Due every 2 years)	October 2025	October 2026
Deputy Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (Due every 2 years)	December 2024	December 2026
Whole School Staff Refresher/updates (Annual)	Weekly	Weekly
Safer Recruitment Training (Due every 5 years)	Paul Joplin October 24 Martyn Canham March 24 Suzanne Loyden May 25 Vicky Lavin April 24 Faye Lloyd April 24	October 2029 March 2029 May 2030 April 2029 April 2029
Trustee Training	October 2024	Ongoing
Prevent Training (whole staff)	January 2025	January 2026
Online Safety Training (whole staff)	February 2025	June 2026

## Our Safeguarding Pledge

To demonstrate our commitment to safeguarding the members of our community, we pledge:

- To have the integrity and compassion to ensure that children are heard and their needs, views and wishes addressed
- To demonstrate professional curiosity and always ensure that our children are visible, their voices heard and their needs, views and wishes addressed
- To recognise that children are individuals and some are more vulnerable than others due to their personal circumstances, serving them compassionately, fostering trust.
- To work with other agencies to ensure the best outcomes for the children
- To act without delay to protect children from harm and abuse
- To support our pupils' needs by providing the best early help possible to support our community before their needs escalate further
- To use the local authorities "Continuum of Need" with integrity to assess and evaluate pupils' needs
- To share information promptly to support a compassionate, collective and holistic assessment of pupils' needs
- To work closely with parents and carers, putting the child at the centre of all discussions and adopting a solution-focused approach leading to a trusting partnership
- To work closely with all parties and agencies to ensure pupils attend school regularly to ensure their education is safeguarded
- To attend all multi-agency meetings to ensure collective responsibility for achieving positive outcomes for the children in a timely way
- To ensure all agencies act with integrity, challenging each other so that action is taken promptly, avoiding professional drift
- To follow local multi-agency procedures to concerns until there is an appropriate resolution
- To participate in regular and effective supervision meetings so that there is strong support and oversight of decisions made and actions taken
- To meet all mandatory training requirements, regularly updating our professional knowledge whilst applying any learning to our practice, cascading to all relevant member of staff
- To ensure staff and pupils promote and encourage the 'BE SAFE' principle from our Behaviour Curriculum

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

### Child Protection and Safeguarding, inclusive of Woodchurch High School, Forest School and School Led Satellite Curriculum (SLSC).

- 1.1. It is essential that **everybody** working in a school or college understands their safeguarding responsibilities. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play ensuring children and young people are safe from abuse, neglect exploitation and harm. Our school is committed to safeguarding children and aims to create a culture of vigilance. All staff should make sure that any decisions made are **in the best interests of the child**.
- 1.2. Our pupils' welfare is our paramount concern. The governing body will ensure that our school will safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and work together with agencies to ensure that our school has adequate arrangements to identify, assess and support those children who are suffering or where significant harm is suggested. (<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/1-2-recognition-significant-harm/>)
- 1.3. Our school is a community and all those directly connected, staff members, governors, parents, families and pupils, have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure for all.
- 1.4. This procedure document provides the basis for good practice within the school for Safeguarding work. It should be read in conjunction with the Wirral Safeguarding Partnership Child Protection - Safeguarding Policies and Procedures (<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/>), plus the Child Protection - Safeguarding appendix document. These are in keeping with relevant national procedures and reflect what the partnership considers to be safe and professional practice in this context.

## 2. OUR ETHOS:

- 2.1 We believe that this school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical, spiritual and moral development of the individual child, enabling all children to thrive.
- 2.2 We recognise the importance of providing an environment within our school that will help children feel safe and respected. We recognise the importance of enabling children to talk openly and to feel confident that they will be listened to. We recognise that both mental and physical health are relevant to safeguarding and the welfare of children

- 2.3 We recognise that all adults within the school, including permanent, supply staff, temporary staff, volunteers, parents and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm.
- 2.4 We will work pro-actively with parents to build a solid understanding of the school's responsibilities to ensure the welfare of all children, including the need for referrals to other agencies in some situations.

### **3. SCOPE**

- 3.1 In line with the law, this policy defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 years but in the case of SEN it is up to 25 years of age.
- 3.2 This policy applies to all members of staff in our school, including all permanent, temporary and support staff, governors, volunteers, contractors and external service or activity providers.

### **4. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

- 4.1 Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on governing bodies of maintained schools and further education institutions (including sixth-form colleges) to make the necessary arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school. Section 157 of the same Act places a similar duty on non-maintained and independent schools, including free schools and academies.
- 4.2 Under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, all maintained schools, further education colleges and independent schools, including free schools and academies, are required to co-operate with the local authority to improve the well-being of children in the local authority area.
- 4.3 Under section 14B of the Children Act 2004, the Local Safeguarding Children Board can require a school or further education institution to supply information in order to perform its functions. This must be complied with.
- 4.4 This policy and the accompanying procedure have been developed in accordance with the following statutory guidance and local safeguarding procedures:

Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children, Dec 2023:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2025

Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK

All procedures can be found on the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership website:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/>

## 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 Our governing body recognises the need to ensure that it complies with its duties under legislation, and this policy has regard to statutory guidance; [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2024\)](#), [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#), Key statutory and non-statutory guidance and any locally agreed inter-agency procedures.
  
- 5.2 The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with overall designated responsibility for safeguarding is Paul Joplin. We have a deputy designated safeguarding lead, Andrew Smith, to ensure there is appropriate cover for this role at all times. **The responsibilities of all Designated Safeguarding Lead are described in detail in Appendix A.**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be on our school's leadership team and their role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (and the deputy) will be explicit in their job description. This person should have the appropriate authority and be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and Safeguarding matters, to take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings – and/or to support other staff to do so – and to contribute to the assessment of children. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the response to safeguarding concerns..

- 5.3 The school has a **named trustee (Beverly Cowley)** responsible for safeguarding to champion good practice, to liaise with the head teacher and to provide information and reports to the governing body.
  
- 5.4 The **case manager for dealing with allegations** of abuse made against school staff members is the head teacher. The case manager for dealing with

allegations against the head teacher is the chair of trustees, Tony Smith. **The procedure for managing allegations is detailed in Appendix Document**

- 5.5 The **head teacher** or proprietor will ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the governing body are fully implemented and sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable staff members to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities. All staff and other adults are clear about procedures where they are concerned about the safety of a child, including if children go missing from education, including children who are 'absent' from education, or those unexplainable and or/persistent absences, particularly on repeat occasions or for prolonged periods.
- 5.6 The **governing body** is collectively responsible for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are fully embedded within the school's ethos and reflected in the school's day-to-day practice.
- 5.7 **All staff members, governors, volunteers and external providers** know how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse, how to respond to pupils who disclose abuse and what to do if they are concerned about a child. They are aware that behaviours and physical signs linked to behaviours that put children in danger. All staff should know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused or neglected. Staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and children's social care. Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child. Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This may include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), gender-based violence/sexual harassment, sexual violence and assaults, harmful sexual behaviour and sexting. Staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. ([7-minute-briefing-Child-on-child.pdf](#))
- 5.8 Staff must challenge any form of derogatory and sexualised language or behaviour. Staff should be vigilant to sexualised/aggressive touching/grabbing DfE guidance situates sexual violence, sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour in the context of developing a whole-school safeguarding culture, where sexual misconduct is seen as unacceptable, and not 'banter' or an inevitable part of growing up. Advice about tackling and reporting sexual harassment in schools, colleges and educational settings <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2>. Assessment support can be found via Shorespace - <https://shorespace.org.uk/>

It should be recognised that these issues are likely to occur, and so schools should have procedures in place to deal with them. Groups at particular risk include girls, students who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, questioning their gender', Transgender+ (LGBT+), or are perceived by peers to be LGBT+, and pupils with SEND. We recognise that these children can be

targeted by other children, so it is vital your school provide a safe space for these children to speak out and share their concerns with members of staff. Pupils are protected from upskirting, bullying (+ cyber), homophobic, biphobic and transphobic behaviour, racism, sexism, and all other forms of discrimination. [More guidance in KCSIE2025](#)

Our school acknowledges the need to treat everyone equally, with fairness, dignity and respect. Any discriminatory behaviours are challenged, and children are supported to understand how to treat others with respect. We also have a statutory duty to report and record any of the above incidents.

### **Online Risk and Harms:**

Our school is committed to responding to evolving digital risks, supporting the changes to the [online safety act](#) (2023), which protects children and adults online and puts a range of new duties on social media companies and search services, giving them legal duties to protect their users from illegal content and content harmful to children. More information on the changes can be accessed [here](#).

We also acknowledge that generative artificial intelligence (AI) presents exciting opportunities to improve lives and will continue to explore this technology safely to encourage innovation and maximise the benefits for education. The full guidance can be accessed here: [Generative AI guidance](#)

The appropriate designated safeguarding lead should be familiar with the full guidance from the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS), Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (updated Mar 2024)

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-a  
dvice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people)

The school will look to identify how to meet the digital and technology standards, using self-assessments that can be accessed [here](#).

**Adult involvement in youth-produced sexual imagery** - The school's full response to youth-produced sexual imagery (YPSI) is outlined in the Youth-produced Sexual Imagery Policy.

### **Sexually motivated incidents**

The school will remain aware that not all instances of YPSI will be between children and young people, and in some cases may involve adults posing as a child for the purpose of obtaining nude and semi-nude images from persons under 18.

Staff will be aware of the signs that an adult is involved in the sharing the nude or semi-nude images. These include:

- Being contacted by an online account they do not know but appears to be from somebody under the age of 18.
- Quickly being engaged in sexually explicit communications.
- The offender sharing unsolicited sexual images.
- The conversation being moved from a public to a private and/or encrypted platform.
- Being coerced or pressured into doing sexual things, including producing sexual imagery.
- Being offered money or gifts.
- Being threatened or blackmailed into sharing nude or semi-nude images, and/or further sexual activity.

### **Financially motivated incidents**

Financially motivated incidents of YPSI involving adults may also be called “**sextortion**”, where the offender threatens to release nudes or semi-nudes of a child or young person unless they do something to prevent it, e.g. paying money. In these cases, offenders often pose as children and:

- Groom or coerce the victim into sending nudes or semi-nudes in order to blackmail them.
- Use images that have been stolen from the child or young person, e.g. via hacking.
- Use digitally manipulated and/or \*AI-generated images of the child or young person.

\*(Computer systems and software that are able to perform tasks that ordinarily require human intelligence, such as decision-making and the creation of images).

Staff will be aware of the signs of sextortion, which include:

- Being contacted by an online account they do not know but appears to be from somebody under the age of 18.
- Quickly being engaged in sexually explicit communications.
- The offender sharing sexual images first.
- The conversation being moved from a public to a private and/or encrypted platform.
- Told their online accounts have been hacked in order to obtain images, personal information, and contacts.
- Being blackmailed into sending money or sharing bank account details.
- Being shown stolen or digitally manipulated/generated images of the victim.

It is important that schools record incidents across the whole spectrum of sexual violence, sexual harassment, and harmful sexualised behaviours so that they can understand the scale of the problem in their own schools and make appropriate plans to reduce it.

The guidance covers: It covers what sexual violence and harassment is, schools' and colleges' legal responsibilities, a whole school or college approach to safeguarding and child protection and how to respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Children may not feel ready to, or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited or neglected, but this shouldn't stop staff from having a 'professional curiosity' and speaking to the DSL. <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professional-curiosity/>

Incidents should be immediately reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or equivalent and managed in line with your child protection and safeguarding policies. Where there is a safeguarding concern, governing bodies, proprietors and school or college leaders should ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. A bespoke helpline for children and young people who've experienced abuse at school, and for worried adults and professionals that need support and guidance. If you are concerned about something, you can contact the NSPCC helpline Report Abuse in Education on 0800 136 663 or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

5.9 There is a Digital Safety policy, which covers the use of mobile phones, cameras and other digital recording devices e.g., i-Pads. For online safety, there is within the policy support about children accessing the internet whilst they're at school using data on their phones (3G or 4G networks). The policy reinforces the importance of online safety, including making parents aware of what your school ask children to do online (e.g. sites they need to visit or who they'll be interacting with online)

Digital literacy and safety is one of the most paramount issues of our time. For teachers and pupils, learning how to use the online space sensibly and in a protected manner is vital. Project EVOLVE by SWGfL presents a plethora of tools to help your staff and pupils, develop a well-rounded educational schemata for inclusion into lessons. <https://swgfl.org.uk/magazine/what-is-projectevolve-edu/>

Governing bodies and proprietors are doing all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the risks from the school's or college's IT system and ensure the school or college has appropriate filters and monitoring

systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness. The leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified.

The leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified.

The policy for remote learning that demonstrates on understanding of how to follow safeguarding procedures when planning remote education strategies and teaching remotely. The school maintains the capability to provide remote education when it is not possible for some or all of their pupils to attend in person.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providing-remote-education-guidance-for-schools>

Filtering and monitoring standards are adhered to and a DSL has robust oversight of the arrangements to meet those standards.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/filtering-and-monitoring-standards-for-schools-and-colleges>

Artificial Intelligence has the power to transform education by helping teachers focus on what they do best: teaching. This marks a shift in how technology is used to enhance lives and tap into the vast potential of AI in classrooms. We look to consider the risks and challenges alongside the opportunities and benefits continue to work to ensure the safety and reliability of technology, including AI tools, to support teachers and learners. The guidance below support the assessment of risk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/generative-artificial-intelligence-in-education/generative-artificial-intelligence-ai-in-education>

Resources for schools and education settings -  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/using-ai-in-education-settings-support-materials>

## 6. SUPPORTING CHILDREN

6.1 We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence (domestic abuse) are likely to have low self-esteem and may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. We also recognise children who witness domestic abuse are victims, that witnessing domestic abuse can have a lasting impact on children, and that children can be victims in their own relationships too.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help> They may feel helpless, humiliated and some sense of blame. Our school may be the only

stable, secure and predictable element in their lives. What is domestic abuse information

6.2 We accept that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.

6.3 **Our school will support all pupils by:**

- ensuring the content of the curriculum includes social and emotional aspects of learning; Through PSHE, RHSE and other curriculum contexts, pupils are encouraged to talk about feelings and deal assertively with pressures, are listened to, and know to whom they can turn to for help and advice;
- providing pupils with a range of appropriate adults to approach if they are in difficulties; and ensuring that pupils are taught about safeguarding so that they 'recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it' (KCSIE 2020);
- Continuing to engage in Operation Encompass, the national police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people who experience Domestic Violence and Abuse, and which is in place in every police force in England and Wales. Children are recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right in the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act.
- supporting the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence and encourage the development of self-esteem and self-assertiveness while not condoning aggression or bullying; (The anti-bullying policy is located on the school website in the Behaviour Policy);
- ensuring a comprehensive curriculum response to online safety, enabling children and parents to learn about the risks of new technologies and social media and to use these responsibly; plus Relationship and Sexual Health Education (RSHE) requirements;
- liaising and working together with other support services and those agencies involved in safeguarding children; including domestic abuse: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/domestic-abuse-act-statutory-guidance>
- ensuring that the curriculum will help children stay safe, recognise when they do not feel safe and identify who they might or can talk to and will support young people to become more resilient to inappropriate behaviours towards them, risk taking behaviours and behaviours that children may be coerced into including sexual harassment, child-on-child abuse 'sexting' and the displaying of 'Harmful Sexualised Behaviour'; <https://www.csacentre.org.uk/resources/key-messages/harmful-sexual-behaviour/>

- Wirral's HSB identification toolkit can be found here:  
<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/harmful-sexual-behaviour/>

### **Child-on-child abuse (inc. sexual violence and sexual harassment)**

- For the purposes of this policy, '**child-on-child abuse**' is defined as abuse between children.
- The school has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, including child-on-child abuse,
- All staff will be aware that child-on-child abuse can occur between pupils of any age and gender, both inside and outside of school, as well as online risk and harm. All staff will be aware of the indicators of child-on-child abuse, how to identify it, and how to respond to reports. All staff will also recognise that even if no cases have been reported, this is not an indicator that child-on-child abuse is not occurring.
- All staff will speak to the DSL if they have any concerns about child-on-child abuse.
- All staff will understand the importance of challenge inappropriate behaviour between peers, and will not tolerate abuse as "banter" or "part of growing up".

Child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many different ways, including:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying.
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers – sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse'.
- Physical abuse – this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse.
- Sexual violence – this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence.
- Sexual harassment, including online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent.
- The consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos. / Upskirting.
- Initiation- and hazing-type violence and rituals, which can 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.

