

## **CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY including EYFS DURHAM HIGH SCHOOL**

***This policy is made available to parents of pupils on our School website. This policy should be read in conjunction with: Anti-bullying Policies; Behaviour Policies; Child Protection and Technology Policy; Data Protection Policy; Educational Visits Policy; Mental Health Policy, Missing Pupil Procedures; Pastoral Care Policy; Recruitment and Selection Policy; Staff Code of Conduct; Taking, Storing and Using Images of Children; SEND Policy; Visiting Speaker Policy; Whistleblowing Policy. Covid-19 Annex to our Safeguarding, Child Protection and Behaviour Policies are also available on our web-site.***

### **Policy Statement**

Durham High School is committed to Safeguarding, child protection and promoting the welfare of all pupils, regardless of age, special needs or disability, racial/cultural heritage, religious belief or sexual orientation. This Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy forms a fundamental part of our approach to providing excellent Pastoral Care for all pupils and includes the School's provision for Safeguarding in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

The policy complies with DfE statutory guidance for schools and colleges: 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), September 2019'; and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (WTSC), 2018'. The policy is also in accordance with locally agreed inter-agency procedures for County Durham and takes into account the non-statutory guidance, 'Information Sharing, 2015', and department advice: 'What to do if you are Worried a Child is Being Abused' and Covid-19: Safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers'.

### **Creating a Culture of Safeguarding**

All staff, governors and volunteers who work in regulated activity and are in direct contact with children at Durham High School have a responsibility in relation to Safeguarding. The School recognises that Safeguarding covers much more than child protection and is aware that we form part of the wider Safeguarding system for children as described in the statutory guidance WTSC, 2018. This policy operates in conjunction with the 'Staff Code of Conduct', the 'Whistleblowing Policy' and other related policies and procedures, such as safer recruitment, pupil wellbeing, anti-bullying, behaviour management, information sharing, the safe use of ICT and School security. All staff members and adults working in the School are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where Safeguarding is concerned. In all our dealings with Safeguarding issues, the School is clear that we always consider what is in the best interest of the child and act accordingly.

The School recognises that as well as protecting children from harm, Safeguarding widens the responsibility of preventing harm and promoting the wellbeing of children, which includes: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health and development; protecting children from self-harm; preventing radicalisation; ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

The School recognises that children with SEN/D face additional safeguarding challenges; in addition, staff are made aware that additional barriers may exist to identifying abuse and neglect in this group of children. We therefore do not make the assumption that an indicator of possible abuse relates to a child's disability without further investigation. Staff understand that children with SEN/D may be impacted upon disproportionately by behaviours such as bullying without outwardly showing any signs and that their disability may provide communication barrier and difficulties in overcoming the additional barriers. Girls are identified through the pastoral system (HoYs, Learning Support) and staff are regularly update on the special needs of girls who require additional support.

### **The Aims of the Policy**

This policy aims to outline: the role that the School has in working with and leading different agencies to enable the most appropriate form of intervention to take place; the procedures that staff should follow; and guidance on issues related to Safeguarding generally. It is not exhaustive. All staff should use as a rule of thumb the needs and safety of the child as being at the centre of any decision they make. The policy applies to all staff (teaching and non-teaching), governors and volunteers coming in contact with children in the School. There are eight main aims of the policy:

- to raise awareness of individual responsibilities in identifying and reporting concerns including “children in need” and “children at risk of significant harm”;
- to provide a systematic means of monitoring, recording and reporting of concerns and cases;
- to provide guidance to staff on local early help processes and understand their role in it
- to provide guidance on recognising and dealing with suspected child abuse;
- to provide guidance to all staff on how to respond and manage reports of sexual violence or harassment
- to provide a framework for inter-agency communication and effective liaison;
- to identify strategies and interventions available to support children at risk; and
- to raise awareness of ‘The Prevent Duty Guidance, 2015’ in relation to counter-terrorism and security.

The policy’s aims also link to the aim of ensuring we practise safer recruitment in checking the suitability of staff, governors and volunteers – see separate ‘*Recruitment and Selection Policy.*’

### **Implementation Procedures**

The School has systems in relation to Safeguarding to: prevent unsuitable people working with pupils; identify pupils who are at risk of and/or are likely to suffer significant harm and take appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are safe; promote safe practice and challenge poor practice, unsafe practice and inaction; deal with issues of confidentiality, information sharing and consent; and ensure that staff do not, through their actions, place pupils at risk of harm, or themselves at risk from an allegation of harm, by providing guidance on areas such as inappropriate electronic communication – see ‘*Staff Code of Conduct.*’

The School has procedures to assist staff and volunteers when handling Safeguarding concerns and all staff and volunteers must follow these procedures at all times, as set out below. The School’s procedures follow those as set out by the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership: <https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/0-19-Threshold-Document-Final-June-2018-DSCP.pdf>

The School also takes account of guidance issued by the DfE. School recognises the expertise that staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns daily. Staff are given the opportunity to contribute and shape safeguarding arrangements and child protection policy through staff meetings and briefings as well as annual safeguarding INSET training.

If staff members have any **concerns** about a child, they will need to decide what action to take. Where possible, there should be a conversation with the designated safeguarding lead to agree a course of action, although any staff member can make a referral to children’s social care. Other options could include referral to specialist services or early help services and should be made in accordance with the referral threshold set by the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership. If early help is appropriate the DSL will support the staff member in liaising with other agencies and keep the case under constant review.

