



Brampton Abbots CE Primary School



Bridstow CE Primary School



Oak Meadow Federation

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY SUITE

This policy will be reviewed and updated by the Governing Body at least annually.
All references to 'the school' imply both Brampton Abbots and Bridstow Primary Schools.

Date signed off by Full Governing Body: 17th October 2023

Signed Daniel Brearey, Headteacher

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Paul Mason, GB Chair

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Date next review due: October 2024

Introduction

Our vision is rooted in Psalm 1:3: 'You are like a tree, planted by streams of water that never run dry. Your fruit ripens in its time; your leaves never fade or curl. In all you do, you prosper'. Through our Christian ethos we seek to nurture every child to reach their potential by working together in friendship, growing together in honesty and respect, and flourishing together in happiness. To this end, we encourage a broad and respectful understanding of the diversity that makes up modern Britain, contributing to a school atmosphere in which children feel safe, valued and respected, and able to talk to staff if they have any concerns, big or small. We believe that this is one of the most positive things we can do to safeguard our pupils and give them the courage and self-esteem to let us know if they are being neglected, abused, or groomed.

Child protection and safeguarding are everyone's responsibility. This suite of policies provides a framework to ensure that children remain safe while being given the freedoms and access to opportunities they need to work, grow and flourish together. It ensures that everyone (including staff, volunteers and governors) who works regularly in school and as part of extended school or off-site activities has the information and skills to enable them to keep children safe and well by:

- promoting a positive and inclusive culture that supports our school values of working together in friendship, growing together in honesty and respect, and flourishing together in happiness;
- recognising at as early a stage as possible issues that may affect a child's mental and physical wellbeing or development;
- understanding and taking the appropriate action in a timely manner.

This suite of policies does not duplicate Keeping Children Safe in Education; it supplements it with local policies and procedures. Keeping Children Safe in Education must be read by all staff ([Part 1](#)) and governors ([Part 1, Part 2 and Annex C](#)).

The chapters in the suite are:

[Chapter 1](#): promoting a positive, inclusive and safe learning environment;

[Chapter 2](#): early intervention and prevention;

[Chapter 3](#): responding to child protection concerns;

[Chapter 4](#): child-on-child (including peer-on-peer) abuse;

[Chapter 5](#): children who are absent from education;

[Chapter 6](#): online safety, including social media and sexting;

[Chapter 7](#): responding to allegations of abuse against staff.

There is not a separate chapter on preventing radicalisation and extremism. This is embedded throughout our approach, from promoting inclusive values to ensuring that teachers are alert to early warning signs of alienation and that all staff are aware of appropriate reporting mechanisms should concerns or support needs arise.

Other key school documents to refer to are the:

- Staff code of conduct (including procedures for dealing with allegations against members of staff);
- Behaviour policy, including anti-bullying policy;
- Recruitment policy (including safer recruitment and DBS checks);
- Information sharing and data protection policy;
- Curriculum intent, implementation and impact, especially for Relationships & Sex Education, Health Education and Citizenship Education;
- Risk assessment framework (particularly during pandemic-related lockdowns).

Roles, responsibilities and training

All staff members have a responsibility to keep children safe and well. Appendix 3 sets out training requirements, key people (including DSL and Deputy DSL), and specific responsibilities for ensuring that an appropriate framework is in place.

The Governing Body

The Governing body will facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding, this means ensuring safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development.

Complaints and whistleblowing

Complaints should follow the procedures as set out in the Complaints Policy on our website. Staff also have a responsibility to raise any concerns following the school's whistleblowing policy.

Compliance

This suite of policies complies with the legislation and statutory guidance listed at Appendix 1. It also complies with the strategic safeguarding arrangements agreed and published by our three local safeguarding partners (Herefordshire Council, the Hereford Clinical Commissioning Group, and West Mercia Police) as part of Safeguarding Children and Young People in Herefordshire, set out at <https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/page/contents> .

Where services or activities are provided separately on school premises by another body, the school will seek assurance that the provider concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place.