- The DSL will ensure they appropriately assess all instances of child-on-child abuse, including in cases of image-based abuse, to help determine whether the alleged perpetrator(s) is under the age of 18 or is an adult posing as a child. The DSL will immediately refer the case if it is found that a so-called child-on-child abuse incident involves an adult, e.g. where an adult poses as a child online to groom a child or young person.
- All staff will be clear as to the school's policy and procedures regarding child-on-child abuse and the role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.
- Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled. This includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers. Pupils will also be reassured that they will be taken seriously, be supported, and kept safe.
- The school's procedures for managing allegations of child-on-child abuse are outlined in the Child-on-child Abuse Policy. Staff will follow these procedures, as well as the procedures outlined in the school's Anti-bullying Policy and Suspension and Exclusion Policy, where relevant.
- Addressing child on child abuse - [Resources for schools and colleges](#)
- Responding to Child Sexual abuse –  
<https://www.csacentre.org.uk/child-sexual-abuse-response-pathway/>
  - The school will consider intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment [KCSIE 2025](#).
  - having a behaviour policy that is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that each pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but that they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred; the Behaviour Policy is located on the school website.
  - The Behaviour Policy outlines measures to prevent bullying, including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.
  - Clear procedures are in place for addressing and minimising the risk of child-on-child abuse, including harmful sexual behaviours, sexual violence and sexual harassment – these procedures are easily understood and easily accessible. Children who have experienced sexual violence can display a wide range of responses, so the school will remain alert to the possible challenges of detecting those signs and show sensitivity to their needs.

Further information is contained in the Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and Child-on-Child Abuse Policy.

- Playing a crucial role in preventative education and preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. There is a culture of zero tolerance to sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment. This will be underpinned by the school's Behaviour Policy, pastoral support system and a planned programme of RHSE delivered regularly, tackling issues such as: boundaries, consent, body confidence, stereotyping and sexual harassment.
- acknowledging the importance of 'contextual safeguarding', <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/> which considers wider environmental factors in a pupil's life that may be a threat to their safety and/or welfare. [Working together to safeguard children](#) and [KCSIE 2025](#)
- liaising with a range of [Early Help](#) agencies that support the pupil such as Health Services, Wirral Social Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Education Welfare Services, Special Educational Support Services, Youth Services and the Educational Psychology Service; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-people-s-emotional-health-and-wellbeing>
- ensuring that, when a pupil who is the subject of a Child Protection Plan leaves, their information is transferred to the new school within two weeks and that the child's Social Worker is informed that the child has moved;
- After 20 days absence if a child has moved and the new school is unknown the school will post details on the 'Pupil to Pupil' register;
- alert the authority if it is aware of any child being looked after under a Private Fostering arrangement. On admission to school, and at other times, the school will be vigilant in identifying any private fostering arrangement.; <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/7-min-Briefing-Private-Fostering.pdf>
- acknowledging that a child that is looked after (CLA) or has been previously looked after by the Local Authority potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep CLA and previously looked after children safe. It is important that all agencies work together and prompt action is taken on concerns to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group;
- applying disciplinary measures such as restraint or isolation in response to incidents involving children with special educational needs and disabilities

(SEND), by considering the risks carefully, given the additional vulnerability of the group;

- recognising that to safeguard a pupil, it may be necessary to use restraint and yet restraint is likely to impact on the well-being of the child. By planning positive and proactive behaviour support, schools and colleges can reduce the occurrence of risky behaviour and the need to use restraint. Guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>

#### **6.4 Monitoring Attendance**

- A child missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, including exploitation. Local Authority guidance and procedures will be followed for dealing with a child who is missing from education, or unexplainable and or/persistent absences, particularly on repeated occasions or if a child suddenly stops attending. The school will follow the Missing Child Policy. For those children and families who have chronic poor attendance or persistent absenteeism, school will consider whether educational neglect is present and whether a referral to children's services is required, or whether the school should seek consent to begin an Early Help Assessment in order to coordinate a multi-agency plan of support for the child and family.
- Attendance will be closely monitored. In line with the school's attendance policy, contact will be made for any unexplained absences on the first morning of any absence. Follow up calls will then be made throughout the period of absence. In addition, the attendance of children with known welfare and attendance concerns will be monitored closely, particularly those with chronic poor attendance or persistent absentees, or if a child suddenly stops attending. Schools should also scrutinise the attendance of off-site provision to ensure children are attending and are safe. Similarly, the attendance of children who are vulnerable or with known welfare and safeguarding concerns such as children who have a child protection plan, a child in need, are Children Looked After and/or SEN will be rigorously monitored on a daily and weekly basis. The child's social worker will be informed immediately when there are unexplained absences or attendance concerns.
- It is important that the school's attendance team, including the Local Attendance Officer are aware of any safeguarding concerns. It is critical that when a child is not attending school their welfare is confirmed and expected practice would be for an appropriate professional to visit the home and speak to the child alone, particularly if there are any safeguarding concerns. The timing for this home visit will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The

school will seek to ensure it has at least two emergency contacts for each family and consider what urgent action it may need to take when a vulnerable child and family are not contactable and the child has not attended school. Where necessary, this may include reporting the child missing to the police. The school will ensure it is aware, in advance, of any difficulties in accessing the premises of a child's family home.

- It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage.
- Children Missing Education (C.M.E.) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. All staff should be aware that children missing education, or those unexplainable and or/persistent absences, are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Children going missing, or unexplainable and or/persistent absences, can also be an indicator of mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. Maintained schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. Academies and independent schools have a similar safeguarding duty for their pupils. When a child is deemed to be missing from education, or those unexplainable and or/persistent absences, school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the local authority, before deleting the pupil's name from the register. Once these enquiries have been undertaken, our school will follow the local protocol for Children Missing Education and make a C.M.E referral to the Local Authority Officer for C.M.E.
- Some parents will decide to remove their child from the school role in order to educate them at home. For the majority of children, this choice will be with the child's best education at the heart of their decision and it will be a positive learning experience. However, this is not the case for all, and home education can mean that some children become less visible to services who are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their individual needs. Where a parent or carer has expressed their intention to remove their child from the school roll with a view to educating at home, the school will work together with other key professionals and will, where possible, attempt to facilitate a meeting with the family to ensure that all parties have considered what is in

the best interests of the child. This is particularly important for those children who have SEND, are vulnerable, and/or who have a social worker. The school will also link with the named officer for Elective Home Education within the Local Authority. Staff are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers.

### **Alternative provision**

- Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil, (further information provided in [KCSIE 2025](#)), should always know where a child is based during school hours. This includes having records of the address of any alternative providers and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the child may attend.
- Schools should obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment, i.e. those checks that the school would otherwise perform in respect of its own staff.
- School should regularly review any alternative provision placements to make sure the placement continues to be safe and meets the child's needs. If safeguarding concerns occur, the placement should be immediately reviewed and ended if necessary (further compliance can be found in paragraphs 169 and 170 of KCSIE 2025).

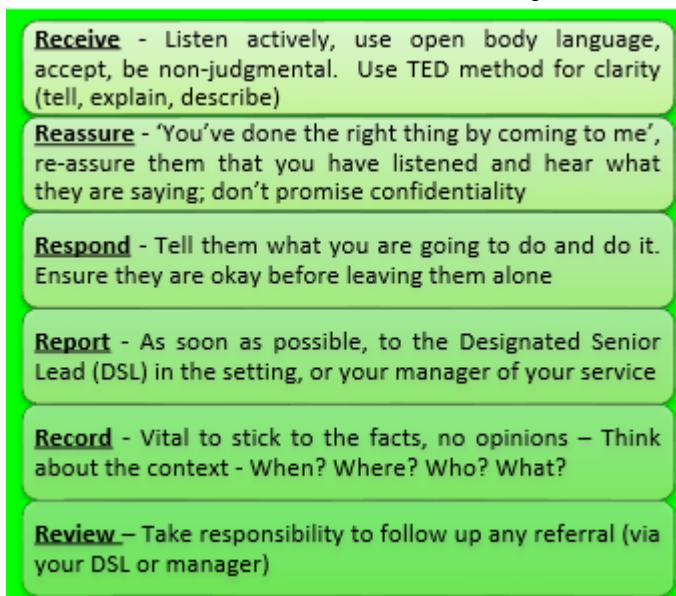
## **7. SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE**

- 7.1 We have developed a structured procedure in line with *Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership* which will be followed by all members of the Education community in cases of suspected abuse. **This is detailed in Appendix B.**
- 7.2 In line with the procedures, the Integrated Front Door will be contacted as soon as there is a significant concern (0151 606 2008 / [ifd@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:ifd@wirral.gov.uk)).
- 7.3 The name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be clearly advertised in the school and on the website, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.
- 7.4 We will ensure all parents and carers are aware of the responsibilities of staff members to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by publishing the policy and procedures on our website and by referring to them in our introductory school materials.

7.5 We will use the NSPCC- [When to call the police](#) to help designated safeguarding leads understand when they should consider calling the police and what to expect when they do.

## 8. DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE MADE BY A CHILD - ADVICE FOR ALL MEMBERS OF STAFF

8.1 ***If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff or volunteer should consider ways to:***



In addition:

- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay and follow safeguarding process;
- Complete the Safeguarding incident/welfare concern form and pass it to the DSL.

*Dealing with a disclosure from a child and safeguarding issues can be stressful. Consider seeking support for yourself and discuss this with the DSL.*

Further information about what to do if you are worried that a child is being abused is available here in advice for practitioners:

[Child abuse concerns: guide for practitioners - GOV.UK](#)

**The role of an appropriate Adult in Safeguarding:**

The Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) act advises that “The role of the appropriate adult (AA) is to safeguard the rights, entitlements and welfare of juveniles and vulnerable persons”, with there being further elaboration that the AA is expected to observe that the police are acting properly and fairly in relation to a vulnerable detained persons rights and entitlements, as well as helping the detained person understand their rights. This role is relevant where the police have detained a child or vulnerable person under PACE.

The role of AA is not restricted to specific individuals, in relation to children and young people under the age of 18, PACE guidance sets out that the AA can be: the parent, guardian or, if the juvenile is in the care of a local authority or voluntary organisation, a person representing that authority or organisation.

### Safeguarding and the role of the appropriate adult

## **RECORD KEEPING**

8.2 All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. This will also help if/when responding to any complaints about the way a case has been handled by the school or college. Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child. Records should include:

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

Systemic Practice model ([Introduction to Systemic Practice](#)) to be used to capture the child's voice and their daily lived experience.

8.3 We will continue to support any pupil leaving the school about whom there have been concerns by ensuring that all appropriate information, including Safeguarding and welfare concerns, is forwarded under confidential cover to the pupil's new school as a matter of priority.

8.4 Schools should have at least two emergency contacts for every child in the school in case of emergencies, and in case there are welfare concerns at the home in order to reduce the risk of not making contact with family members where welfare and/or safeguarding concerns are identified. ([Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#))

**9. DISCUSSING CONCERNs WITH THE FAMILY AND THE CHILD – ADVICE FOR THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD (DSL) AND DEPUTY DSL**

- 9.1 In general, you should always discuss any concerns the school may have with the child's parents. They need to know that you are worried about their child. However, you should not discuss your concerns if you believe that this would place the child at greater risk or lead to loss of evidence for a police investigation.
- 9.2 If you make a decision not to discuss your concerns with the child's parents or carers, this must be recorded in the child's Safeguarding file with a full explanation for your decision and the reason for this decision.
- 9.3 It is important to record and consider the child's wishes and feelings, as part of planning what action to take in relation to concerns about their welfare. Capturing the lived experience of the child is paramount to ensure that actions remain child-centred Systemic Practice is a way of working in partnership with children and young people and families to help them improve outcomes and address issues which prevent them from thriving. Systemic Practice does this by seeking to understand the relationships between family members, and between the family and their wider networks to help professionals understand why the family works the way it does. ([Intro to Systemic Practice](#)) it remains important capture the child's lived experience **and their own words when possible.**
- 9.4 When talking to children, you should take account of their age, understanding and preferred language, which may not be English. It is also important to consider how a SEND child may need support in communicating.
- 9.5 How you talk to a child will also depend on the substance and seriousness of the concerns. You may need to seek advice from the Integrated Front Door or the police to ensure that neither the safety of the child nor any subsequent investigation is jeopardised.
- 9.6 If concerns have arisen as a result of information given by a child, it is important to reassure the child but not to promise confidentiality.
- 9.7 It is expected that you discuss your concerns with the parents and seek their agreement to making a referral to the Integrated Front Door, unless you consider that this would place the child at increased risk of significant harm.
- 9.8 You do not need the parents' consent to make a referral if you consider the child is in need of protection, although parents will ultimately be made aware of which organisation made the referral. If parents refuse to give consent to a referral but you decide to continue, you need to make this clear to the Integrated Front Door ([IFD@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:IFD@wirral.gov.uk) / 0151 606 2008).
- 9.9 If you decide to refer the child without the parents' consent, make sure to record this with a full explanation of your decision.

9.10 When you make your referral, you should agree with the Integrated Front Door what the child and parents will be told, by whom and when. The school as a relevant agency should be part of discussions with statutory safeguarding partners to agree to the levels for the different types of assessment as part of local arrangements.

**MAKING A REFERRAL** - If a child or young person is at risk of harm, abuse or neglect please report it to the **Integrated Front Door**

**Mon-Fri, 9:00am – 5.00pm Tel: 0151 606 2008**

**Outside of these hours Tel: 0151 677 6557**

**Email: [IFD@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:IFD@wirral.gov.uk)**

In an emergency always call police on 999.

If you think there has been a crime but it is not an emergency call 101.

**The new online Request for Services referral form can be accessed here:**

[https://wirral-self.achieveservice.com/service/Children\\_and\\_families\\_request\\_for\\_support\\_form](https://wirral-self.achieveservice.com/service/Children_and_families_request_for_support_form)

## **10. SAFER WORKFORCE AND MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

(This procedure is detailed in Appendix C, Section 4)

10.1 We will prevent people who pose risks to children from working in our school by ensuring that all individuals working in any capacity at our school have been subjected to safeguarding checks in line with [Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2025](#). In addition to obtaining the DBS certificate described, anyone who is appointed to carry out teaching work will require an additional check to ensure they are not prohibited from teaching. See Appendix C.

A check of any prohibition can be carried out using the Teacher Services' system that may be found here: [Teaching Regulation Agency](#)

Prohibition orders are described in the National College for Teaching and Leadership's (NCTL) publication Teacher misconduct: the prohibition of teachers. It can be found here:

[Teacher misconduct: the prohibition of teachers - GOV.UK](#)

- 10.2 We will ensure that agencies and third parties supplying staff provide us evidence that they have made the appropriate level of safeguarding checks on individuals working in our school. See Appendix C, for information on Single Central Record (SCR). The single central record must cover the following people: all staff, including teacher trainees on salaried routes, agency and third-party and supply staff who work at the school. The Single Central Record is located in the finance office.
- 10.3 Every job description, person specification and job advertisement will have a clear statement about the safeguarding responsibilities of the post holder. The school website will echo this within our 'Vacancies' section. The school will consider carrying out an online search on shortlisted candidates to help identify any issues that are publicly available online.
- 10.4 We will ensure that at least one member of every interview panel has completed safer recruitment training within the last 5 years.
- 10.5 We have a procedure in place to manage allegations against members of staff, supply staff and volunteers (and to respond to low level concerns) in line with [allegations against staff procedure](#). We will communicate with Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), through consultations and referrals where needed. Allegations related to any incidents when an individual or organisation is using the school premises for the purposes of running activities for children, the school will follow our safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO' within 24 hours.
- 10.6 Supply teachers – we will consider all allegations against an individual not directly employed by, where disciplinary procedures do not fully apply, (for example, supply teachers provided by an employment agency) and ensure allegations are dealt with properly and communication with supply agency and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is continued throughout the investigation.
- 10.7 There is an agreed staff behaviour policy (sometimes called the code of conduct) which is compliant with 'Safer Working Practices', and includes - acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships, [low level concerns](#) and communications including the use of social media. The staff Code of Conduct policy is located on the school intranet. Staff are also directed to follow PROMPT to avoid data breaches and unsafe behaviour. [PROMPT Guidance](#)
- 10.8. For agency and third party supply staff, schools and colleges must also include whether written confirmation has been received that the employment business supplying the member of supply staff has carried out the relevant checks and obtained the appropriate certificates, and the date that confirmation was received and whether any enhanced DBS certificate check has been provided in respect of the member of staff.

**Further Guidance can be accessed (Feb 2022):**

<https://c-cluster-110.uploads.documents.cimpress.io/v1/uploads/d71d6fd8-b99e-4327-b8fd-1ac968b768a4~110/original?tenant=vbu-digital>

## **11. STAFF INDUCTION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

- 11.1 All new members of staff, including newly-qualified teachers and teaching assistants, will be given induction that includes basic safeguarding training on how to recognise signs of abuse, how to respond to any concerns, e-safety and familiarisation with the Child Protection (safeguarding) policy, staff code of conduct, Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges and other related policies. All governors and trustees should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online risks and harm) training at induction. There are mechanisms in place, such as safeguarding updates, to assist staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities as set out in [Part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education](#). Staff should also read, "[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)" Dec 2023
- 11.2 The induction will be proportionate to staff members' and governors' roles and responsibilities.
- 11.3 All Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) will undergo updated Safeguarding training every two years. DSL's should undertake Prevent awareness training and disseminate the training to all staff annually.
- 11.4 All staff members of the school will undergo face to face training (whole-school training) which is regularly updated and at least every three years. ***All governors must undergo governor specific awareness training to equip governors with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge, so they're assured safeguarding policies/procedures are effective and deliver a robust whole-school approach to safeguarding. This training should be regularly updated.*** All staff will have access to WSCP multi-agency safeguarding training and e-learning.  
<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/training/>
- 11.5 Staff members who miss the whole-school training will be required to undertake other relevant training to make up for it, e.g. by joining another school's whole-school training, booking onto whole-school training mop-up sessions. To book mop up sessions visit safeguarding partnership website:  
<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/training/>

- 11.6 The nominated governor for safeguarding will undergo training prior to or soon after appointment to the role; this training will be updated every three years. All governors will receive appropriate safeguarding training annually.
- 11.7 We will ensure that staff members provided by other agencies and third parties, e.g. supply teachers and contractors, have received appropriate safeguarding training commensurate with their roles before starting work. They will be given the opportunity to take part in whole-school training if it takes place during their period of work for the school.
- 11.8 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will provide briefings to the school on any changes to safeguarding legislation and procedures and relevant learning from Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR's) in line with Working Together 2023. These will occur annually or more frequently when necessary.