**If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children’s social care and/or the police immediately.** Anyone can make a referral. Where referrals are not made by the designated safeguarding lead, the designated safeguarding lead should be informed as soon as possible that a referral has been made.

### Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)

Role	Name	Job Title	Contact details
DSL in Senior House	Linda Ibbott	Deputy Head (Pastoral)	Extension 143214 l.ibbott@dhsfg.org.uk
Deputy DSLs in Senior House	Simone Niblock	Headmistress	Extension 143207 <a href="mailto:s.niblock@dhsfg.org.uk">s.niblock@dhsfg.org.uk</a>
	Julia Tomlinson	Deputy Head	Extension 143216 <a href="mailto:j.tomlinson@dhsfg.org.uk">j.tomlinson@dhsfg.org.uk</a>
	Judith Lonsdale	Head of Y10/Senior Teacher: Pastoral Y7-11	Extension 143245 <a href="mailto:j.lonsdale@dhsfg.org.uk">j.lonsdale@dhsfg.org.uk</a>
	Clare Wheeler	Head of Sixth Form/Senior Teacher: Pastoral Sixth Form	Extension 143238 c.wheeler@dhsfg.org.uk
DSL in Junior House	Katherine Anderson	Head of Junior House	Extension 143250 <a href="mailto:k.anderson@dhsfg.org.uk">k.anderson@dhsfg.org.uk</a>
Deputy DSL in Junior House and EYFS specialist DSL	Kathryn Hall	EYFS Coordinator	Extension 143253 <a href="mailto:k.hall@dhsfg.org.uk">k.hall@dhsfg.org.uk</a>
Deputy DSL	Carol Meade	Bursar	Extension 143202 <a href="mailto:bursar@dhsfg.org.uk">bursar@dhsfg.org.uk</a>
Governing Body Safeguarding Lead	Linda Clark	Chair of Governors	Contact number can be obtained from the School Office on 0191 384 3226

The DSLs, Linda Ibbott (Senior House) and Katherine Anderson (Junior House), should be the first to be approached about any issues; however, the ultimate lead responsibility is with Linda Ibbott. A Deputy DSL should only be approached if the DSL is out of School and/or unavailable to act if a situation is urgent. Linda Ibbott, Simone Niblock, Katherine Anderson and Kathryn Hall can also deputise for one another, should the need arise. The DSL or a Deputy DSL should be available at all times during school hours. The role of the DSL is included in the job description of each of the aforementioned members of staff.

The DSL will:

- Manage referrals - make child protection referrals, recording and reporting accordingly, referring children in need to children's social care and children at risk to children's social care immediately. Support other staff who make referrals. Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern and support other staff who make referrals to the Channel programme;
- Work with others – co-ordinate action within the School and liaise with outside agencies acting as a point of contact with safeguarding partners. Liaise with the Headmistress to inform her of any issues especially ongoing enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989. Liaise with staff on any matter of safeguarding including online and digital safety. Act as a source of support, advice and expertise within the School providing appropriate feedback to members of staff on a need-to-know basis. Meet termly with the Governing Body Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy DSLs to review the implementation of the School's Safeguarding Policy and practice. If a crime may have been committed, report the matter to the police immediately;
- Be responsible for training – undergo training, including Prevent, to provide them with the relevant knowledge and skills, and update this at least annually ensuring that Deputy DSLs do the same. Understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and local authority children's social care referral arrangements. Have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend

and contribute to these effectively when required to do so. Ensure each member of staff has access to, and understands, the School's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff. Remain alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers. Understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation. Understand the importance of information sharing, both within the School, and with the three safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of Safeguarding. Keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals. Understand and support the School with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation. Understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at School. Recognise the additional risks that children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support SEND children to stay safe online. Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses. Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the School may put in place to protect them. Organise training on Safeguarding within School in line with Durham Local Authority and ensure all staff and volunteers receive regular training every three years as well as updates annually;

- Raising awareness – ensure the School's child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately. Ensure the School's child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing body regarding this. Ensure the child protection 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 in this. 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.
- Child protection file – Ensure that where children leave the School their child protection file is transferred to the new School as soon as possible. This will be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. In addition to the child protection file, the DSL will also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

## **The Governing Body**

The Governing Body Safeguarding Lead, Linda Clark, Chair of Governors, takes **leadership** responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements and, in working with the DSLs, will:

- ensure that there is an annual review of the 'Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy';
- ensure there is an effective Staff Code of Conduct in place;
- review the efficiency with which Safeguarding policy and practice is carried out;
- discuss updates to policy and practice and report to Governing Body meetings.

The Governing Body Safeguarding Lead will meet with the DSLs and Deputy DSLs, prior to each full Governors' Meeting to discuss policy and practice. Minutes will be kept of any meetings and discussions relating to the monitoring and checking of Safeguarding policy and practice.