CHAPTER 1: PROMOTING A POSITIVE, INCLUSIVE AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

1.1 A positive and inclusive school

We seek to nurture every child to reach their potential by working together in friendship, growing together in honesty and respect, and flourishing together in happiness. This can only be achieved if all children feel welcome, included, safe and respected. All children therefore benefit from positive messages about wellbeing, confidence and resilience, as well as developing an understanding of how to protect themselves through the curriculum, particularly Relationships Education, Health Education and Citizenship Education, and lessons regarding online safety. Our behaviour policy encourages all pupils to treat each other considerately and with respect. Our assemblies foster an understanding of our values and how to live them out, while developing an understanding of the importance of democracy and freedom of speech. Pupils participate in local community events so that they appreciate and value their neighbours and friends, including those who may not share their background.

1.2 Keeping children safe at school

Visitors

As part of ensuring that the school itself is a safe environment, we ask visitors:

- to report to reception, where we will check their credentials before they come in if they are unknown to us;
- to wear a visitors' badge;
- not to take any photographs on their 'phones or other devices whilst in school;
- to provide a DBS certificate before they are able to work 1:1 with children.

All other visitors will be accompanied and never left unsupervised with children.

Children who go missing whilst at school

If a child goes missing, we will secure the site, check boundaries, contact parents, contact other names on the child's contact list, contact the police, record the incident, and report it as a near miss if necessary.

Non-collection of children

If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we will contact parents, contact other names on the child's contact list, and look after the child until collected. If the child is not collected within an hour and we cannot make contact with a parent or other named contact, we will agree an appropriate course of action with the headteacher and record the incident on MyConcern.

CHAPTER 2: EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

School staff are well-placed to identify at an early stage if there are problems arising in children's lives. It is always easier to help children and their families if issues are identified early. Some additional support within school or from informal voluntary sector routes might be enough to give people the help that is needed.

2.1 Active listening and a note on confidentiality

If a child wishes to talk to you, you (which refers throughout this policy to the staff member who is aware of a potential safeguarding issue) should always:

- make time to do so promptly;
- listen without judgement, giving time and not asking leading questions;
- stay calm and not show if you are shocked or upset;
- tell the child s/he has done the right thing in telling you;
- explain what will happen next and that you will keep it confidential, as long as it does not put them or someone they know at risk of being hurt.

You should never promise a child that you will keep information secret, as you cannot do so if information disclosed raises a safeguarding concern. Sharing confidential information (including sensitive and personal data) for the purposes of safeguarding and protecting children is specifically allowed under the Data Protection Act. This can be done without consent if a practitioner is unable to, or cannot be reasonably expected to, gain agreement from the individual, or if gaining agreement could place the child at risk. However, you should only tell those who need to know (the DSL in the first instance). If you are uncertain about whether it is acceptable to share information, you should consult the DSL.

2.2 Early warning signs

You should also be alert to warning signs of problems arising, particularly where they may constitute abuse or neglect. Ultimately, this will be based on your professional judgement, supported by a discussion with the DSL, but you could look out for signs such as a child's:

- routinely arriving late, or regularly missing days of school;
- not being able to focus as well as usual in class;
- having poor self-esteem or low confidence;
- beginning to have behavioural problems;
- behaviour changing in relation to other children (e.g. becoming more withdrawn or more gregarious);
- not feeling like they belong;
- beginning to make less good progress than previously;
- language or references to out-of-school activities changing;
- changing their friendship group;
- making references that concern you in relation to their online activity;
- often being tired or hungry;
- often being poorly dressed;
- parents' ceasing or reducing significantly their contact with school;
- apparently receiving limited support to learn at home;
- signs of self-harm;
- signs of unexplained injuries;
- having unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- having to have more time off for GP appointments.

If you notice physical injuries (including whilst children are changing for PE), you can ask them how the injury happened.

2.3 Recognising increased vulnerability

You should also be aware that some groups of children may be more at risk of experiencing problems. These include:

- having special educational needs (SEN), disabilities or additional needs;
- being a young carer;
- being frequently targeted for bullying;
- going missing from care, home or education;
- showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour;
- misusing drugs or alcohol;
- having changes in their family circumstances;
- experiencing discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality;
- having English as an additional language;
- living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse, parental mental health problems, or domestic violence;
- being an asylum seeker;
- being at risk either due to their own or their family member's mental health needs;
- being at risk of FGM or forced marriage;
- having a social worker, being looked after or previously looked after