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/serious-case-reviews/>

- 11.9 The school will maintain accurate and up to date records of staff induction and training.

## **12. CONFIDENTIALITY, CONSENT AND INFORMATION SHARING**

- 12.1 We recognise that all matters relating to Safeguarding are confidential.
- 12.2 The head teacher or the Designated Safeguarding Lead will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis only.
- 12.3 All staff members must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep key information a secret or to themselves which might compromise the child's safety or well-being.
- 12.4 All staff members have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
- 12.5 All staff members who come into contact with children will be given appropriate training to understand the purpose of information sharing in order to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- 12.6 We will ensure that staff members are confident about what they can and should do under the law, including how to obtain consent to share information and when information can be shared without consent.
- 12.7 Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and in promoting children's welfare, including in relation to their educational outcomes. Schools and colleges have clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes.

12.8 Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. They should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision. [Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers](#) supports staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. This advice includes the seven golden rules for sharing information and considerations with regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety of children. [\(KCSIE 2025\)](#)

School and college staff should be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care.

### **13. INTER-AGENCY WORKING**

13.1 We will develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, including agencies providing early help services to children, the police and Children's Social Care. In line with managing internally, the school or college may decide that the children involved do not require referral to statutory services but may benefit from early help. Early help is support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent HSB and may prevent escalation of sexual violence. It is particularly important that the designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) know what the local early help process is and how and where to access support. More information on the early help process can be found in [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).

13.2 We will ensure that relevant staff members participate in multi-agency meetings and forums, including child protection conferences and core groups, to consider individual children.

13.3 We will participate in Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs), other reviews and file audits as and when required to do so by the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership. We will ensure that we have a clear process for gathering the evidence required for reviews and audits and embed recommendations into practice and compile required actions within agreed timescales.

## **14. CONTRACTORS, SERVICE AND ACTIVITY PROVIDERS AND WORK PLACEMENT PROVIDERS**

- 14.1 We will ensure that contractors and providers are aware of our school's Child Protection - safeguarding policy and procedures. We will require that employees and volunteers provided by these organisations use our procedure to report concerns.
- 14.2 We will seek assurance that employees and volunteers provided by these organisations and working with our children have been subjected to the appropriate level of safeguarding check in line with KCSIE 2025. If assurance is not obtained, permission to work with our children or use our school premises may be refused.
- 14.3 When we commission services from other organisations, we will ensure that compliance with our policy and procedures is a contractual requirement.

## **15. WHISTLE-BLOWING AND COMPLAINTS**

- 15.1 We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff members fail to do so. The school Whistle Blowing policy is located on the school website.

Whistleblowing: guidance and code of practice for employers is located [here](#).

Whistleblowing Advice Line is available for all workers - 0800 028 0285

Email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

[Blowing the whistle to the Department for Education - GOV.UK](#)

- 15.2 We will ensure that all staff members are aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of Safeguarding, which does include the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary, they will speak with the head teacher, the chair of the governing body or with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- 15.3 We have a clear reporting procedure for children, parents and other people to report concerns or complaints, including abusive or poor practice. We also acknowledge that low-level concerns can arise in several ways from various sources, e.g. suspicion, complaint or a disclosure. Procedures in place for confidentially sharing and handling of low-level concerns. This is set out in the Low Level Concerns Policy.

15.4 We will actively seek the views of children, parents and carers and staff members on our Safeguarding arrangements through surveys, questionnaires and other means.

## **16. SITE SECURITY & OUT OF SCHOOL PROVIDERS**

16.1 All staff members have a responsibility to ensure our buildings and grounds are secure and for reporting concerns that may come to light.

16.2 We check the identity of all visitors and volunteers coming into school. Visitors are expected to sign in and out in the office visitors' log and to display a visitor's badge while on the school site. Any individual who is not known or identifiable will be challenged for clarification and reassurance. The visitor policy is located: WSCP Provide schools with guidance for visitors to school and can be found here:  
<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/visitors-to-schools-guidance/>

16.3 The school will not accept the behaviour of any individual, parent or anyone else, that threatens school security or leads others, child or adult, to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse the person access to the school site.

16.4 Where schools are used for non-school activities, those providers are expected to meet the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Out of School Settings. More details regarding safeguarding in sport can be found here: [safeguarding in sport](#)

## **17. QUALITY ASSURANCE**

17.1 We will ensure that systems are in place to monitor the implementation of and compliance with this policy and accompanying procedures.

17.2 We will complete an audit of the school's safeguarding arrangements at frequencies specified by the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership and using the Section 175 online audit tool provided by them for this purpose. More information including how to register for school 175 audit: [Section 11 and 175 Audit - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) Findings from the audits can be found in WSCP's '[Annual Report](#)' section on the web.

17.3 The school's senior management and the governing body will ensure that action is taken to remedy any deficiencies and weaknesses identified in child protection arrangements without delay.

## **18. POLICY REVIEW**

- 18.1 This policy and the procedures will be reviewed every academic year. All other linked policies will be reviewed in line with the policy review cycle.
- 18.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that staff members, including volunteers and sessional workers are made aware of any amendments to policies and procedures.
- 18.3 Additional updates to the Child Protection - safeguarding policy and appendix will take place as and when needed.

Updated Policy Date:	Scheduled review by WSCP
22/08/2025	30/06/2026

## APPENDIX A: The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

### 1. MANAGING REFERRALS:

- 1.1 Refer all safeguarding cases, including Early Help, to the Integrated Front Door (IFD) and to the Police if a crime may have been committed. (IFD@wirral.gov.uk)
- 1.2 Identify any safeguarding issues relating to individual children, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- 1.3 Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff members on matters of child protection and safeguarding, including Contextual Safeguarding.
- 1.4 Escalate inter-agency concerns and disagreements about a child's wellbeing. Further information can be found here:  
[10.2 Multi-agency Escalation Procedure - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)
- 1.5 Have responsibility to ensure there is at least one key adult for 'Operation Encompass\*' and the point of contact for Child Exploitation. \*Guiding principles of the scheme are here  
<https://www.operationencompass.org/school-participation>. An annual information letter to be sent to parents. All downloadable documents are here: [OE - Resources for school](#). A generic safeguarding email address has been sent to [Operation Encompass](#) to ensure continuity. A key worker completes the online [key adult training](#) annually. Further information on Wirral Operation Encompass can be found here: [OE Information](#)
- 1.6 To ensure that the Local Authority are notified if children are persistently absent or missing from education. Including children who are 'absent' from education, particularly on repeat occasions or for prolonged periods. Or those 'unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education'.

### 2. RECORD KEEPING:

- 2.1 Keep written (or online) records of Safeguarding and welfare concerns and ensure a stand-alone file is created as necessary for children with safeguarding concerns
- 2.2 Schools should have at least two emergency contacts for every child in the school in case of emergencies, and in case there are welfare concerns at the home.

- 2.3 Maintain a chronology of significant incidents for each child with safeguarding concerns, including a record of decisions made and the reasons for those decisions.
- 2.4 Ensure such records are kept confidentially and securely and separate from the child's educational record.
- 2.5 Where children leave the school, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term to allow the new school or college to have support in place for when the child arrives. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should ensure secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. For schools, this should be transferred separately from the main pupil file. Receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as Designated Safeguarding Leads and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) or the names persons with oversight for special educational needs and disability (SEND) in a college, are aware as required.

### **3. INTER-AGENCY WORKING AND INFORMATION SHARING:**

- 3.1 Co-operate and comply with Children's Social Care for enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- 3.2 Advocate that the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe; and this includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent ([Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#)).
- 3.3 Complete reports and attend, or ensure other relevant staff members attend, child protection conferences, core group meetings and other multi-agency meetings, as required.
- 3.4 Liaise with other agencies working with the child, share information as appropriate and contribute to assessments.
- 3.5 The school's information sharing policy is located on the school website refers to confidentiality in line with 'Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services' (DfE, 2018).

[DfE non statutory information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parent](#)

#### 4. TRAINING:

4.1 Undertake appropriate annual training, **updated every two years for DSLs**, in order to

- be able to recognise signs of abuse and how to respond to them, including special circumstances such as child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, fabricated or induced illness
- understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, e.g. WSCP thresholds of need, preventative education and the local offer
- have a working knowledge of how the local authority conducts initial and review child protection (CP) case conferences and contribute effectively to these; and
- be alert to the specific needs of children in need (as specified in section 17 of the Children Act 1989), those with special educational needs, pregnant teenagers and young carers, those who are privately fostered, vulnerable to exploitation, radicalisation and subject to listening to or hearing [domestic abuse](#).

4.2 Ensure each member of staff has read and understands the school's Child Protection - safeguarding policy and procedures, including providing induction on these matters to new staff members. Induction and training, must include the school's behaviour policy and the school's procedures for managing children who are [missing education](#), or 'unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education', as well as the staff code of conduct, and the child protection policy, dealing with disclosures and managing allegations processes.

4.3 Organise face-to-face whole-school Safeguarding training for all staff members at least **every three years**. Ensure staff members who miss the training receive it by other means, e.g. by joining another school's training. The DSL must provide all staff members with safeguarding updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Link to access safeguarding training via Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP) is:  
[Virtual Safeguarding Training for schools and education](#)

4.4 All staff should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding, and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This should include the:

- child protection - safeguarding policy
- behaviour policy
- staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct)
- safeguarding response to children who go missing from education; and
- role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

Copies of policies and a copy of Part one of this document should be provided to staff at induction (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021: 6). For staff

who don't work directly with children on a regular basis the condensed version of part 1 (Annex A) can also be accessed.

Best practice would also see staff and leaders reading - ['What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'](#), as it contains examples of the different types of safeguarding issues.

- 4.5 Ensure the school allocates time and resources every year for relevant staff members to attend training and receive continuous professional development opportunities.
- 4.6 Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any action the school takes to protect them.
- 4.7 Maintain accurate records of staff recruitment, induction, ongoing training and continual professional development (CPD) relating to safeguarding.
- 4.8 New staff to school, whether starting at the start of a new academic year, or in year, will receive thorough induction programme on their first day. This will ensure that they have the knowledge and understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures.

WSCP School / College / Educational establishment training courses can be found here:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/schools/>

## 5. **AWARENESS RAISING:**

- 5.1 Ensure the school's or college's child protection – safeguarding policies are known, understood and used appropriately;
- 5.2 Ensure the school's or college's child protection - safeguarding policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies or proprietors regarding this;
- 5.3 Ensure the safeguarding policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school or college in this; and
- 5.4 Link with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements. [Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

## **6. QUALITY ASSURANCE:**

- 6.1 Monitor the implementation of and compliance with policy and procedures, including periodic audits of Safeguarding and welfare concerns files (at a minimum once a year).
- 6.2 Complete an audit of the school's safeguarding arrangements at frequencies specified by the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership. Schools complete the 175 audit here:  
<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/section-11-175-audit/>
- 6.3 Provide regular reports, to the governing body detailing changes and reviews to policy, training undertaken by staff members and the number of children with child protection plans and other relevant data.
- 6.4 Take lead responsibility for remedying any deficiencies and weaknesses identified in Safeguarding arrangements.

## **7. SUPERVISION AND REFLECTION:**

- 7.1 Working to ensure children and young people are protected from harm requires sound professionals judgements to be made. It is demanding work that can be distressing and stressful. It is therefore essential that staff involved in this work have access to advice and a robust process of reflection/ supervision to help them reflect upon and review their work.
- 7.2 The school will have a framework for providing an opportunity to staff who are working directly with vulnerable young people, particularly those who are being managed on a child protection, child in need or team around the family plan, to have regular access to an appropriate manager to talk through and reflect on their involvement with the child's case. A guidance document published by the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership for undertaking safeguarding reflection is published on the WSCP website and can be accessed here:  
[Safeguarding Procedures](#)

## APPENDIX B: Safeguarding Procedure and Child Protection

### 1. DEFINITIONS:

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

1.2 **Children** are any people who have not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday; a 16-year-old, whether living independently, in further education, in the armed forces or in hospital, is a child and is entitled to the same protection and services as anyone younger. KCSIE now applies to providers of post 16 education as set out in the Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021.

1.3 **Child protection** is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and refers to activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, or significant harm is suggested.

1.4 **Early help** means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years to teenage years.

1.5 **Harm** is ill treatment or impairment of health and development, including impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

1.6 **Safeguarding children** is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Schools and college staff are particularly important, as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children's welfare and prevent concerns from escalating ([KCSIE 2025](#)).

All staff must be aware safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting. Staff should be clear as to the school or college's policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse; and on how the risk of child-on-child abuse is being minimised, how suspected abuse will be recorded and investigated; as well as how the victims and perpetrators will be supported. More support can be found:

[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK](#)

It is important that schools record incidents across the whole spectrum of sexual violence, sexual harassment, and harmful sexualised behaviours so that they can understand the scale of the problem in their own schools and make appropriate plans to reduce it. For more guidance go to: [\(KCSIE 2025\)](#)

All such incidents should be immediately reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or equivalent and managed in line with your setting's child protection policies. Victims of harm should be supported by the school's pastoral system.

A bespoke helpline for children and young people who've experienced abuse at school, and for worried adults and professionals that need support and guidance. If you are concerned about something, you can contact the NSPCC helpline, Report Abuse in Education on 0800 136663 or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

- 1.7 **Significant harm** is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in the family in the best interests of the child. Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 states 'where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health or development, his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child.'
- 1.8 Any child may benefit from [early help](#), but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:
  - is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
  - has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
  - has a mental health need
  - is a young carer
  - is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
  - is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care,

- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child.

## 2. CATEGORIES OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT:

2.1 **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

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

2.2 **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical 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 misuse. Once a child is born, it may involve a parent failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate care givers
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Educational neglect is also considered:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/neglect/>.

Neglect is the most common reason for a child to be the subject of a child Protection Plan in the UK and research from the NSPCC tells us that 1 in 7 secondary school age children and 1 in 20 children under 11 in the UK have been neglected at some point. To help combat neglect of children the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership has developed and published its multi-agency Neglect Strategy (June 2023): Cherish – [Wirral's Neglect Strategy](#)

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

2.4 **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific

safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it. ([KCSIE 2025](#)).

### **3. MENTAL HEALTH:**

- 3.1 All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- 3.2 Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.
- 3.3 Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.
- 3.4 If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

[Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing - GOV.UK](#)

The department has published advice and guidance on [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#), and [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#) (which may also be useful for colleges). In addition, Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among young people including its guidance [Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing](#). Its resources include social media, forming positive relationships, smoking and alcohol. See <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/topics/mental-wellbeing/overview> for links to all materials and lesson plans.

**There are three thresholds for and types of referral that need to be considered:**

**Is this a child with additional needs; where their health, development or achievement may be adversely affected?**

- Age appropriate progress is not being made and the causes are unclear or
- The support of more than one agency is needed to meet the child or young person's needs.

If this is a child with additional needs discuss the issues with the Early Help Assessment (EHAT) trained practitioner in your school, the child and parents. You will need to obtain parental consent for an EHAT to be completed.

**Is this a child in need matter? Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 says:**

- they are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development, without the provision of services by a local authority.
- their health or development is likely to be impaired, or further impaired without the provision of such services.
- they are SEND (and as such can face additional safeguarding challenges).

*If this is a child in need, discuss the issues with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and parents. Obtain their consent for referral.*

**Is this a child protection matter? Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 says:**

- children at risk or who are suffering significant harm.
- children suffering the effects of significant harm
- serious health problems.

More on the thresholds can be found here:

[Multi-agency Thresholds - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

*If this is a child protection matter, this should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and will need to be referred to the Integrated Front Door by the school as soon as possible.*

[Concerned about a child - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

## APPENDIX C: FURTHER INFORMATION

A full series of '[7-minute briefings](#)' have been designed to inform and engage staff in understanding a wide range of safeguarding concerns. A selection can be found at the end of this document. There are new briefing being added, so to access the full range of briefings click here: [7 Minute Briefings - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

### 1. Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. [Harmful Practices - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

**1.1 Indicators** - There is a range of potential indicators that a girl may be at risk of FGM. Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation>

The FGM resource pack for agencies can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack>

**1.2 Actions** - If staff have a concern they should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care. Mandatory reporting commenced in October 2015. These procedures remain when dealing with concerns regarding the potential for FGM to take place. Where a teacher discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18, there will be a statutory duty upon that individual to report it to the police.