## **School Staff, including Part-time Staff and Volunteers**

The School is committed to carrying out safer recruitment practice when recruiting staff or volunteers or appointing contractors to work within School. DBS checks are carried out according to the guidance outlined in the document KCSIE 2020, depending on the role and duties of the

applicant. Disqualification from working with children in childcare in the EYFS setting, is also adhered to – *see separate 'Recruitment and Selection Policy' for further policy and practice.*

Every new member of the teaching and non-teaching staff, including temporary staff, and volunteers, new peripatetic music teachers and sports coaches, is required to attend a training session on Safeguarding as part of their induction programme. All new employees including the cleaning staff and catering firm are also given training in Safeguarding as are Sixth Form students employed in After School Care. Also, training is given to the Sixth Form Senior Leadership prefect team and to any older girls who act as buddies to younger girls.

Induction training sessions are organised by Linda Ibbott (Senior House) or Katherine Anderson (Junior House), and will be held prior to the member of staff coming into direct contact with girls at DHS. The training will cover:

- the School's 'Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy';
- the 'Staff Code of Conduct'
- Pupil Behaviour Policy
- the 'Whistleblowing Policy';
- the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
- the identity of the DSLs and Deputy DSLs;
- Part 1 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), 2020';
- the risks of radicalisation;
- how to identify children and young people at risk; and
- online safety.

All are required to read and have an understanding of the 'Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy', 'Staff Code of Conduct', 'Whistleblowing Policy' and 'Part 1 of KCSIE, 2020 and Annex A of KCSIE, 2020'. All governors are given the same suite of documents but do not need to undergo the same training unless they are working in regulated activity.

Following the training all staff and volunteers should:

- be aware of the signs of abuse;
- know to not promise confidentiality and to report any concerns immediately to the DSL;
- consult with the DSL if in any doubt about any aspect of Safeguarding policy or practice;
- follow the advice given in this policy in relation to how to handle disclosures; and
- attend any Safeguarding Inset training sessions when requested.

In addition, all staff will be asked to complete an online Prevent awareness course; notification of completion will be kept by the DSL.

All teaching, non-teaching staff and volunteers will be required to sign a form to say they have received Safeguarding training, read the key policy documentation and that they agree to work in accordance with the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures. This form is then kept on the member of staff's file.

The only adults who work or visit the School who are exempt from this requirement are those not working in regulated activity and include: occasional visitors, including occasional speakers and contractors, who sign in and are given a security badge by our Receptionist, and who are escorted throughout their visit; and contractors working during school holidays *or* contractors working on a designated site that is physically separated from the rest of the School, who are required to sign in and out at their site office and to wear security badges at all times.

In line Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership policy and practice, all staff undergo Level 1 Safeguarding training with Durham Local Authority every 3 years. An annual in-house up-date Safeguarding training session will take place every September for all staff during which the annually revised 'Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy' will be distributed. Any other updates will be distributed by the DSL, Linda Ibbott, as and when required.

## **Children missing from education**

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

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

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

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

The DSLs and Deputy DSLs are trained in signs to look out for, and the individual triggers to be aware of, when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being missing; such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

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

## **The Internet, Mobile Phones and Cameras (with particular reference to the EYFS Setting)**

Staff must not use mobile phones or cameras, unless for the purpose of recording evidence for a Learning Journal, when with, or around, pupils in the EYFS Setting. This includes in the dining hall when EYFS pupils are having lunch. For ease of policing this policy, staff are asked to not take phones into the dining hall or use mobile phones anywhere in, or around, Junior House. Older pupils who work with pupils in the EYFS Setting are given the same information, as are all Sixth Form students.

It is expected that any staff taking photographs of pupils will do so using one of the school devices. If this is not possible, all staff are aware that any photographs must be deleted as soon as possible from personal devices (e.g. if taking photographs whilst on a school trip to upload to social media, staff should adopt a policy of 'tweet then delete'). All photographs taken of pupils should show pupils in context of the school activity that they are participating in.

## **Raising Awareness amongst Pupils**

The School is committed to raising awareness of Safeguarding amongst pupils whenever the opportunity arises. This includes highlighting general health and safety issues in and around School as well as teaching pupils about Safeguarding, through for example, discussion in PSHE lessons about personal safety issues, mental health, body image and forming healthy relationships as part of sex education. The Government has made Relationships and Sex Education mandatory for all Primary and Secondary pupils from September 2021 and the school is working towards updating PSHE schemes of work to fully implement these changes. Pupils are also taught about

cyber-safety in PSHE and Computing lessons, in assemblies and whenever ICT is used as a teaching and learning tool. Staff are also aware of the need to build resilience to the risks of radicalisation whenever the opportunity arises within the curriculum or in pastoral contexts.

All staff follow the *Child Protection and Technology Policy* and pupils sign an ICT code of conduct. The access to inappropriate internet content is prevented through the school's filtering system. Monitoring of attempts to access inappropriate content via the school network is carried out daily by the DSL. Access to 3G and 4G is naturally limited on the school site due to poor network coverage. Pupil access to inappropriate content via 3G and 4G networks cannot be filtered on the school site. However, school tries to mitigate the danger of pupils accessing inappropriate content by educating pupils on how to stay safe online.

The aim is to help pupils reduce their risk of harm in an age appropriate way, so pupils become aware of the risks posed by adults or young people, especially those who use the internet and social media to bully, groom or abuse other people. (See 'The UK Safer Internet Centre' website ([www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)) and the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) Thinkuknow website ([www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk))). School is also committed to reducing the risk of harm to children from the online world by taking note of guidance issued by the DfE in [Teaching Online Safety in School](#).