Experiencing some of these factors can increase some (even young) children being susceptible to sexual exploitation, radicalisation, violent extremism, modern slavery, trafficking or criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence. You should also be alert to the possibility that organised abuse involves one or more abusers and a number of children. This can occur both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community and within institutions such as residential homes or schools. There are also cases in which children are abused online. More information can be found in Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

2.4 Potential barriers to recognising and disclosing neglect or abuse

You should be aware that for some children, particularly those with SEN and disabilities, additional barriers can exist when recognising and disclosing abuse and neglect, including:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's situation without further exploration;
- pupils who are more prone to peer-group isolation than other pupils;
- the potential for disproportionate impact of behaviours such as bullying, or problems at home, without their outwardly showing any signs;
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers – as a result of a disability or a feeling that such problems should not be discussed, for example.

Extra pastoral support is available for pupils you consider to be at risk of experiencing such barriers in understanding these issues if needed. If you believe this may be helpful, please talk to the DSL.

2.5 Sensitivity to cultural expectations

You (and the DSL) should be aware of the impact of cultural expectations and obligations on the family, the family's knowledge and understanding of UK law in relation to parenting and child welfare, the impact on the family if recently arrived in the UK, their immigrant status if so, and the potential need to use safe and independent interpreters for discussions about parenting and child welfare, even though the family's day-to-day English may appear/be adequate. However, the analysis of the child's and family's cultural needs must not result in a lowering of expectations when applying standards of good practice to safeguarding the child.

2.6 Children with a social worker

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

- responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks;
- the provision of pastoral and/or academic support.

2.7 The child's wishes

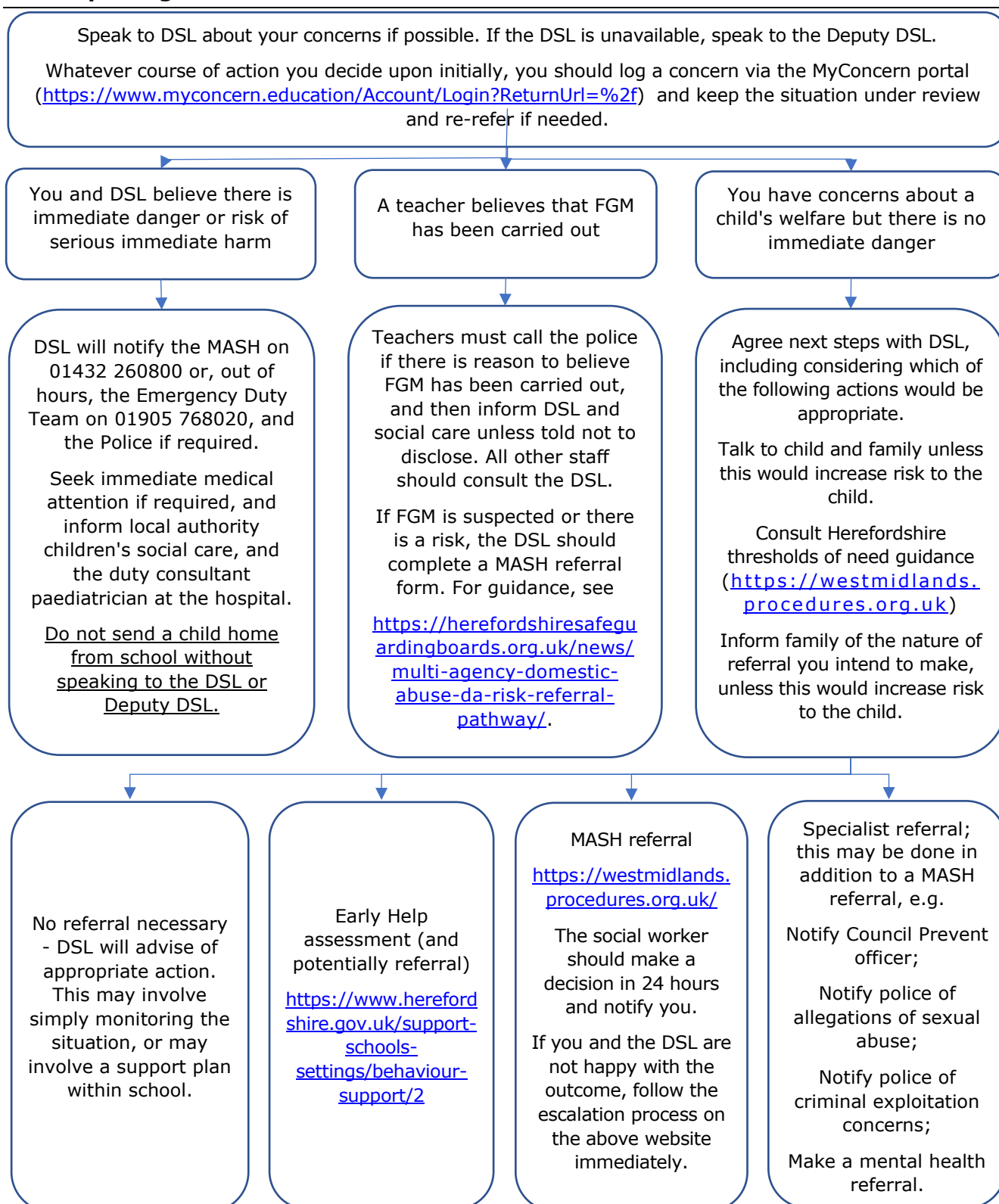
In all efforts to support a child's safety and mental and physical wellbeing, the child's wishes and feelings should be taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. The family's circumstances also need to be taken into account (as has been particularly apparent during periods of lockdown).