### 1.3 Mandatory Reporting Duty

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) will place a statutory duty upon **teachers, along with social workers and healthcare professionals, to report to the police** where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils, but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies.

The Mandatory reporting duty commenced in October 2015. Teachers must report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to

have been carried out. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the school's designated safeguarding lead and involve the Integrated Front Door as appropriate.

1.4 **Harmful practices** is an umbrella term for many practices that take place as a result of belief systems. There are many different practices worldwide, examples include child marriage, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, breast flattening, child abuse linked to faith or belief and so-called 'honour'-based abuse.

All these practices in isolation are physically and/or emotionally abusive, however, their continued adoption in society means that they stop being seen as abusive and start to be seen as acceptable, even a rite of passage, therefore losing the label of abuse.

## **2. Fabricated or Induced Illness / Perplexing Presentation:**

2.1 Staff must be aware of the risk of children being abused through fabricated illness. There are three main ways of the carer fabricating or inducing illness in a child. These are not mutually exclusive and include:

- fabrication of signs and symptoms. This may include fabrication of past medical history;
- fabrication of signs and symptoms and falsification of hospital charts and records, and specimens of bodily fluids. This may also include falsification of letters and documents;
- induction of illness by a variety of means.

2.2 Where this is identified and considered a risk a referral will be made to **The Integrated Front Door (IFD)** for support and guidance. School may involve other agencies in making their assessments. That could include school nurse, community paediatrician, occupational therapists for example. For more on perplexing presentations go to <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/7-Minute-Briefing-Perplexing-Presentations-and-FII.pdf>

## **3. Gang and Youth Serious Violence:**

3.1 Children and Young People who become involved in Gangs are at risk of violent crime and as a result of this involvement are deemed vulnerable. Agencies and professionals have a responsibility to safeguard these children and young people and to prevent further harm both to the young person and their potential victims. Risks associated with Gang activity include access to weapons (including firearms), retaliatory violence and territorial violence with other gangs, knife crime, sexual violence and substance misuse

3.2 **Indicators may be (age in brackets):**

- Troublesome (7-9; 10-12) / High daring (10-12) / Positive attitude towards delinquency (10-12) / Previously committed offences (7-9) / Involved in anti-social behaviour (10-12)
- Substance use (7-9) / Aggression (7-9) / Running away and truancy (7-9; 10-12) / Marijuana use (10- 12) / Marijuana availability (10-12) / Disrupted family (7- 9; 10-12) / Poor supervision (10-12)
- Low academic achievement in primary school (10- 12) / Learning disability (10-12) / Peers involved in crime and/or anti-social behaviour (7-9; 10-12)
- Children and young people in the neighbourhood involved in crime and/or anti-social behaviour (10-12)

[Serious Violence Strategy - GOV.UK](#)  
WSCP - [Children affected by gang and serious violence](#)

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

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

- **go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from their home;**
- **have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime).**

**4. 'Child Abuse Linked to Faith and Belief':**

4.1 Our policy recognises the 'National Action Plan to Tackle Abuse linked to faith or belief' which describes this abuse as:

'not about challenging people's beliefs, but where beliefs lead to abuse that must not be tolerated. This includes belief in witchcraft, spirit possession, demons or the devil, the evil eye or djinns, dakini, kindoki, ritual or muti murders and use of fear of the supernatural to make children comply with being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation. The beliefs which are not confined to one faith, nationality or ethnic community.'

4.2 When this type of abuse is suspected staff will make a referral will make a referral to Wirral Integrated Front Door (IFD – 0151 606 2008) for support and guidance. School may request the advice and support of MEAS service in making their assessments. For more information:  
<http://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/calfb/>

[Child abuse linked to faith or belief: national action plan - GOV.UK](#)

Savera UK are a Liverpool based charity which specifically targets Harmful Practices including FGM, Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage. [Savera UK](#)

## 5. **Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking:**

5.1 The Modern Slavery Act 2015 is an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It is designed to combat modern slavery in the UK and consolidates previous offences relating to trafficking and slavery. [Modern Slavery Act 2015 - GOV.UK](#)

The definition of human trafficking is:

- (a) “Trafficking of persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat of or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.
- (b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in sub-paragraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used.
- (c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in sub-paragraph (a) of this article
- (d) “Child” shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

5.2 Children trafficked into the country may be registered at a school for a term or longer, before being moved to another part of the UK or abroad. This pattern of registration and de-registration may be an indicator that a child has been trafficked. It has been identified as a particular concern in schools which are situated near ports of entry, but practitioners should be alert to this possibility in all schools. However, practitioners should always bear in mind that not all children who go missing from education have been victims of trafficking. For example, there may be instances of children from communities that move around – Gypsy, Roma, traveller or migrant families – who collectively go missing from school.

5.3 If a member of the school staff suspects that a child may have been trafficked they should act immediately to inform the senior member of staff with designated responsibility for child protection and ensure that police or local authority children’s social care are contacted immediately. The National Referral Mechanism ( NRM ) is a framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support. To access support, [click here](#)

## 6. Risks Associated with Parent/Carer Mental Health:

6.1 The majority of Parents who suffer mental ill-health are able to care for and safeguard their children and/or unborn child. Some parents, however, will be unable to meet the needs and ensure the safety of their children. The school will follow the guidance outlined in 'working with parents with mental health problems and their children (Think child, think parent, think family: a guide to parental mental health and child welfare).

6.2 Our approach is to recognise; seek support; instil preventive factors and monitor. The Integrated Front Door can provide links and support with Wirral Adult Social Care if required. Designated teacher should seek support through TAF with family support but escalate to the Integrated Front Door if they are concerned that the child involved is being placed at immediate risk of harm. The offer includes mental health support services: [Early Help and Support for Families - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

6.3 **Homelessness** - Homelessness or the risk of it poses a serious threat to a child's welfare. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and their deputies must know how to contact and refer to the Local Housing Authority to act early on concerns. Risk indicators include:

- Debt or rent arrears
- Domestic abuse
- Anti-social behaviour
- Eviction or threat of eviction

Referrals to housing services should follow local procedures but must not replace referrals to Children's Social Care where a child is at risk of harm.

Under the [Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#), councils must assess needs, create housing plans, and support those at risk. Early intervention is key. While most cases involve families, 16- and 17-year-olds may be homeless independently. In such cases, Children's Social Care is the lead agency, and DSLs must ensure appropriate referrals are made. [See statutory guidance for more details.](#)

## 7. Drugs and Alcohol:

Children can be at risk of drugs and alcohol directly and indirectly.

They may be at direct risk of having access to these substances (see guidance on gangs) or indirectly because they affect family life at home through use by parents/carers, siblings, child-minders etc. Risks associated with drugs and alcohol and built into the year 5-6 curriculum. We work with our partners and Wirral LA to provide curriculum advice and guidance in this area. To access the most up to date Wirral School Drugs Policy click - [Wirral Schools Drug Policy Framework](#)

More details can be found at:  
<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/substance-misuse/>

## **8. Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriages:**

8.1 Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage refers to a collection of practices used to control behaviour within families to protect perceived cultural or religious beliefs and honour. Violence can occur when offenders perceive that a relative has shamed the family or community by breaking their 'code of honour'. Honour Based Violence cuts across all cultures and communities: Turkish, Kurdish, Afghani, South Asian, African, Middle Eastern, South and Eastern European for example. This is not an exhaustive list. Where a culture is heavily male dominated, HBV may exist.

8.2 'A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not (or, in the case of some vulnerable adults, cannot) consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.' The age to marry has been raised to the age of 18. (Feb 2023) It is now a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their 18th Birthday, even if violence, threats, or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages. ([KCSIE 2025](#))

For more information see;

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/when-things-go-wrong/forced-marriage/>

[The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage - GOV.UK](#)

[Karma Nirvana](#)

## **9. Managing Allegations against staff:**

9.1 The Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations (**LADO must be told of allegations against adults working with children and young people within 24 hours**). Chairs of Governors should refer to this guidance if there is an allegation against the headteacher. This includes all cases that meet the harms threshold where a person is alleged to have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The last bullet point above includes behaviour that may have happened outside of school or college, that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children, this is known as transferable risk. Where appropriate an assessment of transferable risk to children with whom the person works should be undertaken. If in doubt seek advice from the local authority designated officer (LADO).

9.2 There are two levels of allegation/concern:

1. Allegations that may meet the harms threshold (see definition above)
2. Allegation/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold – referred to in the guidance as ‘low level concerns’ ([KCSIE 2025](#))

Governing bodies and proprietors should have policies and processes to deal with concerns (including allegations) which do not meet the harm threshold. Concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

It is important that schools and colleges have appropriate policies and processes in place to manage and record any such concerns and take appropriate action to safeguard children.

‘Low Level Concerns’ (see Appendix E) - Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harms threshold) are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical.

A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO. Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

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

**Such concerns such always be recorded and reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.**

9.3 The Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations (LADO) in Wirral is **Kevin Dyke**

- **email any referral and /or consultation form to:**  
[safeguardingunit@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:safeguardingunit@wirral.gov.uk) and [kerrywilliams@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:kerrywilliams@wirral.gov.uk)

If judged appropriate during the initial contact with the LADO, an Allegations Referral Form must be completed by the senior manager in full and forwarded to the LADO via email within 24 hours. LADO referral forms, flowcharts and information can be accessed here:

[LADO Allegations - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

The LADO procedure does not replace safeguarding procedures and the **Integrated Front Door** ([IFD@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:IFD@wirral.gov.uk)) must be contacted if you have a safeguarding concern about a child. If you require advice about your agency's response to an allegation, please contact your HR provider.

The LADO can only provide advice and guidance regarding allegations in relation to a person in a position of trust. Any general safeguarding enquiries or concerns should be reported to Wirral Integrated Front Door on 0151 606 2008 or 0151 677 6557 out of hours.

## **10. Preventing Radicalisation:**

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of schools' wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse. During the process of radicalisation, it is possible to intervene to prevent 'susceptible' people being radicalised.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people. As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. School staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include making a referral to the Channel programme

**10.1 Prevent** - From 1 July 2015 all schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 ('The CTSA 2015') Schools must have regard to statutory PREVENT GUIDANCE issued under section 29 of the CTSA 2015 and the [Contest strategy](#). Paragraphs 57-76 of the Prevent

guidance are concerned specifically with schools' responsibility to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism."

This duty is known as the Prevent duty. It applies to a wide range of public-facing bodies.

The statutory Prevent guidance summarises the requirements on schools in terms of four general themes:

- risk assessment
- working in partnership
- staff training
- IT policies

Schools are expected to **assess the risk** of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology. This means being able to demonstrate both a general understanding of the risks affecting children and young people in the area and a specific understanding of how to identify individual children who may be at risk of radicalisation and what to do to support them. Schools and colleges should have clear procedures in place for protecting children at risk of radicalisation. These procedures may be set out in existing safeguarding policies. **It is not necessary for schools and colleges to have distinct policies on implementing the Prevent duty.** The Prevent duty builds on **existing local partnership arrangements.** For example, governing bodies and proprietors of all schools should ensure that their safeguarding arrangements take into account the policies and procedures of Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs).

The Single Point Contact for Wirral is Andrea Bignall, [Andrea.Mears@merseyside.police.uk](mailto:Andrea.Mears@merseyside.police.uk). All assessments are to be carried via Integrated Front Door. Designated safeguarding leads and other senior leaders should familiarise themselves with the revised [Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales](#).

The Prevent guidance refers to the importance of Prevent **awareness training** to equip staff to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. Individual schools are best placed to assess the training needs of staff in the light of their assessment of the risk to pupils at the school of being drawn into terrorism. *As a minimum, however, schools should ensure that the designated safeguarding lead undertakes Prevent awareness training and is able to provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.* [7 Minute Briefings - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

Schools must ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when **accessing the internet** in schools. Schools should ensure that suitable filtering is in place. It is also important that schools teach pupils about online safety more generally. Further information and guidance is available on the WSCP website: [Prevent Radicalisation and Extremism - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

The Department for Education has also published advice for schools on the Prevent duty and is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts other sources of advice and support.

[The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation - GOV.UK](#)

## 10.2 Channel

School staff should understand when it is appropriate to make a referral to the Channel team. Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

Section 36 of the CTSA 2015 places a duty on local authorities to ensure Channel panels are in place. The panel must be chaired by the local authority and include the police for the relevant local authority area. Following a referral the panel will assess the extent to which identified individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, and, where considered appropriate and necessary consent is obtained, arrange for support to be provided to those individuals. Section 38 of the CTSA 2015 requires partners of Channel panels to co-operate with the panel in the carrying out of its functions and with the police in providing information about a referred individual. Schools and colleges are required to have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education and, as partners, are required to cooperate with local Channel panels. Channel guidance can be found here:

[Channel and Prevent Multi-Agency Panel \(PMAP\) guidance - GOV.UK](#) More on [Channel and Prevent Process - Wirral](#)

## 11. Child Missing Education:

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area, or those 'unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education'.

- 11.1 A child going [missing from education](#) or unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School and college staff should follow the school's or college's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual and/or criminal exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.
- 11.2 Schools should put in place appropriate Child Protection - safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from

education, particularly those 'unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education', on repeat occasions or for prolonged periods. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers. An appropriate response is needed when a child has poor attendance or is regularly missing education, or those 'unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education'. [Missing Education guidance is here.](#)

11.3 **All** schools must inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

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

11.4 The local authority must be notified when a school is to delete a pupil from its register under the above circumstances. **Schools should contact the Admissions section: Tel: 0151 666 4600.** This should be done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting the pupil's name from the register. It is essential that schools comply with this duty, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, or those 'unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education', follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

**All schools must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).**

11.5 In addition, the school will receive an Operation Encompass notification if a child has been reported to the police as missing from home. Appropriate follow up will be taken to ensure positive school experiences.

## **12. Child Sexual Exploitation & Child Exploitation (CE):**

12.1 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) - CSE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation (see below), understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school/college, inside and outside of home, and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

All school and college staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.

A full list of indicators can be found here: [Child Exploitation - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

The department provide: [Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners](#)

12.2 **Child Criminal Exploitation:** While there is still no legal definition of 'Child Criminal Exploitation' or CCE, it is increasingly being recognised as a major factor behind crime in communities across Merseyside and the UK, while also simultaneously victimising vulnerable young people and leaving them at risk of harm. A simple definition of CCE is: CCE often occurs without the victim being aware that they are being exploited and involves young people being encouraged, cajoled or threatened to carry out crime for the benefit of others. In return they are offered friendship or peer acceptance, but also cigarettes, drugs (especially cannabis), alcohol or even food and accommodation.

12.3 County lines is a term used to describe gangs, groups or drug networks that supply drugs from urban to suburban areas across the country, including market and coastal towns, using dedicated mobile phone lines or 'deal lines'. They exploit children and vulnerable adults to move the drugs and money to and from the urban area, and to store the drugs in local markets. They will often use intimidation, violence and weapons, including knives, corrosives and firearms. County lines is a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and missing persons; and the response to tackle it involves the police, the National Crime Agency, a wide range of Government departments, local government agencies and voluntary and community sector organisations. County lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing and exploitation has a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and local communities. Further information and PAN Merseyside CE / CCE Documentation can be found here:

[Child Exploitation - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

12.4 **Child Sexual Exploitation & Child Criminal Exploitation:** Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females and children or adults.

The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

Further information and documentation can be found here:  
<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/child-sexual-exploitation-cse/>

### **13. Sexual harassment, violence, violence against women and girls (VAWG) harmful sexual behaviours (child on child abuse and 'Upskirting')**

13.1 Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence refers to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, including rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (described in the guidance and in KCSIE 2025).

13.2 It is important that schools and colleges are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school/college. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

13.3 Staff must challenge any form of derogatory and sexualised language or behaviour. Staff should be vigilant to sexualised/aggressive touching/grabbing

DfE guidance situates sexual violence, sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour in the context of developing a whole-school safeguarding culture, where sexual misconduct is seen as unacceptable, and not 'banter' or an inevitable part of growing up. Advice about tackling and reporting sexual harassment in schools and colleges can be found in [KCSIE 2025](#). The Wirral Youth Justice Service have developed a multi-agency HSB identification tool to help professionals determine and assess the level of sexual behaviours being displayed by a child.

The tool, and included guidance sets out, for different age ranges what are expected and normal behaviours, what are inappropriate or concerning, and what are likely to be harmful. For each level of behaviour the tool provides clear advice about how to respond.

Click here for the [Wirral Identification Tool](#).

It should be recognised that these issues are likely to occur, and so schools should have procedures in place to deal with them. Groups at particular risk include girls, students who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, those who are gender questioning, Transgender+ (LGBT+), or are perceived by peers to be LGBT+, and pupils with SEND. We recognise that these children can be targeted by other children, so it is vital school provides a safe space for these children to speak out and share their concerns with members of staff. Pupils are protected from 'upskirting', bullying, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic behaviour, racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination. Staff have familiarity with the [Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK](#).

The Wirral Domestic Abuse Alliance and the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership have published the [Wirral Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls strategy](#).

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) refers to a range of crimes, with the common theme that they disproportionately affect women and girls. This strategy has been developed to help professionals identify, prevent and respond to all gender-based violence.