We are also committed to raising pupils' awareness of how adults and other pupils behave around them. We encourage pupils to share any worries and concerns with someone they trust, should they feel compromised or if they are being asked to do something they feel uncomfortable with; this is achieved by creating a culture of listening to pupils and taking into account their wishes and feelings when they voice concerns. Class teachers, Form Teachers and Heads of Year play a key role in this.

In both Junior House and Senior House, we also have a 'Thoughts Box' where girls of all ages are encouraged to post things that they may want teachers to know or give feedback on, without having to talk to anyone directly about it. The School Counsellor is also available, by appointment, for girls to talk to should they wish to do so.

We have staff who are National Online Safety trained and we use National Online Safety materials within PSHE and assemblies in order to get Safeguarding messages across to pupils of all ages. We have strong links with local Police who frequently come into School and give Safeguarding talks to pupils.

## **Different types of Abuse**

Staff at DHS are trained regularly to be aware of the different types of abuse girls in our care may be exposed to and we ensure that coherent procedures are in place both for educating the girls about such abuses as well as for staff to understand how to deal with cases of abuse. Abuse may take many different forms: child sexual exploitation, honour-based violence, female genital mutilation, peer-on-peer abuse, forced marriage, faith abuse and radicalisation.

## **Peer-on-peer Abuse**

We recognise that there are different types of peer-on-peer abuse which may include, but are not limited to, physical abuse, gender-based violence, sexual harmful behaviour, bullying including cyberbullying, 'upskirting' and 'sexting'.

We aim to minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse by:

- Challenging inappropriate behaviours by making it clear to all pupils that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not accepted, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.
- Not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as 'banter', 'part of growing up', 'just having a laugh'.

- Raising staff awareness about about peer-on-peer abuse through regular Safeguarding training.
- Providing a preventative and age-appropriate PSHE curriculum which addresses issues associated with peer-on-peer abuse such as:
  - Healthy and respectful relationships
  - What respectful behaviour looks like
  - Consent
  - Gender roles, stereotyping and equality
  - Body confidence and self-esteem
  - Prejudiced behaviour
  - Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Seeking specialist support where necessary and particularly when approaching sexual violence and sexual harassment as part of preventing peer-on-peer abuse. Specialist organisations could include:
  - NSPCC
  - UK Safer Internet Centre
  - Brook
  - The Anti-Bullying Alliance

In cases where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm due to a pupil or a group of pupils abusing them, for example, if a child is being bullied or pressurised to post something compromising on the internet, the DSL will work with pastoral staff in School to ensure the absolute safety of the child. If appropriate, such abuse will be referred to Local Outside Agencies and the parents of the child and other children involved will be informed. It is an expectation that in the event of such a disclosure, all children involved, whether perpetrator or victim, would be treated as being 'at risk'.

When there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm due to a bullying incident, the incident will be treated as a child protection concern.

Through our comprehensive pastoral and PSHE programme we foster a culture where girls are encouraged to come forward with concerns they have. All allegations of peer-on-peer abuse, including youth produced sexual imagery, will be dealt with by the DSL who takes lead responsibility for liaising with external agencies or police if deemed necessary.

As part of the annual safeguarding training, staff are trained to manage a report of sexual violence or harassment by peers and staff should follow guidelines regarding effective safeguarding practices, as set out in KCSIE 2020.

Reports of child-on-child sexual violence or harassment can be managed

- internally
- as part of an early help approach
- by involving children's social services
- by reporting to the police

### **Safeguarding and supporting the alleged victim of Peer-on-peer abuse**

Victims of peer-on-peer abuse, including sexting, are well supported within school; we take each case very seriously, listen and acknowledge the concerns of the victim and take necessary action swiftly; in any case, consideration is always given to the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. School always investigates thoroughly and collates all relevant information; when there is a report of sexual violence the DSL (or Deputy) will record a risk assessment and keep it under review at all times. Unless there are specific reasons not to, School will inform parents of the victim and perpetrator of peer-on-peer abuse at the earliest opportunity. If necessary, we will segregate the victim and perpetrator during the investigation. In case of sexting, and where an external person may be involved, police may be informed.

## **Safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator of Peer-on-peer abuse**

The school acknowledges it has a difficult balancing act to consider. On the one hand, the need to safeguard the victim (and the wider pupil/student body) and on the other hand provide the alleged perpetrator with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions. To effectively do this, the school will:

- Consider the age and the developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator and nature of the allegations. Any child will likely experience stress as a result of being the subject of allegations and/or negative reactions by their peers to the allegations against them.
- Consider the proportionality of the response. Support (and sanctions) should be considered on a case-by-case basis. An alleged perpetrator may potentially have unmet needs (in some cases these may be considerable) as well as potentially posing a risk of harm to other children. Harmful sexual behaviours in young children may be (and often are) a symptom of either their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices and or materials. Advice should be taken, as appropriate, from children's social care, specialist sexual violence services and the police.
- It is important that if the alleged perpetrator does move to another educational institution (for any reason), that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs and where appropriate, potential risks to other children and staff. The DSL will take responsibility to ensure this happens, as well as transferring the child protection file.