CHAPTER 3: RESPONDING TO CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS

3.1 Referrals for safeguarding concerns

If you have safeguarding concerns but there is no immediate danger, discuss the best course of action with the DSL and refer to the flow chart below to support you in making a decision. If there is immediate danger, talk immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL, who may 'phone the Police on 999 or the MASH on 01432 260800 or, out of hours, the Emergency Duty Team on 01905 768020. Do not send a child home if you believe there to be immediate danger, without speaking to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

3.2 Reporting concerns



3.3 Recording and transfer of information

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded on the 'MyConcern' online reporting system. Write up your conversation as soon as possible in the child's own words. Stick to the facts, and do not include your own judgement. If in doubt about recording requirements, you should discuss it with the DSL.

You should keep a record of:

- discussions with the child (it is good practice to give the child full attention while they are talking and then to record conversations straight afterwards to ensure that they are as fresh in your mind as possible);
- discussions with the parent/carer;
- discussions with the DSL/other school staff;
- information provided to local authority children's social care;
- decisions and actions taken (with time and date clearly noted, and signed).

Records will be kept by the school in line with the records retention schedule.

If a child for whom the school has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that the child protection file is forwarded promptly and securely, and separately from the main pupil file. In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child. Records are held in files and sent in sealed envelopes that are signed for on receipt or where possible delivered in person, so that confidentiality is assured. Any transfer of information to other agencies is also undertaken securely.

CHAPTER 4: CHILD-ON-CHILD (INCLUDING PEER-ON-PEER) ABUSE

4.1 Allegations of abuse made against other pupils

Child-on-child abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”. Child-on-child abuse can be through direct or isolated incidents, or as a result of ongoing behaviour over a longer period of time. Some of the most common forms include the following – you should note that some may be gendered but all are serious and none is acceptable:

- bullying (including cyberbullying), including emotional abuse;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair-pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration, and sexual assault;
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- up-skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery);
- initiation/hazing-type violence and rituals.

You should minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by:

- challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour, including requesting or sending sexual images;
- being vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing-type violence with respect to boys;
- ensuring our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent;
- ensuring pupils know they can talk to staff confidentially by explaining this to children each half term or as often as is needed;
- ensuring staff are trained to understand that a pupil harming another child could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy.

Most cases of pupils who hurt other pupils will be dealt with under the school’s behaviour policy, but this child protection policy applies to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This includes where the alleged behaviour:

- is serious, and potentially a criminal offence;
- could put pupils in the school at risk;
- is violent;
- involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol;
- involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, up-skirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including sexting – see Chapter 6 for further details in relation to sexting).

4.2 Signs of child-on-child abuse

You should be alert to signs of someone being abused by another child, e.g.