The strategy includes a comprehensive local delivery plan, and with its emphasis on prevention and education involves closer work with schools and colleges. This can be viewed here: [VAWG Strategy](#)

**Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)** - it is never a child's responsibility to prevent abuse, protect themselves or make the abuse stop. By better understanding child sexual abuse, having conversations and highlighting concerns, we can play a role in protecting children. We will use the CSA [Response Pathway](#) to respond to concerns of child sexual abuse at key points: from first concerns and early help safeguarding through to child protection and criminal justice responses.

13.4 Our school acknowledges the need to treat everyone equally, with fairness, dignity and respect. Any discriminatory behaviours are challenged, and children are supported to understand how to treat others with respect. We also have a statutory duty to report and record any of the above incidents. Schools must record incidents across the whole spectrum of sexual violence, sexual harassment, and harmful sexualised behaviours so that they can understand the scale of the problem in their own schools and make appropriate plans to reduce it.

All such incidents should be immediately reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or equivalent and managed in line with your setting's child protection policies. Victims of harm should be supported by the school's pastoral system and, and their wishes and feelings considered and that the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them, not criminalise them.

13.5 The appropriate safeguarding lead person should be familiar with the full guidance from the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS), Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK](#)

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

**What is consent?** Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal,

anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. Further information about consent can be found here: [Rape Crisis England & Wales](#) -

### **Sexual consent**

- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
- the age of consent is 16;

Woodchurch High School's Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment & Child on Child Abuse Policy can be found [here](#).

## **14. Digital Safety, Remote Learning & Filtering and Monitoring**

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation- technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm. An effective approach to online safety empowers a school or college to protect and educate the whole school or college community in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene and escalate any incident where appropriate.

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

- content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material
- contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users
- conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm

There is a Digital Safety Policy, which covers the use of mobile phones, cameras and other digital recording devices. E.g. i-Pads. For online safety, there is within the policy support about children accessing the internet whilst they're at school using data on their phones (3G or 4G networks). The policy reinforces the importance of online safety, including making parents aware of what your school ask children to do online (e.g. sites they need to visit or who they'll be interacting with online).

The Governing Body is doing all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the risk from the school's or college's IT system and ensure the school has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and regularly reviews their effectiveness.

For online safety, there is recognition in this guidance that most children are using data on their phones, on the 3G or the 4G network. In schools, this means that not only must staff think about filtering and monitoring within the school's infrastructure, they also need to have a policy about children accessing the internet whilst they're at school.

### **14.1 Filtering and monitoring**

Governing bodies and proprietors should be doing all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the school's or college's IT

system. As part of this process, governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their school or college has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place.

Whilst considering their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, governing bodies and proprietors should consider the age range of their pupils, the number of pupils, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs vs risks. Additional support documents can be found here: [digital safety](#)

The appropriateness of any filters and monitoring systems are a matter for individual schools and colleges and will be informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty.<sup>119</sup> The UK Safer Internet Centre has published guidance as to what "appropriate" filtering and monitoring might look like: [UK Safer Internet Centre: appropriate filtering and monitoring](#). There is guidance below designed to help parents and carers to keep their children as safe as possible when online: [Online Safety - Guidance for Parents \(April 2025\) - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) Use of AI imagery will be monitored in line with the Child Protection-Safeguarding Policy (Computer systems and software that are able to perform tasks that ordinarily require human intelligence, such as decision-making and the creation of images).

All staff are to understand their role in the published standards for 'Filtering and Monitoring'. and DSLs are expected to have the 'lead responsibility'. The standards can be found here: [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges - Guidance - GOV.UK](#). Further support on digital safety, filtering and monitoring can be found [here](#):

Filtering and Monitoring has been added to the full staff CPD programme and governing body/trustees will be supported to understand their role in Filtering and Monitoring. DSL's will have 'lead responsibility' for Filtering and Monitoring and this forms part of their job description.

**14.2** The policy for remote learning demonstrates an understanding of how to follow safeguarding procedures when planning remote education strategies and teaching remotely. The school maintains the capacity to provide remote education when it is not possible for some or all pupils to attend in person. All IT policies are located on the school's website.

[Providing remote education: guidance for schools - GOV.UK](#)

## **15. Pre-Appointment Checks and Safer Recruitment:**

**15.1** Any offer of appointment made to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, must be conditional on satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-employment checks. The guidance can be found [here](#).

**15.2** When appointing new staff, schools and colleges must

- Verify a candidate's identity. Identification checking guidelines can be found on the GOV.UK website; For details of changes to the guidelines from April 2025 click [here](#).
- obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity);
- Evidence of current address for identity – when using Route One for identity check, schools no longer need to obtain or verify address information, however every DBS application form still requires a full 5-year address history. Three documents confirming name and date of birth are sufficient (for example, a biometric passport, photocard driving licence, and a birth certificate).
- Schools are expected ID to confirm the applicant's identity, which includes being satisfied that their address history is accurate and consistent with other information (e.g. employment history, references).
- In cases where documents don't confirm the current address, schools will still need to verify it through other appropriate means.
- School is clear on who can verify identity (as relatives, friends, or household members cannot act as ID checkers), and verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. A job applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role;
- verify the person's right to work in the UK. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, follow advice on the [GOV.UK website](#);
- if the person has lived or worked outside the UK, make any further checks the school or college consider appropriate and verify professional qualifications, as appropriate.
- carry out prohibition check for all staff with QTS
- complete a risk assessment for each volunteers to decide whether they need to do an enhanced DBS check or not. (Please note:, even if it is decided an enhanced DBS is to be requested, if the volunteer is not in regulated activity, then you're not legally allowed to do a barred list check).
- Carrying out an online search on shortlisted candidates as part of due diligence (and informing them of this prior to any searches) to help identify any issues that are publicly available online

The Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021 extended safeguarding provisions to providers of post 16 Education: 16-19 Academies, Special Post-16 institutions and Independent Training Providers.

15.3 The school or college safer recruitment policy should focus on ensuring potential applicants are given the right messages about the school and

college's commitment to recruit suitable people. The [DBS Identity Checking Guidelines](#) (April 2025) refer to retaining identity check records and documents used to evidence identity for the duration of a person's employment, plus six years. This aligns with the data retention schedule advocated by the Government and can be found [here](#). **Further safer recruitment guidance can be found in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2025\)](#)**

### **Single Central Record:**

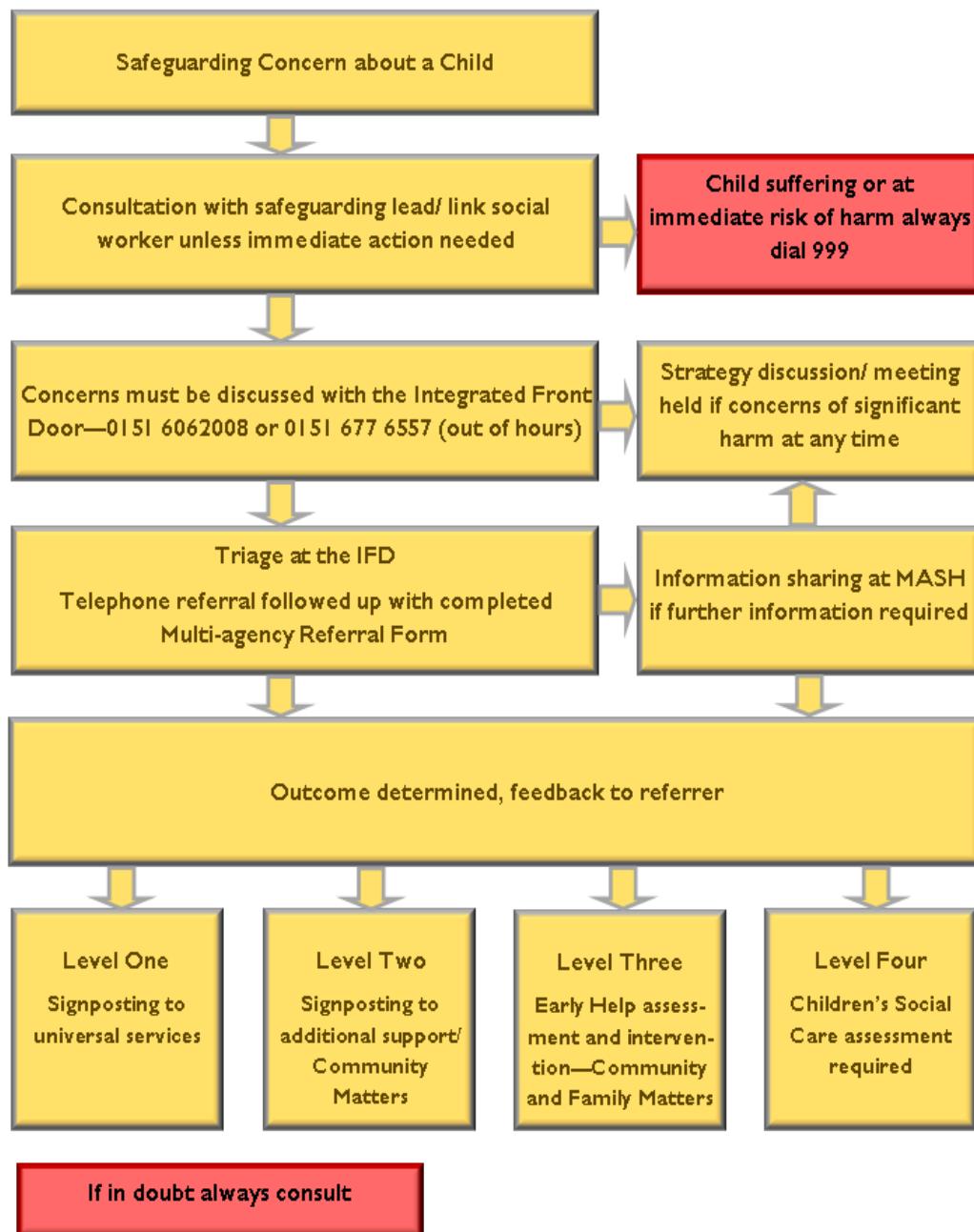
- 15.4 Schools and colleges must keep a single central record. The single central record must cover the following people:
  - all staff (including supply staff, and teacher trainees on salaried routes) who work at the school: in colleges, this means those providing education to children; and
  - The information that must be recorded in respect of staff members (including teacher trainees on salaried route) is whether the following checks have been carried out or certificates obtained, and the date on which each check was completed/certificate obtained:
  - an identity check / a barred list check / an enhanced DBS check/certificate / a prohibition from teaching check;
  - further checks on people who have lived or worked outside the UK; this would include recording checks for those EEA teacher sanctions and restrictions
  - a check of professional qualifications; and a check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom.
- 15.5 For supply staff, schools should also include whether written confirmation that the employment business supplying the member of supply staff has carried out the relevant checks and obtained the appropriate certificates, whether any enhanced DBS check certificate has been provided in respect of the member of supply staff, and the date that confirmation was received.
- 15.6 A record of staff leavers must be maintained on the Single Central record.
- 15.7 Maintained school governors - Governors in maintained schools are required to have an enhanced criminal records certificate from the DBS. It is the responsibility of the governing body to apply for the certificate for any of their governors who does not already have one. Governance is not a regulated activity and so they do not need a barred list check unless, in addition to their governance duties, they also engage in regulated activity.
- 15.8 The SCR shall be updated in the light of any further legislation.
- 15.9 Where school premises are used for non-school activities, those providers are expected to meet the guidance in [Keeping Children Safe in Out of School Setting](#)

## APPENDIX D: SAFEGUARDING GUIDANCE & 7 MINUTE BRIEFINGS

### Actions to take when there are safeguarding concerns about a child

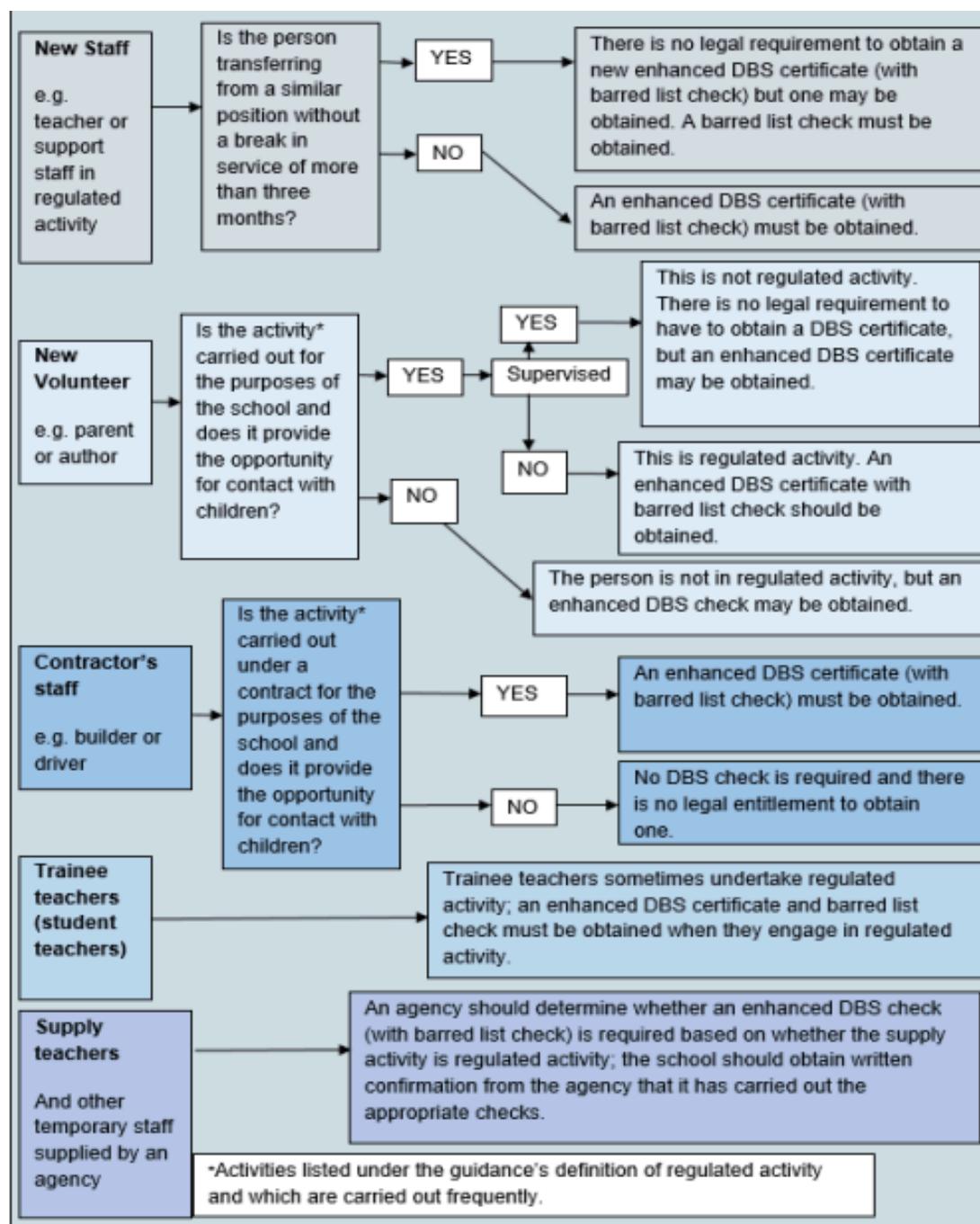


### Actions to take when there are safeguarding concerns about a child

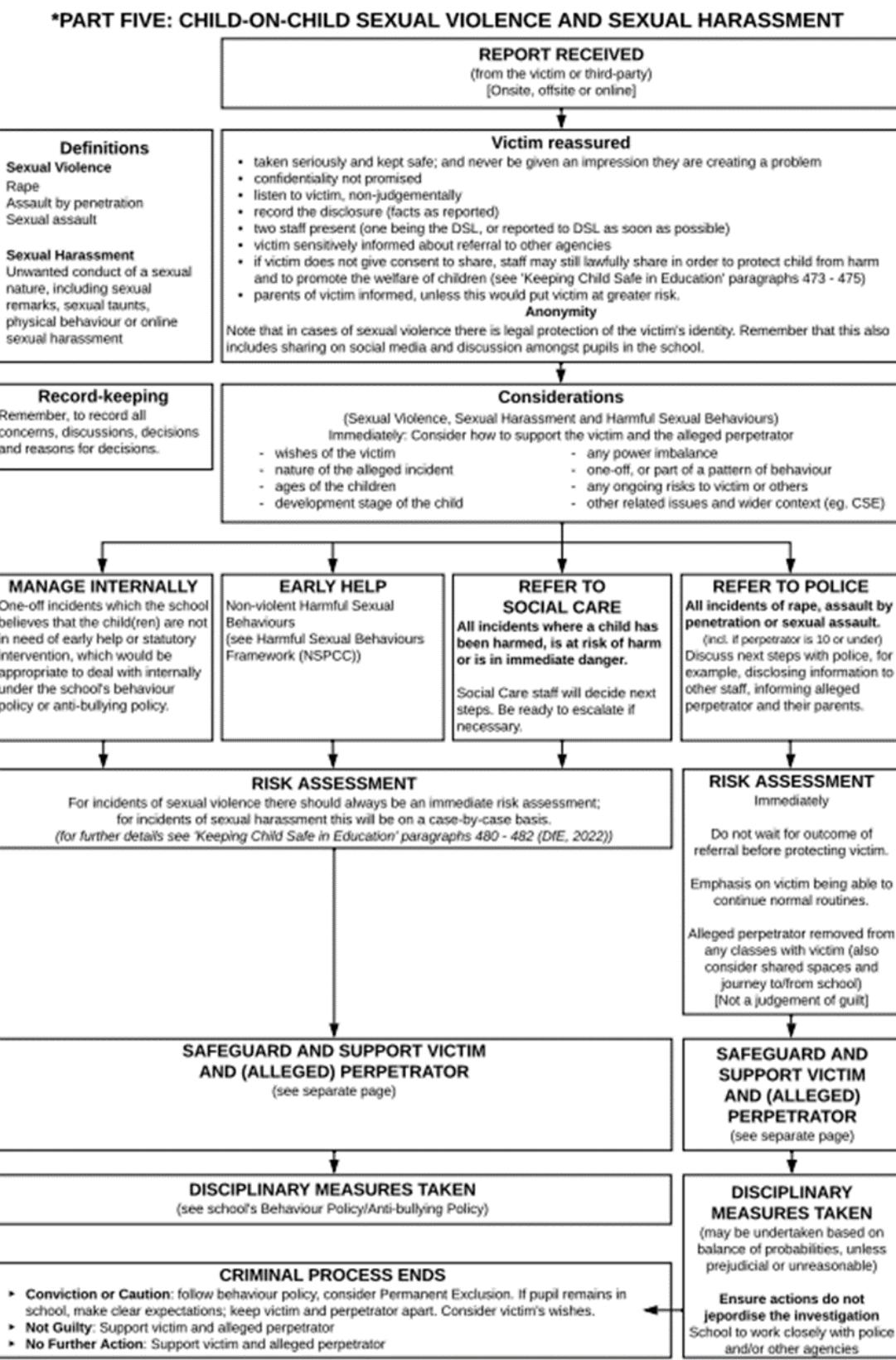


<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/concerned-about-a-child/>

## Flowchart of Disclosure and Barring Service Criminal Record Checks and Barred List Checks



## \*Part Five: Child-on-Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment



## LADO Flowchart

### STAGE ONE

WORKING TOGETHER TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN 2018 REQUIRES EMPLOYERS TO INFORM LADO WITHIN ONE WORKING DAY OF BECOMING AWARE OF AN ALLEGATION.