## **Partnerships with Parents**

Effective liaison with parents on Safeguarding matters is crucial. School recognises that families are from different backgrounds and cultures and have different approaches to bringing up children; we acknowledge such differences and respect family privacy, provided the child is not put at risk. The priority is the needs of the child, however, and should a child be suspected of being at risk within their family home, School will address the issue and, where appropriate, liaise with outside agencies.

Where possible, staff should work with and share Safeguarding concerns with parents, via the DSL. Permission of parents for liaison and information sharing with outside agencies is, however, **not** a requirement, especially if it places the child at risk. In cases where a child is felt to be at risk from their parents, advice must be sought from Social Services and a Child Protection referral made.

School is committed to working with parents to help educate parents and keep them updated about Safeguarding issues. We use our DSLs, National Online Safety trained staff and local Police officers to run regular cyber-safety and general Safeguarding talks for parents.

## **Guidance on Recognising Types of Abuse and Neglect**

All staff are aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

"Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2020", defines abuse to be a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

All staff are aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside school or their families and can be vulnerable to multiple harms eg sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and youth violence.

Abuse might fall into the categories\* of:

**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.

**Some of the following signs may be indicators of physical abuse:**

- Children with frequent injuries;
- Children with unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones; and
- Children with unexplained: bruises or cuts; burns or scalds; or bite marks.

**Emotional/Psychological 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 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 of the following signs may be indicators of emotional abuse:**

- Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong;
- Parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder';
- Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child; and
- Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons.
- Parental response to a child's problems gives cause for concern

**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. The Voyeurism Act of 2019 also classes 'upskirting' as a crime and can be seen as sexual abuse. Upskirting typically involves taking a picture under someone's clothing, without their knowledge, with the intention of seeing the genitals or buttocks for the purpose of sexual gratification or with the intention of causing the victim distress or alarm. 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 (see section on peer-on-peer abuse).

**Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual abuse:**

- Children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age;
- Children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to have;

- Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games; and
- Children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections or underage pregnancy.

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

**Some of the following signs may be indicators of neglect:**

- Children who are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe;
- Children who are left hungry or dirty;
- Children who are left without adequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat;
- Children who are living in dangerous conditions, i.e. around drugs, alcohol or violence;
- Children who are often angry, aggressive or self-harm;
- Children who fail to receive basic health care; and
- Parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured.

*(\* Definitions as given by 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019, Part 1' and 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused, 2015')*

It is not the responsibility of School staff to decide whether child abuse is occurring, but we are required to act and report on any concerns. Staff and volunteers in School are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop. Bruises, lacerations and burns may be apparent, particularly when children change their clothes for physical education and sports activities. All staff and volunteers are also asked to watch out for signs of self-harm.

Staff should also be vigilant and report any concerns they may have if a child threatens or tries to run away or goes missing for any period of time. Any pupil who repeatedly goes missing from School or has regular absence or has ten days of unexplained unauthorised absence, will be reported by the DSL to Durham Local Authority.

### **Other Areas of Safeguarding**

Any concerns about Child Sexual Exploitation or Female Genital Mutilation must also be recorded and reported to the DSL immediately.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation and 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 will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the 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.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. CSE can affect anyone under 18, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex and it appears to be consensual. Child Sexual Exploitation does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. It may occur without the child's knowledge eg through copying images they have created and posted online.

A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power over the victim including pressure from peers to have sex or sexual bullying, including cyber-bullying and grooming.

#### **Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual exploitation:**

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant;
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- Children who regularly miss school or education or don't take part in education.

#### **Child Criminal Exploitation**

All staff are made aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. All staff are made aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to deal with these. Further advice can be found in the advice for schools and colleges from the Home Office's *Preventing youth violence and Gang involvement* and in *Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines*.

Possible indicators of CCE might include:

- Increased absence from school;
- A change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups;
- A significant decline in performance;
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in well-being;
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries;
- Unexplained gifts of new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by or are involved with individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs;
- Misuse of drugs or alcohol;
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late.

#### **Domestic abuse**

Domestic violence and abuse involves any incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, partners or family members. The abuse can be: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. A child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

#### **County Lines**

'County lines' describes organised criminal networks importing illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines. Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines model, with children exploited to

move drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, and violence (including sexual violence). Children can be recruited in areas around schools and become trapped as gangs create drug debts or threaten violence if they attempt to leave the network. An indicator of involvement is missing episodes from home and school. If a child is suspected to be at risk of, or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be made, alongside contact with local services.

### **Honour-based Violence**

So-called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so-called HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubt, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead.

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

Staff need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. The age at which girls undergo FGM varies enormously according to the community. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is newborn, during childhood or adolescence, at marriage or during the first pregnancy. However, the majority of cases of FGM are thought to take place between the ages of 5 and 8 and therefore girls within that age bracket are at a higher risk.

From October 2015, it is mandatory for teachers to report to the Police cases where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Unless there is a good reason not to, an initial report should also be made to the DSL and Children's Social Services should be involved, as appropriate.