- Being frightened of walking to and from school or changing their usual route;
- Feeling ill in the mornings;
- Beginning truanting;
- Beginning to perform poorly in their schoolwork;

- Evidence that clothes or books are being destroyed;
- Becoming withdrawn, starting to stammer, lacking confidence, being distressed and anxious and stopping eating;
- Attempting or threatening self-harm or suicide;
- Reports of their crying themselves to sleep or having nightmares;
- Having their possessions go missing;
- Asking for money or starting to steal (to pay the bully) or continually 'losing' their pocket money;
- Refusing to talk about what's wrong;
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts, or scratches;
- Beginning to bully other children/siblings;
- Becoming aggressive and unreasonable.

Where you have concerns, do not hesitate to speak to the DSL. The DSL will either conduct further assessment prior to deciding the extent and nature of the concerns, or will support you to do so.

4.3 Receiving an allegation of child-on-child abuse

If a pupil approaches you to make an allegation of abuse against another pupil:

- do not promise confidentiality as it is very likely that a concern will have to be shared further (for example, with the DSL or children's social care) to discuss next steps;
- if the child would be comfortable to do so, consider including the DSL in the initial discussion;
- recognise and respect your position of trust and that the child feels comfortable talking to you;
- listen carefully to the child, being non-judgmental and clear about boundaries, not asking leading questions, and only prompting the child where necessary with open questions;
- make sure that the child knows what will happen next, and with whom the information will be shared;
- you must record the allegation straight after the child has spoken to you, only recording facts as the child presented them, and tell the DSL, but do not investigate, ensure that the notes do not reflect personal opinion, and only share the report with those people who are necessary in order to progress it;
- where the report includes an online element, you should be aware of the guidance in Chapter 6, not to view or forward illegal images of a child, and inform the DSL if viewing an image was unavoidable.

4.4 Investigating reports of abuse

Once you have informed the DSL, s/he may contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence. The DSL may also contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate.

The DSL may deem that further investigation within school is necessary before making a referral. This may include advising the parents/guardians of both the victim and the child who is displaying potentially harmful behaviours, and inviting them to be present when the children are interviewed.

It may also include providing pupils with the opportunity to record or dictate in their own words their version of events.

- Neither child will be interviewed on their own after the preliminary questioning following disclosure but should be accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- A written record will be kept of pertinent information including date, time, those present and signature - a diagram / photo of the room / playground may be useful, as well as a description of who was present etc..
- The child will be given the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of the record and record any disagreement.

The DSL will consider whether there is any need to separate the alleged victim and abusive child in the classroom and school, and the possible need to send one or both home, whilst not further victimising the victim of the alleged abuse.

The DSL must decide in the circumstances of each case whether or not behaviour directed at another child should be categorised as abusive or not. This judgement will inform a decision on next steps. The following factors will be considered in informing this decision.

- Relative chronological and developmental age of the two children (the greater the difference, the more likely the behaviour should be defined as abusive)
- A differential in power or authority (e.g. related to race or physical or intellectual vulnerability of the victim)
- Actual behaviour (both physical and verbal factors must be considered)
- Whether the behaviour could be described as age appropriate or involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation
- Physical aggression, bullying or bribery
- The victim's experience and perception of the behaviour
- The possibility that the abuser is, or was, also a victim
- Attempts to ensure secrecy
- An assessment of the change in the behaviour over time (whether it has become more severe or more frequent)
- Duration and frequency of behaviour
- Whether this was a single incident or is it an escalating pattern of behaviour, and/or whether this behaviour had been observed previously

4.5 Potential actions

The DSL will decide whether to:

- manage the issue initially within school, providing additional pastoral support as needed;
- initiate an Early Help Assessment;
- refer to the MASH (and potentially also the police);
- refer to CAMHS.

4.6 Supporting children involved in actual or alleged child-on-child abuse

All children, whether actual or alleged victims or those potentially displaying harmful behaviours, will receive appropriate support within school. This will include time to talk and explore their feelings and motivations with a trusted adult. Where appropriate, parents/guardians will also be supported.

If appropriate, the DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected).

CHAPTER 5: CHILDREN WHO ARE ABSENT FROM EDUCATION

All staff members are aware that children who are absent from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks that a child is absent in future. The following therefore sets out the school's procedures for identifying children who are absent from education, and for supporting the local authority to find both those missing education and those missing from care and home.

5.1 Monitoring attendance

If a child fails to attend on their first day, we will make reasonable enquiries and notify the local authority if necessary.