IF YOU SUSPECT A CHILD IS AT RISK OF IMMEDIATE HARM CONTACT IFD AND / OR MERSEYSIDE POLICE VIA 101 EMPLOYER TO COMPLETE LADO CONSULTATION FORM AND SEND TO [safeguardingunit@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:safeguardingunit@wirral.gov.uk) LINK TO WIRRAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP WHERE LADO INFORMATION AND FORMS ARE AVAILABLE.

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/lado-allegations/>

LADO WILL LIAISE WITH EMPLOYER AND POLICE AND MAKE A DECISION ON WHETHER THE CONCERNs MEET THE THRESHOLD FOR FORMAL LADO INVESTIGATION.

IF THRESHOLD IS NOT MET CONSULTATION WILL BE CLOSED AT THIS STAGE. LADO WILL RECORD DECISION ON CONSULTATION FORM AND RETURN TO EMPLOYER

IF THRESHOLD IS MET EMPLOYER WILL BE REQUESTED TO COMPLETE LADO REFERRAL FORM



### STAGE TWO

LADO WILL CONVENE A LADO MANAGEMENT OF ALLEGATIONS MEETING WITHIN FIVE WORKING DAYS

AT THIS MEETING THE PLAN OF INVESTIGATION WILL BE AGREED TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ANY POLICE INVESTIGATION AND SAFEGUARDING ACTIONS WILL BE CONFIRMED.

TIMEFRAME WILL BE AGREED AND SUPPORT TO THE EMPLOYEE WILL BE CONFIRMED.

EMPLOYER TO UPDATE LADO DURING INVESTIGATION.

EMPLOYER TO INVOKE DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES IF APPROPRIATE.



### STAGE THREE.

LADO CLOSURE MEETING HELD AND WILL INVOLVE ALL APPROPRIATE PROFESSIONALS WHERE THE EMPLOYER WILL PRESENT THEIR FINDINGS/ACTIONS.

#### OUTCOME TO THE LADO PROCESS AGREED BY ALL PROFESSIONALS.

**SUBSTANTIATED** - There is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation that a child has been harmed or there is a risk of harm.

**UNFOUNDED** - There is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.  
*It might indicate that the person making the allegation misinterpreted the incident or was mistaken about what they saw.  
Alternatively, they may not have been aware of all the circumstances.*

*The chair of the meeting / discussion should make a record of the agreed outcome and forward this to the employer*

**UNSUBSTANTIATED** - There is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence

**MALICIOUS** - There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive. The police should be asked to consider what action may be appropriate in these circumstances

**FALSE ALLEGATIONS** - There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.

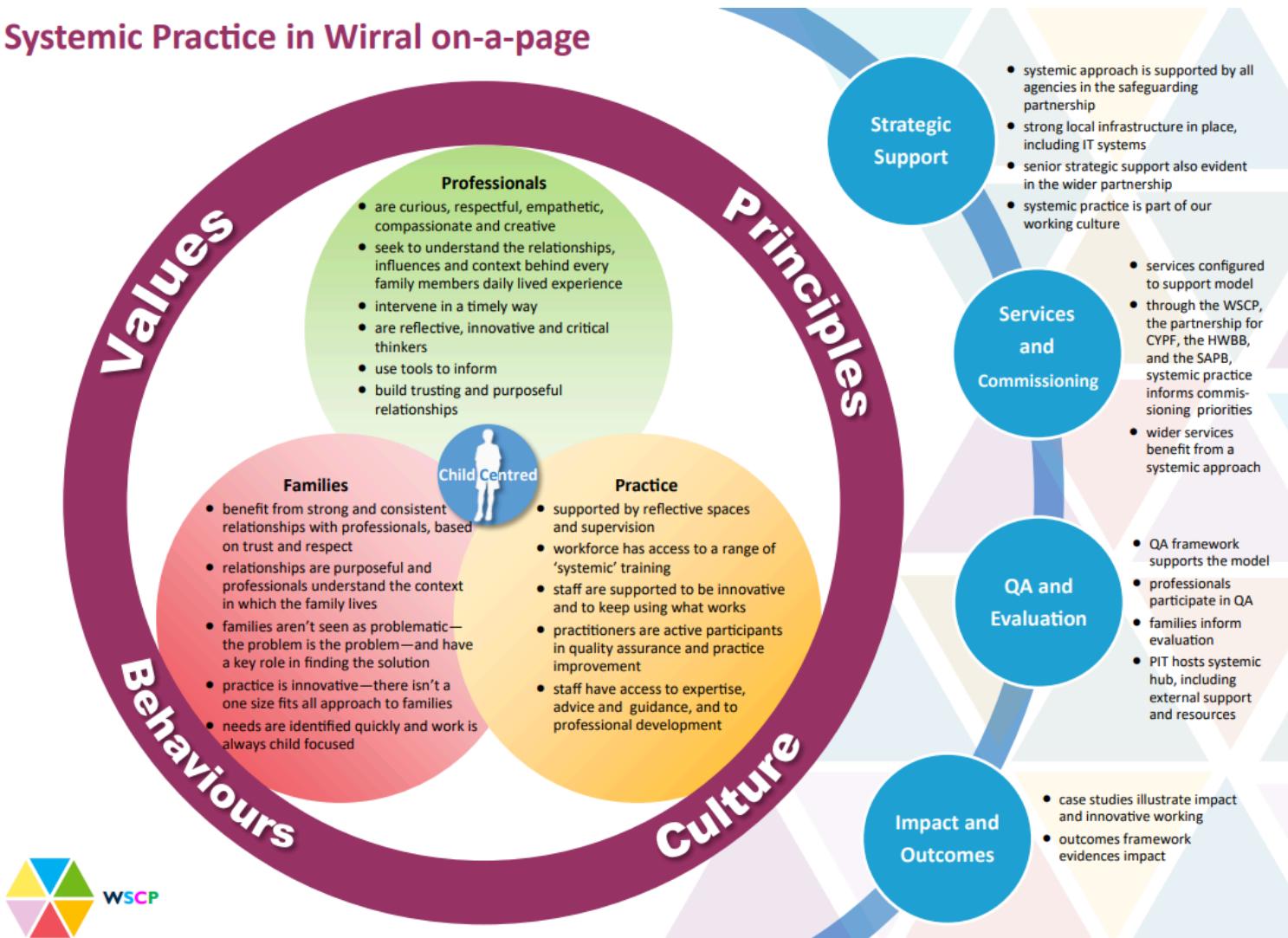
*There is no evidence to suggest that there was a deliberate intention to deceive.*

*False allegations may be an indicator of abuse elsewhere which requires further exploration. If an allegation is demonstrably false, the employer, in consultation with the LADO, should refer the matter to local authority children's social care to determine whether the child is in need of services, or might have been abused by someone else.*

CLOSURE MEETING WILL AGREE ON DBS REFERRAL IF APPROPRIATE AND CLOSURE LETTER TO EMPLOYEE.

## Systemic Practice in Wirral on-a-page

### Systemic Practice in Wirral on-a-page



# Sexual Violence and Harassment in Education

## 1. What is it?

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence refers to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, including rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (Fully described in the DfE guidance and in KCSIE). This briefing will focus on peer sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment means 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated / create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. It is important that schools are aware and that children can, & sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way.

## 7. Recommended Reading:

[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#)

[Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England \(September 2017\)](#)

[Hackett, S. \(2014\) Children and young people with harmful sexual behaviours.](#)

NSPCC helpline Report Abuse in Education on 0800 136 663 or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

## 6. What should we do?

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage. Victims need to be protected, offered appropriate support and every effort made to ensure their education is not disrupted. It is also important that other children, adult students and school and college staff are supported and protected as appropriate.

## 2. What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment can include: sexual comments, such as telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names / sexual "jokes" or taunting / physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature / online sexual harassment / non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos

This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include: sexualised online bullying / unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media / sexual exploitation; coercion and threats; and 'Upskirting'.

## 3. Why is it important?

The Department for Education (DfE) first published guidance on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges, in 2017 (updated May 2018) which means that schools and colleges in England must have regard to it when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The advice covers children of all ages, from the primary through secondary stage and into colleges. Whilst the focus of the advice is on protecting and supporting children, schools and colleges should of course protect any adult students and engage with adult social care, support services and the police as required.

## 4. Key Statistics

Evidence and crime statistics suggest that anywhere from 1/5 to 2/3's of sexual abuse is committed by other children and young people. The NSPCC uses the figure of 1/3 as a mid-way point between the lower end and the higher end of the estimates.

37% of female students and 6% of male students at mixed-sex schools have personally experienced some form of sexual harassment at school. Girls are significantly more likely to be victimised with unwanted sexual messages and images from their peers online, with 31% of female respondents aged 13-17 years saying they had experienced this in 2019 compared to 11% of male respondents.

## 5. What is the impact?

Sexual harassment can create an atmosphere that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence. All staff should be aware of indicators and importance of making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated / not dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter" / challenging behaviours (such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them. The school safeguarding procedures should be transparent, clear and easy to understand for staff, pupils, students, parents and carers.



For school safeguarding support and training go to:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/schools-2>

# Social Media and Mental Health

## 1 Background

Social media has revolutionised the way we connect with each other. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are now used by one in four people worldwide. Many young people have never known a world without instant access to social networking platforms, and this has transformed the way in which this generation interact and communicate with each other.

## 7 Further Information

Please see the links below for more information about mental health and internet safety  
<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/mental-health/>  
<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/internet-safety/>  
<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/new-out-of-hours-mental-health-advice-line-1/>

## 6 How to respond

Professionals need to be aware of both the positive and negative influences of social media. Do not be distracted by the technology, mental health concerns are a safeguarding issue.

Questions for professionals:

Do you routinely ask about social media use when assessing a child/family?

Do you talk to children about safe social media use and their broader online behaviour?



## 2 Why does it matter?

Adolescence and early adulthood is a critical time for social and emotional development, and so understanding the effects of social media on health at this stage is of particular importance. Whilst social media can be a hugely positive influence, it also has the potential for being a negative and destructive influence on mental well-being, particularly for children and young people.

## 3 Why does it matter?

Research suggests a typical teenager will check their phone on average 150 times per day and will take an average of 12 selfies before sharing 1, with just under 50% of young people also adding a filter to 'improve' their appearance. Posts on Social Media will therefore often present an 'idealised' view which creates unrealistic expectations.

## 4 Key statistics

91% of 16-24 year olds use the internet for social networking: Rates of anxiety and depression in young people have risen 70% in the past 25 years: Social media use is linked with increased rates of anxiety, depression and poor sleep: Cyber bullying is a growing problem with 7 in 10 young people saying they have experienced it.

## 5 Positive experiences

Social networking offers young people an opportunity to understand, the health experiences of others. Sharing problems or issues with friends, peers and broader social networks can be met with positive reaction. Nearly seven in 10 teens report receiving support on social media during tough or challenging times. Social media can act as an effective platform for accurate and positive self-expression, letting young people put forward their best self.



<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/>

# Safeguarding Children

## 1 What is it?

..“the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm - is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.”

Working Together 2018

## 2 What is it?

Effective safeguarding is about vigilance. Organisations and individuals whose work brings them into contact with children and young people must have an awareness of safeguarding, abuse, neglect and maltreatment.

## 3 Why is it important?

There have been a number of cases over the years, where children have been seriously harmed or died. When these cases have been reviewed it has been shown that with better safeguarding processes the child may well have been protected.

## 7 Further Information

For more information about safeguarding:  
<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/concerned-about-a-child/>  
<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/serious-case-reviews/>  
<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/multi-agency-thresholds/>

## 6 How to respond

Receive - Listen actively

Reassure - ‘You’ve done the right thing by coming to me’;

Respond - Tell what you are going to do

Report - As soon as possible, to your Safeguarding Lead or the Integrated Front Door (0151 606 2008)

Record – facts not opinions



<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk>

## 4 Types of abuse

Abuse falls into 4 categories:

Physical—hitting, biting, slapping

Emotional—belittling, name calling, ignoring

Neglect—lack of food, clothing, emotional or developmental support

Sexual—direct sexual contact, forming a sexual ‘relationship’ with a child.

## 5 Recognising signs

Some of the following signs might be indicators of abuse or neglect: behaviour changes, aggressive withdrawn or clingy; ill-fitting clothes, poor hygiene; problems at school, regularly missing from school; parents who are dismissive and non-responsive; children who are concerned for/ responsible for younger siblings.

# Missing Children Procedure

## 1. 72 hours missing

Strategy meeting should be convened. Serious Notification Form sent to Local Authority. Multi-agency meetings should continue weekly if child continues to be missing. Press release discussed.

## 7. Return Home Interviews

Catch22 will endeavour to complete a return interview within 72hrs of the child being found and seen safe and well by Police. The return interview is sent to Police Missing from Home Coordinator, allocated social care and or IFD. These return interviews should inform the child's plan (EH, CIN, CP, CLA)

## 6. Catch22

For Wirral Looked after Children who are placed outside of the borough, it is the responsibility of the allocated social worker to inform Catch22 of this missing episode in order that they can carry out the return interview. Catch22 aim to reduce missing episodes with young people by offering direct work where appropriate.



<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/children-who-go-missing/>

## 2. 3 missing episodes in 30 days

Case to be reviewed by IFD if no support in place. If case is in Early Help the Lead Professional should convene a Family Meeting to determine if existing plan is working. If case is in Childrens Social Care there should be consideration for a Strategy Meeting or review of current plan

## 3. 9 missing episodes in 90 days

Case should be reviewed by IFD to see if it an open case. If case is in Early Help the Lead Professional should convene a Family Meeting to determine if existing plan is working. Needs and risks should be identified and referred back to the IFD. If case is in Childrens Social Care there should be consideration for a Strategy Meeting or review of current plan. Police MFH co-ordinator to be invited to all meetings

## 4. Absent/Away from Placement

When a child or young person is identified as not being at a location they are expected to be, the reporting individual must take proactive steps to trace the child's whereabouts prior to contacting the police.

## 5. Absent/Away from Placement

Consider possible risks of CSE, substance misuse, family members where they have previously been removed from. A Care Planning meeting should be held if the child is persistently absent to ensure the child is safeguarded.



# Sexting

## 1 Background

Sexting means sending sexually explicit messages or images/videos. These can be sent by any messaging service and are often sent via social media. Sexting is sometimes known as 'trading nudes', 'dirties', and 'pic-for-pic'. Sexting is being increasingly used by young people as a 'pre-relationship' activity.

## 7 Further Information

Please see the links below for more information about mental health and internet safety

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/sexting/>  
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/sext-ing-sending-nudes/>  
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/sext-ing-advice-professionals>  
<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/sexting/>

## 6 How to respond

Professionals should:

Talk to children about safe social media use, listen without judgement.