There are a number of indications that a girl or woman has already been subjected to FGM:

- a girl or woman asks for help;
- a girl or woman confides in a professional that FGM has taken place;
- a mother/family member discloses that female child has had FGM;
- a family/child is already known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues;
- a girl or woman has difficulty walking, sitting or standing or looks uncomfortable;
- a girl or woman finds it hard to sit still for long periods of time, and this was not a problem previously;
- a girl or woman spends longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating;
- a girl spends long periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems;
- a girl or woman has frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems;
- a girl avoids physical exercise or requires to be excused from physical education (PE) lessons without a GP's letter;
- there are prolonged or repeated absences from school or college
- increased emotional and psychological needs, for example withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour;
- a girl or woman is reluctant to undergo any medical examinations;
- a girl or woman asks for help, but is not be explicit about the problem; and/or
- a girl talks about pain or discomfort between her legs.

NB: this is not an exhaustive list of indicators.

### **Forced Marriage**

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). As a school we can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage and should be aware of potential signs for forced marriage: Staff may become aware of a student because they appear anxious, depressed and emotionally withdrawn with low self-esteem. They may have mental health disorders and display behaviours such as self-harming, self-cutting or anorexia. Students may present with a sudden decline in their performance, aspirations or motivation. Some female students may feel studying is pointless if they are going to be forced to marry and therefore be unable to continue with their education. If staff have any concerns they should raise this with the DSL.

### **'Sexting' or Youth-Produced Sexual Imagery**

Sexting is the 'sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the Internet. It is also likely to include the writing and sharing of sexually explicit messages. From 2019, 'upskirting' is also considered a criminal offence. Creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal and it presents a range of risks which need careful management.

When an incident involving sexting comes the school's attention:

- The incident should be referred to the DSL as soon as possible
- The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff
- There should be subsequent interviews with the young people involved (if appropriate)
- Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm
- At any point in the process if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.
- It should be established where the images/ messages have been sent to and action taken to have these deleted
- Assess the impact the case of sexting will have on the student
- Evaluate which, if any, outside agencies need to be involved

An immediate referral to police and/or children's social care should be made if:

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

Sexually explicit images should not be viewed by any member of staff during the investigation unless it is deemed necessary to safeguard the child. If the image/message has been sent/shared consensually and no malice was intended, then it is usually appropriate for School to manage the incident directly. All incidents of sexting are recorded in the Serious Incident log.

### **Mental Health**

We recognise that School has an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils. All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can be an

indicator that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Although only trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem, our staff, are well-placed to identify those children whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. If staff have a mental health concern about a child, immediate action should be taken, following the School's Mental Health Policy and, where it could also be a Safeguarding concern, the Child Protection Policy.

### **Preventing Radicalisation**

School has due regard to the need to prevent pupils from being drawn into terrorism, as set out in the 'Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, 2015'. Staff are asked to keep an awareness of the potential for radicalisation of pupils, in particular, through the use of the internet and social media – see '*The Use of Social Media for On-line Radicalisation, 2015*'.

The 'Prevent Duty' came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015. The Prevent strategy has three objectives:

- Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote and support it;
- Increase the resilience of institutions to resist terrorists and extremists;
- Stop people from being drawn into terrorism and protect those vulnerable individuals who are at risk of radicalisation, ensuring they are given appropriate advice and support.

'Channel' is a key element of the Prevent strategy. It is a multi-agency approach to identifying and supporting those individuals who are vulnerable and at risk from radicalisation. Channel is about safeguarding individuals from being drawn into committing terrorist related activity. It is about early intervention to protect and divert people away from the risk they face before illegality occurs. (*Definition as given by the Durham Constabulary website*)

Should staff suspect that any pupil is being radicalised in any way, or drawn in to terrorism, concerns should be passed on to the DSL immediately. Any concern will be investigated in the same way as any other Safeguarding concern and the same Durham Local Authority ([www.durham-lscb.org.uk](http://www.durham-lscb.org.uk)) referral processes will then apply. You can also refer an individual to the Channel process or report Prevent related information to the Durham Constabulary Prevent Team on 0191 375 2234.

### **Children in Need**

School recognises the distinction between "children at risk" who have suffered, or are likely to suffer significant harm and "children in need" who are unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health and development, or whose health and development is likely to be impaired without the provision of services. If staff are concerned that a child may be in need they should report their concerns to the DSL who will consult with the local authority and work with inter-agencies including use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and "Team around the Child" (TAC) approaches.

### **Visiting Speakers**

Staff must ensure that any visiting speakers who might fall within the scope of the Prevent Duty, whether invited in to school by staff or pupils, are suitable and appropriately supervised. Staff must ensure that any such speaker who comes in to school has been researched, then checked and vetted as appropriate. An internet search is advised as a first step to check suitability. Staff are then asked to speak to the DSL. A declaration form is completed by the Visiting Speaker to show that they will adhere to our Visiting Speaker Policy. A copy of the form and a register of all Visiting Speakers is kept by the DSL. If checks are required for a visiting speaker, these will be recorded on the Central Register.

### **Policy for Dealing with Suspected Abuse, Radicalisation or Self-Harm**

All staff should refer concerns of abuse, radicalisation or self-harm to the DSL as soon as possible. In the meantime, they should:

- listen to the pupil, keeping calm and offering reassurance;
- never promise confidentiality - let the child know immediately that if they make a Safeguarding disclosure you must speak to the DSL; explain that anything they say will be treated sensitively and only those who need to know will be informed;
- observe bruises or self-harm where possible but should not ask a child to remove or adjust their clothing to observe them;
- allow the child to lead the discussion if a disclosure is made, but do not press for details by asking leading questions, eg 'what did they do next?';
- listen – **do not investigate** but use questions such as, 'Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?';
- accept what the pupil says without challenge - reassure them that they are doing the right thing and that you recognise how hard it is for them;
- not lay blame or criticise either the child or the perpetrator;
- take time to reassure the child and explain that they have done the right thing in speaking to you.