Once a child has started, we will monitor attendance daily and notify the local authority if a child has not attended without explanation for ten days.

5.2 Making reasonable enquiries

Where a child has not attended without explanation, we will make reasonable enquiries, such as checking with:

- relatives, neighbours, landlords and/or other local people who may know
- agencies known to be involved with the family
- the child's previous school, if the child has recently moved from another school
- the Local Authority, in case it is otherwise able to establish the child's whereabouts.

We will record all checks undertaken and use the results to inform our next steps.

If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, we will make a referral to children's social care (and the police if appropriate).

If there does not appear to be immediate danger but a referral to the local authority becomes necessary after 10 days, we will complete the [CME safeguarding checklist](#) and complete a [CME referral form](#).

5.3 Notifying the Local Authority of changes

To support local authorities in identifying when children go missing from education, we will:

- notify the Local Authority when it is agreed that a pupil will leave at a non-standard transition point (e.g. prior to the pupil's completing Year 6);
- provide the Local Authority with the name of the pupil, name and address of the parent(s)/carer(s) with whom the child is living, at least one contact number, and the date when the pupil is expected to move, if applicable; the name of the pupil's destination school and their expected start date, and; the grounds under which the pupil is leaving the school;
- notify the Local Authority within 5 days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point (i.e. after the start of Reception), together with all the information we hold on the pupil and their parents'/carer's contact details.

CHAPTER 6: ONLINE SAFETY, INCLUDING SOCIAL MEDIA AND SEXTING

Our focus in promoting online safety is on:

- creating a culture that incorporates the principles of online safety across all aspects of school life;
- proactively engaging staff members, pupils and parents/carers in promoting online safety;
- reviewing and maintaining principles of online safety, appropriate behaviour and a positive image of self and others;
- embedding and consistently modelling online safety principles.

The online world develops and changes at speed, so the school's approach is to focus on the essential knowledge and behaviours which underpin safe internet use and acceptable online behaviour. This is taught across the curriculum where appropriate, and in a way which reflects each child's age and level of development. As with all aspects of school life, staff members will be sensitive to the impact of particular vulnerability or special educational needs on teaching about online behaviour and safe internet use.

This approach includes enabling children to make judgments about what they see online so that they do not assume that it is true, valid or acceptable, understand how companies use marketing, and can identify risks. They will also learn how to navigate the internet responsibly and how to recognise the ways in which online anonymity and invisibility can be manipulated or used for harmful behaviours such as using fake profiles, incitement to hate crimes, and online grooming. We will be alert to comments from children that may suggest they are being exposed to online grooming or abuse, and any concerns will be addressed in line with the Child Protection policy.

It is also important that young people are aware of the potential negative impact of social media on their own identity, self-esteem, confidence, body image and well-being, and having a healthy self-image forms part of the school's approach to Personal, Social and Health Education and to Relationships Education. We will model a responsible approach to its social media presence. We will not show images of children without parental consent nor breach the privacy of its staff or pupils. We may share general information via social media but will not use social media to communicate with individual parents/carers.

We take a zero-tolerance approach to bullying of all kinds, including cyber-bullying and online abuse, as set out in the Behaviour Policy.

6.1 Staff

Staff members should be mindful of the potential for viruses and malware when accessing the internet and should never use school ICT to access any site which is unsafe or unlawful or would breach the Code of Conduct. Staff members should not identify themselves as members of the school on their personal social media (other than professional networking sites) nor represent their personal views as the school's and should always be mindful of safeguarding principles. Staff members should consider the professional implications and the school's reputation when posting pictures on any personal social medium.

Staff members should draw boundaries between their professional and personal lives and should not use social media to communicate about individual children. However, we recognise that many staff members have other links to the school and wider community, including as parents and as friends, and it is likely that there will therefore be connection on social media between staff members and parents. Staff members should be mindful of these wider connections and of their professional responsibilities when posting content on social media platforms.

The Headteacher will respond immediately and firmly in the event that any staff member is subject to harassment on social media.

6.2 Parents/carers & visitors

Parents and carers have a duty to use social media responsibly. Posting pictures online of children in school uniform should be avoided, and photos of other children must not be posted online without parental consent. Using social media to harass members of staff or other families, or to damage the school's reputation, is not acceptable.