Ensure your focus remains child-focused.

Report to the Police and Social Care any concerns particularly where the child is under 13 or particularly vulnerable, or where there is adult involvement.

Try to get the image removed by contacting the website or Internet Watch Foundation (IWF).



## 2 Why does it matter?

Sharing explicit images of a child is illegal, even if the person doing it is a child. The young person is breaking the law if they: take an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend; share an image of a child; store a video of a child, even if that child gave permission.

However as of January 2016 the police can choose to record a crime was committed but not take formal action if its not in the public interest.

## 3 Why does it matter?

Studies suggest that up to a third of 15 year olds have shared a nude or semi-nude image of themselves. Studies have also shown that 90% of those that have received a sext have subsequently shared it. Young people often perceive sexting as 'no big deal' but the consequences of sharing explicit images can be far-reaching.

## 4 Why does it matter?

When an image is shared online all control is lost and that image is in the public domain. This means that photos or videos which a young person may have shared privately could still be end up being shared between adults they don't know. These images have also been known to resurface later on in life and been used as blackmail or 'sextortion'.

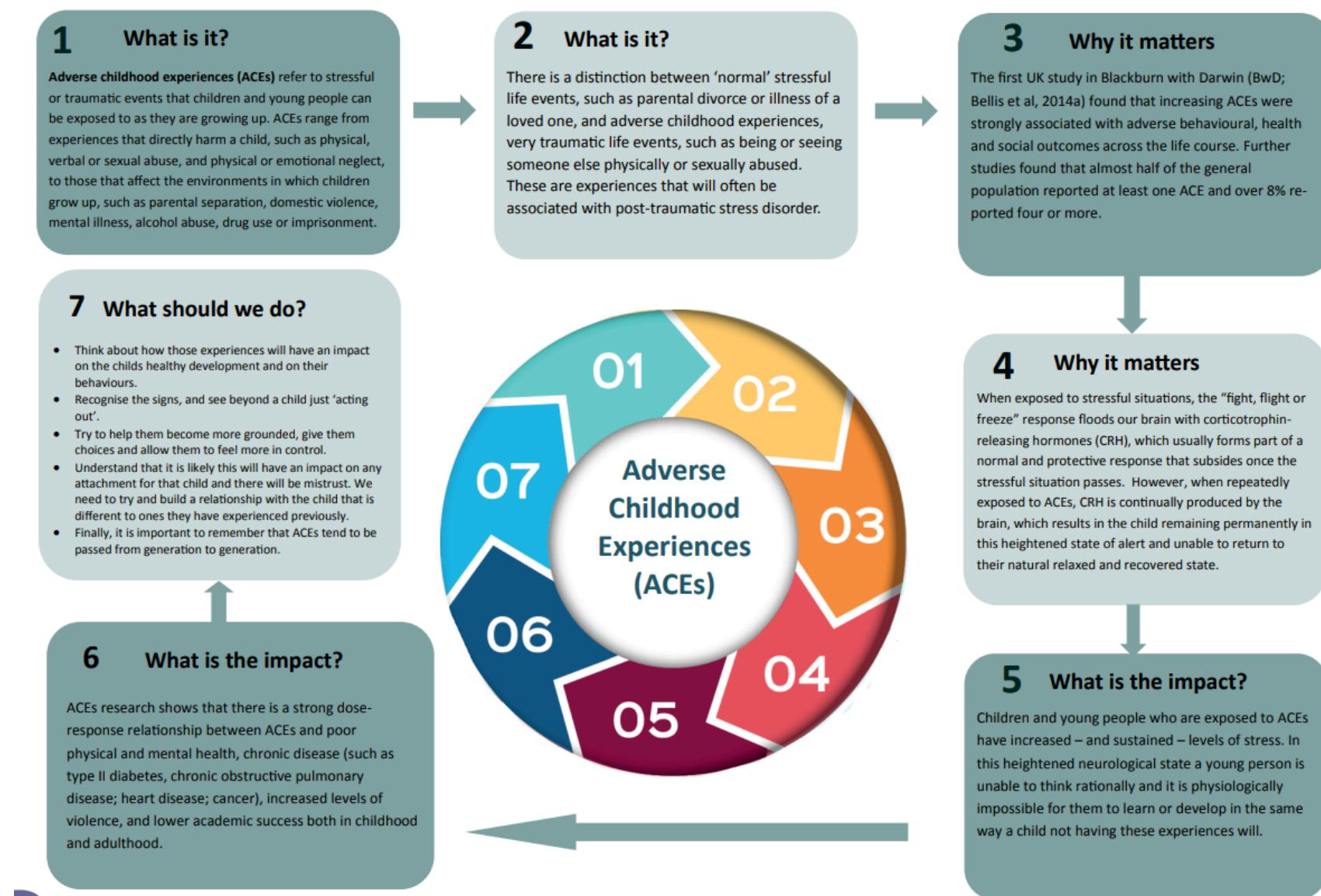
## 5 Why does it happen?

There may be many reasons why a young person shares this kind of image. They may feel under pressure, or may feel it helps them fit in. They may trust the person they are sending it to, or love them. It may be an extension of adolescent 'risk-taking' behaviour, or been seen as 'just banter'.



<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/>

# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)



# Anderson Children Multi-Agency Learning Review

## 1 Background

This case was considered by the WSCP Case Review committee following removal of the 5 Anderson children as a result of neglect. The case did not meet the CSPR threshold but a multi-agency learning review was agreed.

## 7 Further Information

All learning is embedded in training. In addition the WSCP will be publishing a summary report of the findings.

For further information on Child Practice Safeguarding Reviews and Learning Reviews go the WSCP website.

## 6 Learning

- Tools were under-utilised across the partnership, particularly the Graded Care Profile, and where assessment was started it was not completed
- Significant changes in structures in the LA impacted how services were delivered, meaning that documents were inaccessible to those involved with the family.



## 2 Purpose of the review

The purpose of a learning review is to identify learning for the multi-agency partnership which will strengthen the safeguarding system. Beyond individual cases reviews also often provide a window into wider systems (ways of working/ processes) which may need to be changed.

## 3 Concerns

The family were first known to services when Jacob the oldest child was 3 months old. Concerns identified at that point were neglect and contact with maternal grandmother. Over the following 8 years all 5 children were managed across the thresholds with the main concern always being neglect.



<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/serious-case-reviews/>

## 4 Key Practice Episodes

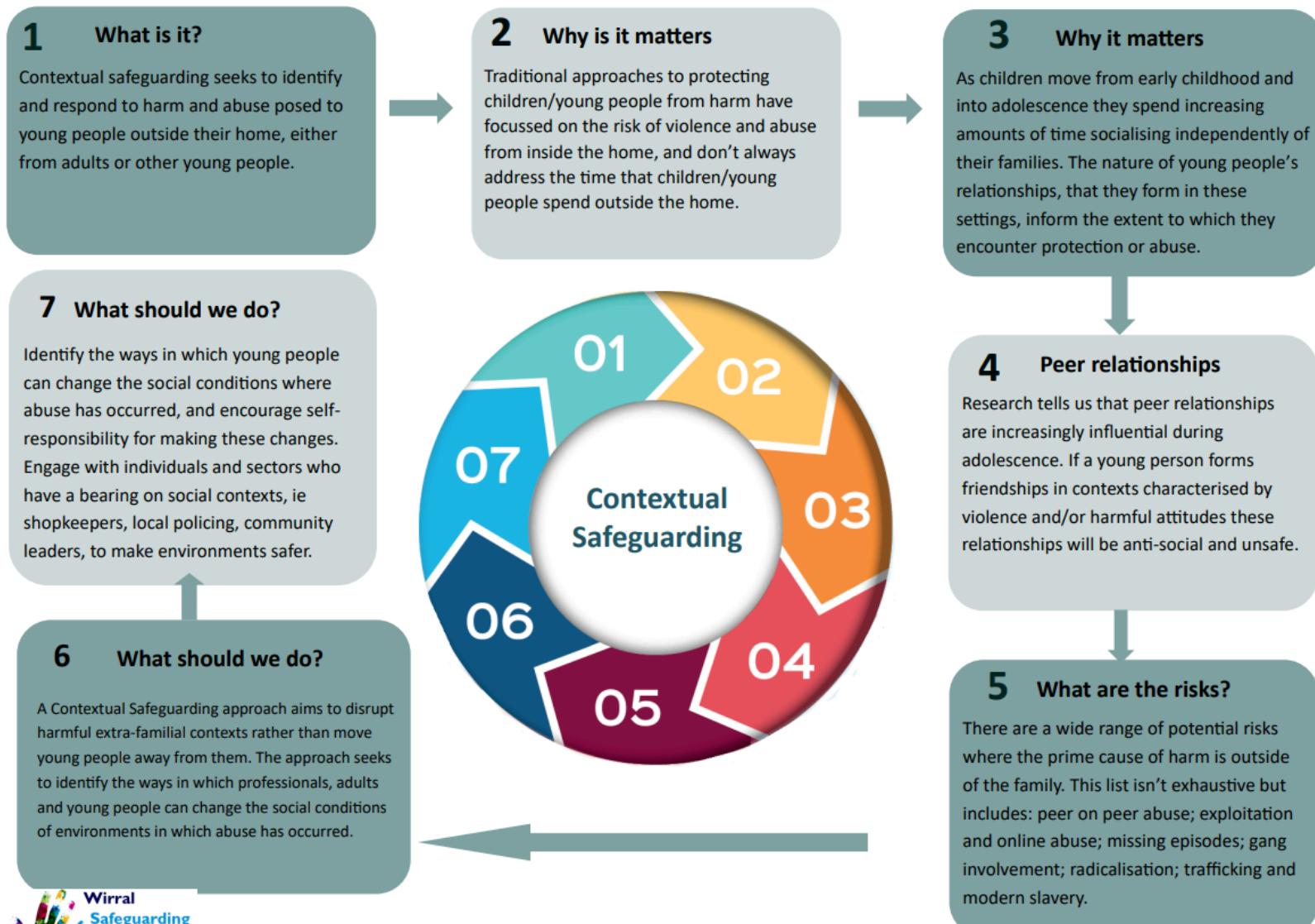
Analysis of the combined chronology revealed 3 Key Practice Episodes (KPE's). These KPEs helped frame the discussion at the learning review meeting:

- Effectiveness of Multi Agency Working
- Over-optimism in parents parenting ability
- Evidence based decision making

## 5 Learning

- The family would have benefitted from an extended period before services were withdrawn. It was evident that there was significant improvement in the quality of parenting when support was available.
- On a number of occasions workers escalated concerns. This was often not followed up and formal escalation procedures were not followed.

# Contextual Safeguarding



# Supporting Families Enhancing Future (SFEF)

## 1 What is SFEF?

Supporting Families Enhancing Futures (SFEF) is a new model for working with children, young people and their families across levels 3 and 4 (Team Around the Family, Child in Need and Child Protection) of the Wirral Continuum of Need.

## 2 The principles of SFEF

1. Understand the world of the child(ren).
2. Understand the world of the adults
3. Recognise family strengths as well as concerns.
4. Engage families in the change process.
5. Measure change through actions and interventions that lead to child-focused outcomes.

## 3 The lived experience

The focus of the model is on understanding how issues within the family affect the child's daily lived experience. After a referral is made the child is spoken to about their 'day' from the moment they wake up to the moment they go to sleep. In this process their thoughts and feelings will be explored.

## 7 The plan

The plan will identify: Recognised strengths of the family; What professionals are concerned about (what needs to change); Who is going to complete actions (and by when).

The plan will be reviewed regularly to measure positive changes to the lived experience of the child(ren).

## 6 Traffic lights

Traffic lights will be used as an easy visual representation of levels of concern.

RED - developmental needs are not being met likely to cause significant harm to the child

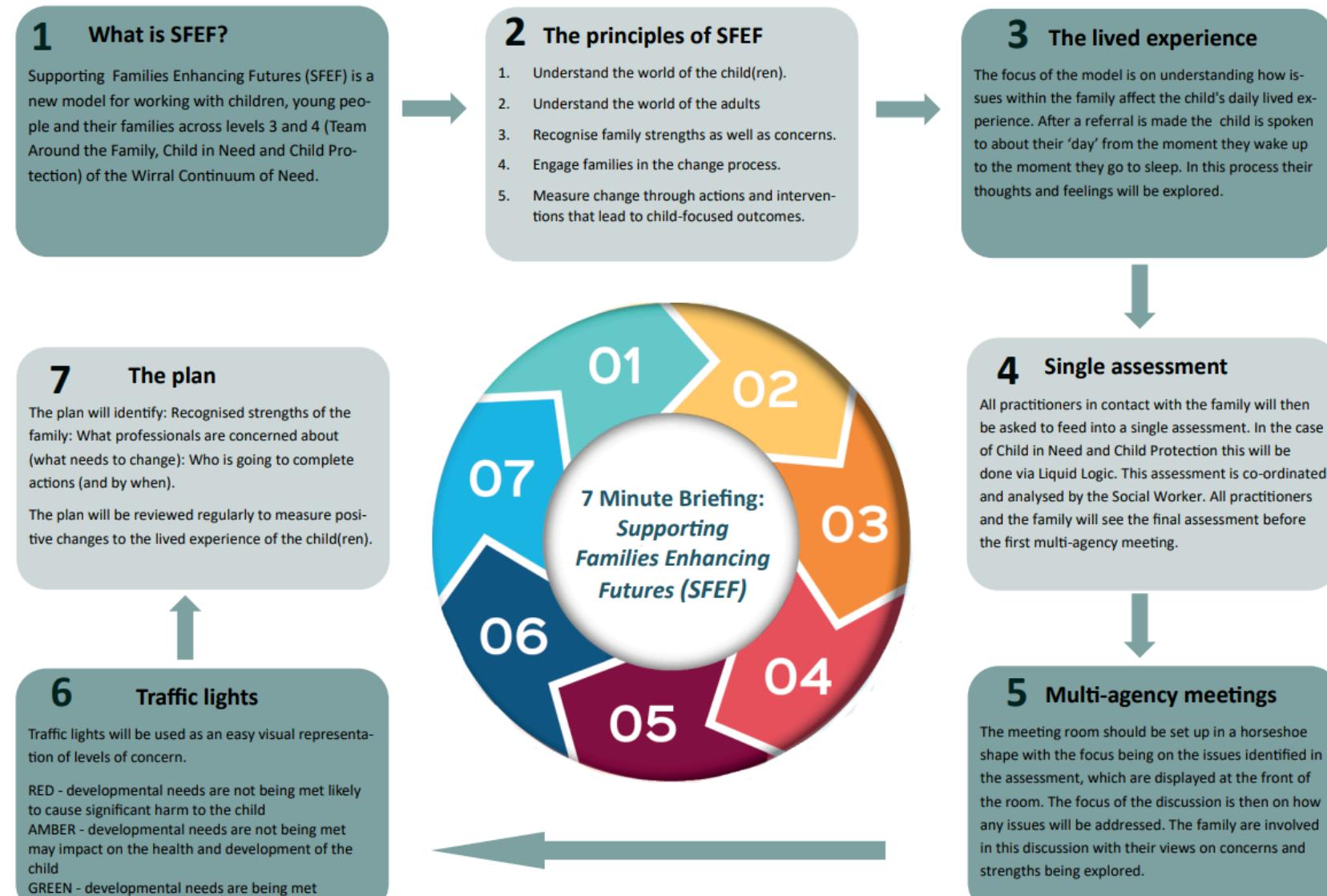
AMBER - developmental needs are not being met may impact on the health and development of the child

GREEN - developmental needs are being met

**7 Minute Briefing:  
Supporting  
Families Enhancing  
Futures (SFEF)**



# County Lines



<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/supporting-families-enhancing-futures/>

# Professional Disagreement & Escalation

## 1 What is an escalation?

If you feel that a practitioner or an agency is not acting in the best interests of the child, young person or family, you have a responsibility to respectfully challenge the practitioner or agency, and escalate your concerns.

## 7 Record keeping

- Agencies should record their use of the Escalation Procedure (Stages 1-3) and be able to report outcomes of escalations to the WSCP.
- The child's record should be updated
- The WSCP will keep a record of all escalations and outcomes at Stage 4, and may request information about the outcomes of escalations at Stages 2 and 3.

## 6 Stage 4

- The WSCP Partners will seek written representation, and may request a meeting with those involved.
- The WSCP Partners will make a recommendation on the most appropriate way to proceed and communicate this within 5 days of notification.

## 2 When would you escalate?

When working with practitioners from other agencies there will at times be differences of opinion or concerns about professional practice in relation to a child, young person or family.

The new WSCP procedure outlines the escalation process including timescales and principles for resolution. There are 4 key stages to resolving multi-agency escalations.