Staff should be careful in subsequent discussions to keep confidentiality and ensure that information is only given to the appropriate DSL. Members of staff, other than the DSL and those involved closely, should only be given enough details in order to help them to act sensitively and appropriately to a pupil.

In summary, the role of the member of staff or volunteer is to listen, record and report; not to investigate. Information should be passed straight to the DSL. If a child says they want to tell you something and then stops once you explain that you cannot keep a Safeguarding concern confidential, still report the initial conversation to the DSL.

If, at any point, a child has suffered serious harm or there is a risk of immediate serious harm a referral should be made to Children's Social Care immediately. Any member of staff can make a referral to Social Care if they judge a child to be in immediate danger. In such cases there is no requirement to obtain consent from the child's parents.

Where a child is not at immediate serious harm but is in need of additional support from one or more agencies, the DSL should follow Durham LSCB practices and Common Assessment Framework (CAF) processes to instigate inter-agency assessments.

Staff and volunteers are encouraged to speak to the DSL at any time about any Safeguarding concerns they may have; no issue is too small as often small pieces of information that seem insignificant on their own, come together and help the DSL paint a bigger and more detailed picture of a child's circumstances. Staff are also asked to raise any concerns regarding inaction or perceived weaknesses in School Safeguarding policy or practice.

### **Procedures for Monitoring, Recording and Reporting a Concern**

School policy is that brief notes should be kept at the time of the incident or immediately after. Staff should complete a CPOMs incident with details of the disclosure or of what they have observed. The incident should be sent to the DSL only and no one else, unless the concern is about a member of staff or volunteer, in which case the form should be sent to the Headmistress or the Chair of Governors. The DSL/Headmistress will then inform any other staff they feel should be involved, on a need to know basis. All handwritten notes should be signed and dated and given to the DSL for upload on to CPOMs as additional evidence.

All records should include factual information rather than assumption or interpretation. The child's own language should be used to quote rather than a translation given. Records may be used in legal proceedings and must be kept accurate and secure.

If an allegation or disclosure of abuse is made about a member of staff, the DSL will contact the LADO immediately or within one working day. If it is not an allegation of abuse but it is felt that Social Services should be involved, the DSL will immediately ring the relevant Social Services Department. If a telephone referral is made, contact will be followed up in writing.

For a child who lives outside of County Durham, the DSL will contact the LADO/Social Services Department in the area in which they reside.

### **Process DSL must follow when reporting a Child Protection Incident**

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, the DSL will need to write a detailed record, using notes made when the disclosure was made. The following check list should be used. Any notes made which are not covered in this list should also be included in the final document.

- The child's name, age and date of birth
- The child's home address and telephone number
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
- The nature of the allegation; include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information
- The context of the disclosure should be noted including location and whether anyone else was close by
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- Details of witnesses to the incidents
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details
- Where possible, and if necessary, referral to the Police or Social Services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded

### **Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused;
- the person making the allegation;
- Social services/Police;
- the alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child). The DSL should seek the advice of Social Services to decide who should approach the alleged abuser.

Records may be used at a later date to support a referral to an external agency. Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to the DSL and Headmistress only. Multiple copies of the information should not be kept by other people. Sensitive information regarding Safeguarding issues and information for children on the Child Protection Register is kept in a separate folder by the DSL. Any specific information relating to a Safeguarding issue, not deemed to be a child protection case, is kept separately and confidentially within the pupil's central file and is confidential to the Headmistress and DSL.

### **Support in School**

All Form Teachers and Heads of Year are responsible, in conjunction with other School staff, for the pastoral needs of the children in their care. When it comes to specific Safeguarding issues the

DSL will work with key pastoral staff to help and support the pupil through any problems they may have.

Within the curriculum there will be opportunities to discuss issues which some children might find sensitive. Care should be taken particularly in relation to discussion about families and their make-up. Assumptions about members of families and the presence of both parents should be avoided both in discussion and in the presentation of materials.

During PSHE, in particular in sex education lessons and other sensitive subjects, staff should be alert to the fact that some children will have very different experiences and may find content at odds with their own experiences. Staff should make themselves familiar with the background of the children in their care in order to avoid distress and pastoral leaders, in consultation with the DSL, will try to pre-empt difficult situations for children who have experienced or are currently experiencing Safeguarding issues.

### **Physical Contact with Pupils**

Some form of physical contact with pupils by teachers is inevitable. All teachers should be aware of issues related to touching, however, and the way in which this might be misconstrued - see '*Staff Code of Conduct*'. Where any uncertainty exists, a senior member of staff should always be consulted. Staff must never use corporal punishment.

### **Inter-Agency Liaison**

School recognises that it plays a big part in contributing to a co-ordinated offer of 'early help' and is often the first agency to realise that a child is in need or at risk. At times, School staff may be called to participate in meetings organised and chaired by Social Care. These might include 'Team Around the Child Meetings' in which a core group of professionals are asked to meet to review the progress of actions decided at case conferences. At these meetings, representatives from the School (usually the DSL) should be ready to report back, providing all necessary and relevant information. Following the meeting, feedback will be given and relevant staff brought up-to-date with any actions that are needed. Discretion should be used, however, when talking about the personal and changing circumstances of children, for example, when a child goes into Social Care. Where children have a social worker, this should inform decisions about safeguarding eg responding to unauthorised absence and about promoting welfare eg pastoral and/or academic support.

Where a child is on the Child Protection Register and leaves one school for another, the DSL must inform the receiving school and the key worker. If the child leaves the School with no receiving school, details should be passed to the principal Education Social Worker (ESW). Education staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with investigative agencies.

### **Looked After Children**

'Looked After Children' are children who are living in Social Care. Linda Ibbott is the named person for Looked After Children in Senior House and Katherine Anderson is the named person for Looked After Children in Junior House. Such children will have their own Personal Education Plan (PEP) which will have been drawn up by the 'Looked After Children's Support Service' following a meeting of key professionals. The PEP is part of a wider Care Plan. It is a record of what needs to happen in order to enable the young person to 'fulfil their potential'.

### **Whistleblowing**

The School recognises that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. Where staff or volunteers reasonably believe that Safeguarding concerns exist, or where they have concerns regarding the behaviour of other staff (including supply staff),

volunteers or the management of Safeguarding issues, it is their duty to raise concerns with the DSL or the Headmistress - see *Whistleblowing Policy for further details*.

### **Allegations against Members of Staff or Volunteers**

School Policy on how to deal with allegations against a member of staff or volunteer follows the statutory guidance set out in Part 4 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2019' and the procedures of Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board. Any suspicion or allegation that a child has been abused by a member of staff, including the DSL, or a volunteer should be reported directly to the Headmistress, Simone Niblock, who will take any necessary steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. The Headmistress will immediately inform the Chair of Governors and will speak to the DSL, if appropriate. If the Headmistress is unavailable, the person receiving the allegation should inform the Chair of Governors directly **without** notifying anyone else in School. If the allegation concerns the Headmistress the person receiving the allegation should contact the Chair of Governors directly and **without** notifying the Headmistress or anyone else in School.

The School will not undergo its own investigation of any allegation without prior consultation with the County Durham Designated Officer/Team of Officers (formerly the LADO), or in the most serious cases, the Police. The Headmistress/Chair of Governors will inform the DO **within one working day** of any allegation made against a member of staff to discuss and agree the best course of action to take regarding communication with the child in question and the parents. The Headmistress will record the outcome of the discussions. The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible but parental consent is not required before reporting an allegation to the LADO. The LADO presides over the investigation of any allegations against members of staff or volunteers.

In the case of serious harm, the Police should be informed from the outset.

The School recognises that if an allegation is made against a member of staff, the quick resolution of that allegation must be a clear priority to the benefit of all concerned and at any stage of consideration or investigation all unnecessary delays should be eradicated.

### **Internal Enquiries and Suspension**

The Headmistress, in consultation with the Chair of Governors and considering the views of the LADO and the Police, will consider carefully but make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further Police and Social Services inquiries. The School will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of the member of staff concerned and guard against unwanted publicity.

Irrespective of the findings of Social Services or Police inquiries, a School Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the Police. In such cases, the Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information, which could suggest that on a balance of probability it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

The School will report immediately to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) any person whether employed, contracted, a volunteer, student teacher or pupil, whose services are no longer used because he/she is considered unsuitable to work with children. Failure to make a report constitutes an offence. In the case of a member of teaching staff who has been dismissed or would have been dismissed had they not resigned, a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) will also be made. Where dismissal does not reach the threshold for DBS referral, School has a duty to consider making a referral to the TRA as a prohibition order may be appropriate owing to 'unacceptable professional conduct'.

**Important Contact Details****For a Child in Need or a Child at Risk:****County Durham First Contact Team and Social Care Direct** - Initial Response Service:

Abbeywoods Business Park, Pity Me, Durham, DH1 5TH

Tel: 03000 267979; Fax: 0191 383 5752; Text Message: 07786 027 280

or

**County Durham First Contact Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours Service)**

Tel: 03000 267979; Fax: 0191 383 5752

**For a Child at Immediate Risk of harm:****Police Emergency Services:** 999**County Durham Designated Officer (formerly LADO)/Team of Officers and Safeguarding Advisers for Schools:** Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham DH1 5UJ: 01207 588247**County Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership:** [www.durham-scp.org.uk](http://www.durham-scp.org.uk)**CAMHS, North End House, Durham (Senior Duty Officer):** 0191 594 5770**To report any Safeguarding crime including Female Genital Mutilation:****Durham Police:** 101 then choose Durham Constabulary or **DI Carl Moss** Safeguarding Unit – North, Durham Constabulary, Durham City Police Office, New Elvet, Durham, DH1 3AQ  
0191 3752815**NSPCC Child Protection Helpline:** 0800 028 0285**Childline:** 0800 1111**DfE Due Diligence and Counter Extremism Group Helpline** for non-emergency advice:  
020 7340 7264 or email [counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk)**Durham Constabulary Force Prevent Team:** 0191 375 2234

*August 2020  
Next review due: Autumn 2021*