## 3 Stage 1

- Initial attempts should be made **between workers** to resolve the issue
- If resolution cannot be achieved professionals must escalate to their **safeguarding lead and/or team manager**
- Take Action Within 24 Hours of Concern
- Record the escalation
- Notify the WSCP

## 4 Stage 2

- The Line Manager/Safeguarding Lead should discuss the concerns/response with their opposite manager in the other agency.
- If resolution cannot be achieved professionals must notify their Senior Managers (or in the case of schools the Chair of Governors alongside the Head)
- WSCP to be notified if resolved

## 5 Stage 3

- The Senior Manager will escalate to the relevant WSCP Partner Representative who will arrange a meeting to seek resolution.
- If agreement cannot be achieved, the matter should be brought to the attention of the WSCP Business Manager who will refer the matter to the WSCP Statutory Partners



# Neglect

## 1. Background

Neglect is the most common reason for referrals to Children's Services. And it is present in over 60% of Serious Case Reviews. The definition of neglect is not as objective as other forms of abuse, and relies on professional assessment.

## 2. What is it?

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

Working Together 2018

## 3. How to recognise it

Professionals may recognise the failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing; adequate supervision; access to medical care; failure to protect from physical harm, but there is a need to also recognise an unresponsiveness to the child's emotional needs.

## 7. Action

Look out for low level concerns and intervene early to assist families before crisis. Ensure you listen to the child's story. Complete a Graded Care 2 assessment to decide on assistance needed. Refer to appropriate services.

## 6. Causes

In many cases the cause is recorded as either poor parental health (54%), domestic abuse (49%), substance misuse (49%), alcohol misuse (38%). Neglect is also often inter-generational.



<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/neglect/>

Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership

## 4. Why it matters

Neglect is not a one off event but rather an accumulation of issues over a long period of time. It can happen to children of all ages from babies to teenagers. The risk for the child may differ depending on the age.

## 5. Why it matters

Neglect is recognised as an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE), can be fatal and affects the global development of children, with a long term impact on both physical and mental health.

# Child Sexual Exploitation



# Peer Sexual Behaviour

## 1. What is Peer Sexual Abuse?

It's normal for children to display a range of sexual behaviours as they grow up, but sometimes their behaviour can be harmful to themselves and others. Around a third of child sexual abuse is committed by other children and young people (Hackett, 2014). We call this peer sexual abuse.

Peer Sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- physical and sexual abuse / sexual harassment and violence / emotional harm / on and offline bullying / teenage relationship abuse

## 7. Further Reading

[Peer on peer abuse | Safeguarding Network - confidence in safeguarding](#)

[Protecting children from peer-on-peer sexual abuse | NSPCC Learning](#)

Department for Education advice: [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[What is peer-on-peer abuse? - schools, early years, further education and skills](#)

## 6. What should you do?

It's important that adults who work or volunteer with children can identify if sexualised behaviour becomes harmful or abusive, and respond proportionally to keep all the children involved safe. This also includes knowing how to proactively:

- Respond to disclosure or a concern raised
- Initiate a discussion with your safeguarding lead
- Take immediate action
- Make a referral when appropriate (for the victim and also perpetrator who may be a child in need).

## 2. What is the context?

Peer sexual abuse can happen in a range of settings, including: at school / at home / in public spaces / at parties / at a friend's house / online. It can take place in spaces which are supervised or unsupervised. Within a school context, for example, peer-on-peer sexual abuse might take place in spaces such as toilets, the playground and outdoor areas, corridors and when children are travelling to and from school (Contextual Safeguarding Network, 2020).

It should be recognised that the behaviour in question is harmful to both the perpetrator (who is a child) and the victim. Behaviour may be intimate or non-intimate.

## 3. Why is it important?

Young people can be confused about whether or not they have experienced peer sexual abuse. Reasons for this include:

Confusion about what constitutes 'normal' sexual activity / they don't know whether they gave consent (N.B no-one can consent to being abused) / they were using substances when the abuse took place / the abuse was carried out by a friend or partner / the abuse took place online; and/or they blame themselves for what happened.

Parents & professionals don't always know the most appropriate way to respond to children who display harmful sexual behaviour and/or who have experienced peer sexual abuse.

## 4. What is the impact?

Experiencing peer sexual abuse can have a long-lasting negative impact on a child's wellbeing that can reach into adulthood. Effects can include:

- mental health issues – such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, self-harming
- challenging behaviour – such as substance misuse, sexualised behaviour, offending
- relationship problems – for example intimacy issues, having unstable relationships, unable to form or sustain friendships

## 5. Spotting the signs and symptoms

- absence from school or disengagement from school activities
- physical injuries / mental or emotional health issues
- becoming withdrawn – lack of self esteem / lack of sleep / alcohol or substance misuse
- changes in behaviour / inappropriate behaviour for age / abusive towards others

As with all safeguarding issues, peer on peer abuse can impact on children and young people without these characteristics.



# Private Fostering

## 1 Background

Since the Children Act 2004 it has been a legal responsibility for Local Authorities to recognise, monitor and support any child in their area who is being 'privately fostered'.

## 2 What is Private Fostering?

This is an informal arrangement where a child up to the age of 16 (or 18 if registered with a disability) is living with someone not classed as family under the Children Act 1989, for a period of 28 days or more.

## 3 Why it Matters

It is believed a lot of children are living in these circumstances unrecognised which could put children at risk of abuse.

Victoria Climbié was brought into the country by a distant relative who went on to abuse and murder her.

## 7 Action

Recognise when a child you are working with may be in this situation, or about to be. Contact the Integrated Front Door (0151 606 2008) [IFD@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:IFD@wirral.gov.uk)

Give as much information about the child and the circumstances as possible.

## 6 Responsibility of the Local Authority

- Complete a Private Fostering Assessment of suitability
- Complete checks on the adults in the household including DBS/ Criminal Records
- Assign an IRO to undertake regular reviews of the arrangement



## 4 Considerations

If the arrangement is broken by a brief visit home it may still be classed as Private Fostering. The arrangement does not need to be 28 days consistently.

The parents will still hold Parental Responsibility and will need to be consulted when decisions about care are made.

## 5 Responsibility of the Private Fosterer

- To notify the Local Authority 6 weeks before the arrangement is proposed or immediately if within 6 weeks
- To agree to checks and assessment being made
- To agree the terms of the care with the parents or whoever holds parental responsibility

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/private-fostering-2/>

# Domestic Abuse

## 1. Background

Domestic abuse can affect anyone from any background. Whilst the majority of cases are male on female violence there has been an increase of female on male violence and violence in same sex relationships.

## 2. Definition

'Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality'.

## 3. What does it look like?

Domestic abuse can take a number of forms: Physical/sexual abuse and violence; psychological abuse and name -calling; financial abuse and control of money in the house; emotional abuse and emotional blackmail. It also includes stalking and Coercive Control.

## 7. Action

Complete the DASH RIC form with the adult victim (over 16) . Make a referral to the Integrated Front Door. Refer to MARAC in those cases where risk is high.

## 6. How to respond

Make sure that any immediate harm is managed. Inform the police if risk of harm is imminent. Discuss safety planning with the victim. Ensuring the safety of the children is paramount.



<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/what-is-domestic-abuse/>

Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership

## 4. Coercive Control

The offence of coercive control came into force on 29<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

Coercive Control is an act ,or a pattern of acts ,of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

## 5. Why it Matters

In 90% of cases children are in the same or the next room when the incident occurs. The highest risk age for women is between 25-45. The highest risk of witnessing domestic abuse is in children aged under 5.

# Early Help

## 1. What is Early Help?

Early help means taking action to support a child, young person or their family as soon as a problem emerges.

It can be required at any stage in a child's life, from pre-birth to adolescence, and applies to any problem or need that the family can't deal with alone.

Early help can lead to better outcomes for children, prevent problems escalating or overwhelming families, to ensure all of their needs are met so they can flourish

## 2. Global Prevention

This aims to provide education and encouragement to empower children, young people and their families.

Involves a partnership approach to provide a wide range of activities, advice and guidance.

Partnership offer published on WSCP website including Hive Youth Zone, Children's Centres, Health Services in Schools etc.

Success includes good take up of activities and services and positive feedback from children and families.

## 3. Focused Prevention

Aims to prevent anticipated need arising by supporting children, young people and families.

This includes providing a range of preventative activity, offering guidance and signposting.

Partnership offer published on WSCP website including global prevention, 2 yr old funding for education, Early Years family workers, alcohol and substance education etc.

Success includes increase in early help activity.

## 7. Further information

Further information and guidance is available on the WSCP website:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/what-is-early-help/>

This includes:

- A Guide to Early Help & Prevention guidance document
- A Community Matters booklet
- A Resource Information and A Key Worker Pack
- The Early Help Strategy

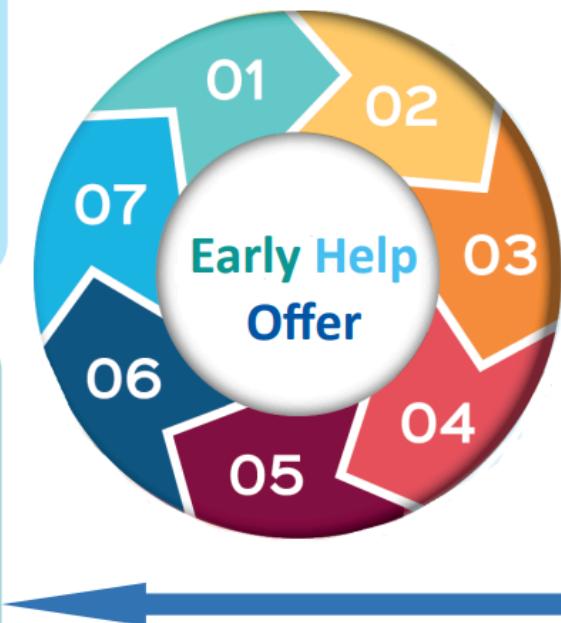
Multi-agency EHAT training is also available through the WSCP

## 6. Family Matters

Family Matters works collaboratively with Children's Social Care to reduce the need for statutory intervention or children becoming looked after. There are 2 priority areas; Edge of Care support and targeted Family support. A Lead Worker co-ordinates a multi-agency Early help Assessment (EHAT) would be undertaken to help identify a Family Plan, underpinned by SFEF to address needs.

Family Matters services include targeted family support, pre-birth and infant team, adolescent response team, family group conferencing etc.

Success includes reduction in referrals to Children's Social Care.



<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/what-is-early-help/>

## 4. Community Matters

Community Matters is a new collaboration between Children's Services and the voluntary, community and faith sector to help families and children get the help they need, when they need it. It's targeted support aims to meet needs and reduce the likelihood of referral to Children's Services. When need for a child or family arises there are three options:

- a. You can initiate an early help episode by completing an Early Help Assessment (EHAT) as Lead Worker and forwarding to [earlyhelpteam@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelpteam@wirral.gov.uk)
- b. You can make a referral to Community Matters by submitting an Early Help Request for Services form to [earlyhelpteam@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelpteam@wirral.gov.uk)
- c. You can seek advice from the Early Help Team at Koala North West on 608 6510 or [earlyhelpteam@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelpteam@wirral.gov.uk)

## 5. Community Matters

A Lead Worker coordinates a multi-agency Early Help Assessment (EHAT) to help identify a Family Plan, underpinned by SFEF, to address needs.

Community Matters services include Caritas, Fender Community School, Open Door Centre, WEB, WIRED, Safer Wirral Hub, schools and youth services.

Success includes reduction in contacts with Children's Social Care.

## APPENDIX E:      LOW LEVEL CONCERNS

### 1. Rationale

This policy should be read in conjunction with Woodchurch High School's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, Staff Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing Policy, to enable staff to share their concerns, no matter how small, about their own or another member of staff's behaviour.

The purpose of the policy is to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the clear values and expected behaviour which are set out in the school's Code of Conduct are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff. The school deals with all concerns about adults working in or behalf of the school appropriately and promptly.

The school seeks to create an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below expected professional standards.

This policy seeks to:

- ensure that staff are clear about, and confident to distinguish between, expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour – in themselves and others, and the delineation of professional boundaries and reporting lines
- empower staff to share any low-level concerns with the Headteacher
- help staff address unprofessional behaviour and help the individual to correct such behaviour at an early stage
- identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour – including any patterns – that may need to be consulted upon with (on a no-names basis if appropriate), or referred to, the LADO
- provide for responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- help identify any weaknesses in the organisation's safeguarding system.

This policy applies to **all** staff at Woodchurch High School.

### 2. Defining a Low level Concern

A low-level concern is one that **does not** meet the harm threshold as stated in the school's Safeguarding Policy. That is, when anyone working in a school (including volunteers, supply staff and contractors) 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 he or she 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 (which includes behaviour that may have happened **outside** school posing a transferable risk to children).

Responses and actions to behaviours that may meet the harm threshold are contained specifically within the School's Safeguarding Policy, 'Allegations Regarding Staff (or volunteers)'. These should be reported to the Headteacher/DSGL without delay.

A low-level concern is **any** concern – **no matter how small**, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' (i.e. they *believe* it could be a concern) – 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 LADO.

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

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

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

### 3. Responsibilities of Staff

It is important that **all** staff are clear of the expectations the school stipulates from them as contained in the Staff Code of Conduct. This is covered annually by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and as part of the school's induction for new staff.

It is crucial that **any** concerns in relation to a staff member's behaviour, including those which do not meet the harm threshold, are shared responsibly and with the Headteacher. This should be done without delay.

Where there are concerns/allegations about the Headteacher, this should be referred to the Chair of Governors (whose contact details can be found in the School's Safeguarding Policy document).

Staff members who are concerned about how their behaviour may have been interpreted, or, on reflection, re-evaluate their behaviour as one that may have been in contrary to the school's code of conduct and expectations, they self-refer to the Headteacher.

#### **4. Dealing with Low Level Concerns**

All low-level concerns may be shared verbally with the Headteacher in the first instance, but must then be recorded in writing.

The record should include:

- details of the concern
- the context in which the concern arose
- action taken

The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, but if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible.

Where the low-level concern is provided verbally, the Headteacher / DSGL should make an appropriate record of the conversation, either at the time or immediately following the discussion, paying heed to the details above. Records will be signed, timed and dated.

Records will remain confidential in accordance with the school's Data Protection policies and GDPR.

#### **5. Responding to a Low Level Concern**

The Headteacher will in the first instance satisfy themselves that it is a low-level concern and should not be reclassified as a higher level concern/allegation and dealt with under the appropriate procedure below.

The circumstances in which a low-level concern might be reclassified are where:

- a) the threshold is met for a higher-level concern/allegation;
- b) there is a pattern of low-level concerns which collectively amount to a higher-level concern/allegation; or
- c) there is other information which when taken into account leads to a higher-level concern/allegation.

Where the Headteacher/DSGL is in any doubt whatsoever, advice will be sought from the LADO, if necessary, on a 'no-names' basis.

Having established that the concern is low-level, the Headteacher/DSGL will discuss it with the individual who has raised it and will take any other steps to investigate it as necessary. If the concern has been raised via a third party, the Headteacher/DSGL should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

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

The information collected will help them to categorize the type of behaviour and determine what further action may need to be taken. All of this needs to be recorded along with

the rationale for their decisions and action taken. Reports about supply staff and contractors will be notified to their employers, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Most low-level concerns by their very nature are likely to be minor and will be dealt with by means of management guidance, training etc. In dealing with a low-level concern with a member of staff, this will be approached in a sensitive and proportionate way. In many cases, a low-level concern will simply require a conversation with the individual about whom the concern has been raised.

Details of the concern will be recorded along with the rationale for decisions and action taken.

Any conversation with a member of staff following a concern will include being clear with the individual as to why their behaviour is concerning, problematic or inappropriate, what change is required in their behaviour, enquiring what, if any, support they might need in order to achieve and maintain that, and being clear about the consequences if they fail to reach the required standard or repeat the behaviour in question. Ongoing and transparent monitoring of the individual's behaviour may be appropriate. An action plan or risk assessment may be required. Some concerns may trigger the school's disciplinary, grievance or whistleblowing procedures, which will be followed where appropriate. Some concerns may be related to performance management and advice may be sought from the school's HR manager.

## **6. Monitoring of Low Level Concerns**

The Headteacher/DSGL will securely retain confidential files on low-level concerns. A central log will be shared and monitored by the school's Senior Leadership Team on a ½ termly basis to ensure that all such concerns are being dealt with promptly and appropriately, and that any potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour are identified. A record will be kept of this review within supervision minutes.

No record will be made of the concern on the individual's personnel file (and no mention made in job references) unless either:

- a) the concern (or group of concerns) has been reclassified as a higher-level concern; or
- b) the concern (or group of concerns) is sufficiently serious to result in formal action under the school's grievance, capability or disciplinary procedure.

## **7. Further References**

Farrer & Co – Developing and implementing a low-level concerns policy: a guide for organizations which work with children – Adele Eastman, Jane Foster, Owen O'Rorke and David Smellie. 2020

<https://www.farrer.co.uk/globalassets/clients-and-sectors/safeguarding/low-level-concerns-guidance-2020.pdf>

Department for Education, *in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1007260/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007260/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2022.pdf)

Working together to Safeguard Children. Statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

## **APPENDIX F: FOREST SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING & SUPERVISION POLICY**

This policy is active in conjunction with the existing safeguarding and child protection Policy and all statutory and non-statutory elements within this applies. The Forest School is an extension of Woodchurch High School and as such, all safeguarding procedures and child Protection information will be managed and administered in the same way.

Forest School Safeguarding & Supervision Policy July 2023