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- set parental controls and boundaries around internet use;
- be aware of the minimum age requirements for social media sites (usually 13);
- take an interest in their children's online world, including online friends and favourite websites;
- be open with their children that they can always feel comfortable to discuss their online activity, including where there is cause for concern.

All visitors to the school, including parents/carers, must apply the same rigorous standards to their internet and social media use while in school, regardless of the device or connection used.

6.3 Pupils

When using the internet at home, pupils are expected to apply the same principles of online safety, healthy online behaviour and positive self-image which they have learned at school.

Unacceptable behaviour out of school, such as cyber-bullying, is not tolerated, and will face sanctions by the school.

6.4 Governors

The Governing Body regard online safety as integral to all safeguarding and child-protection concerns.

6.5 Monitoring & reporting

Any misuse of the internet, including of any social medium, must be reported promptly to the Headteacher, whether carried out by pupils, staff members, or parents/carers. Misuse will be subject to sanctions or disciplinary action in a way which is appropriate and proportionate.

All school ICT systems, including internet and email usage, may be monitored, so users' personal privacy cannot be assumed.

To promote safety, the ICT support team will:

- put in place appropriate filtering and monitoring systems, which are updated on a regular basis and keep pupils safe from potentially harmful and inappropriate content and contact online while at school, including terrorist and extremist material;
- ensure that the school's ICT systems are secure and protected against viruses and malware, and that such safety mechanisms are updated regularly;
- conduct a full security check and monitor the school's ICT systems on a monthly basis;
- block access to potentially dangerous sites and, where possible, prevent the downloading of potentially dangerous files;
- ensure that any online safety incidents are logged and dealt with appropriately in line with this policy;
- ensure that any incidents of cyber-bullying are dealt with appropriately in line with the school behaviour policy.

6.6 Sexting

The following is based on guidance from the UK Council for Child Internet Safety for all staff and for DSLs and senior leaders.

Staff responsibilities when responding to an incident

If you are made aware of an incident involving sexting (also known as 'youth-produced sexual imagery'), you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must not:

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

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

Initial review meeting

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

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

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

- the incident involves an adult;
- there is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs);
- what the DSL knows 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;
- the DSL has reason to believe a 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).

If none of the above applies, then the DSL, in consultation with the headteacher and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care.

Further review by the DSL

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

The DSL will hold interviews with the pupils involved (if appropriate) to establish the facts and assess the risks.

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

Informing parents

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

Referring to the police

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through MASH : 01432 260800.

Recording incidents

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

Curriculum coverage

Pupils are taught about the issues surrounding sexting as part of our PSHE education and computing programmes. Teaching covers the following in relation to sexting.

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

Pupils also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:

- specific requests or pressure to provide (or forward) such images;
- the receipt of such images.

This policy on sexting is also shared with pupils so they are aware of the processes the school will follow in the event of an incident.

CHAPTER 7 ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE MADE AGAINST STAFF

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

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, 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 he or she 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.

It applies regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place in the school. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching and historical allegations of abuse will be referred to the police.

7.1 Timescales

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

Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious will be resolved within 1 week.

If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, we will put in place appropriate action within 3 working days.

If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, we will hold this within 15 working days.

7.2 Procedure for dealing with allegations

An allegation that a member of staff has misused their powers will not result in automatic suspension, and staff members can expect to receive pastoral support from the school. We also have a duty to look after the welfare of a child who makes an allegation, and will therefore deal with any allegation quickly, fairly and consistently, will apply common sense and judgment, and will provide protection both for the child and for the person subject to the allegation.

The following steps will be undertaken by the headteacher (or chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation).

1. If there is no immediate risk, discuss the allegation straight away with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and agree a course of action, including agreeing whether further investigation is needed and whether the police or children's services need to be involved. The head teacher should also agree whether either of the following actions are necessary:
 - a. a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child;
 - b. Ofsted should be informed of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), and any action taken in respect of the allegations. This notification must be made as soon as reasonably possible and always within 14 days of the allegation(s) which have been made.
2. If there is immediate risk to children, call the police.
3. If the school has been made aware that the Secretary of State has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the Teaching Regulation Agency.

If it is decided that no further action is to be taken in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what approach should be taken both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation. Any allegation found to be malicious will be sanctioned as a serious incident in line with our Behaviour policy.

If it is decided that further action needs to be taken the following procedure should be followed, in consultation with the LADO (and police and children's services as appropriate).

1. Carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified. This should usually only be done when there is unavoidable risk to children or the case is so serious it could result in dismissal. If immediate suspension is considered necessary, agree and record the rationale for this with the LADO. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details. When a suspension is necessary, reiterate the pastoral support and counselling which is available.
2. If suspension is not justified, identify a suitable alternative, for example:
 - a. redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned;
 - b. providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children;
 - c. redeploying the individual to alternative work in the school so that they do not have unsupervised access to children;
 - d. moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted;
 - e. temporarily redeploying the individual to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school or other work for the federation.
3. Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the LADO (and the police or children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children's social care services are involved, only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies.
4. Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate.
5. Inform the parents/carers of the child/ren involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children's social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents/carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers while investigations are ongoing. Any parent/carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice.
6. Keep the parents/carers of the child/ren involved informed of the progress of the case and the outcome, where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process (in confidence).

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

7.3 Additional considerations

Supply staff

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

- We will not decide to stop using a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with our LADO to determine a suitable outcome.
- The governing body will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, while the school carries out the investigation.
- We will involve the agency fully, but the school will take the lead in collecting the necessary information and providing it to the LADO as required.
- We will address issues such as information-sharing, to ensure any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account (we will do this, for example, as part of the allegations management meeting or by liaising directly with the agency where necessary).
- When using an agency, we will inform them of our process for managing allegations, and keep them updated about our policies as necessary, and will invite the agency's HR manager or equivalent to meetings as appropriate.

Following a criminal investigation or prosecution

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

7.4 Possible outcomes of allegation investigations

- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
- **Unfounded:** there is no evidence or proper basis to support the allegation.
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence).
- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.
 - If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the case manager and the school's personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to make a referral to the DBS.
 - If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the case manager and personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive.

- If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the headteacher, or chair of governors in the case of an allegation against the headteacher, will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the pupil(s) who made it, or whether the police should be asked to consider whether action against those who made the allegation might be appropriate, even if they are not a pupil.

7.5 Individuals returning to work after suspension

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

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

7.6 References

When providing employer references, we will not refer to any allegation that has been proven to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any history of allegations where all such allegations have been proven to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious.

7.7 Confidentiality

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

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

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

7.8 Record-keeping

The case manager will maintain clear records and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case. Such records will include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation;
- details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved;
- notes of any action taken and decisions reached (and justification for these, as stated above).

If an allegation or concern is not found to have been malicious, the school will retain the records of the case on the individual's confidential personnel file, and provide a copy to the individual.

Where records contain information about allegations of sexual abuse, we will preserve these for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry. We will retain all other records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

The records of any allegation that is found to be malicious will be deleted from the individual's personnel file.

7.9 Learning lessons

After any case, we will review the lessons learned internally. After any cases where the allegations are *substantiated*, we will review the circumstances of the case with the LADO to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future. This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- issues arising from any decision to suspend the member of staff;
- the duration of the suspension;
- whether or not the suspension was justified;
- the use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated, considering how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual.

Appendix 1: Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023). It is in line with the following guidance and legislation.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), and the Governance Handbook

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, which places a duty on schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils

Herefordshire Council: Safeguarding and Child Protection Model Policy for Education Establishments.

The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009, which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least one person conducting an interview to be trained in safer recruitment techniques

Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school

The Children Act 1989 (& 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children

Section 5B(11) of the FGM Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18

Statutory guidance on FGM, which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children

Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children

Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism

The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 and Childcare Act 2006, which set out who is disqualified from working with children

Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and GDPR, which do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

The Department for Education's advice on online safety (June 2019) and relevant legislation.

Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA)

Equality Act 2010

Further resources for schools and parents include:

Teaching Online Safety in School (DfE guidance, June 2019)

Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges

Filtering and Monitoring (KCSIE 2023)

Internet Matters : Vulnerable Children in a Digital World

UK Safer Internet Centre

Think U Know education programme on online safety from the National Crime Agency

UKCCIS literature review of Children's online activities, risks & safety

ChildNet : STAR SEND Toolkit

The Anti-Bullying Alliance

PSHE Association [guidance on teaching about mental health and well-being](#)
[ParentZone](#)

Appendix 2: Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

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

Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm. Child Protection has to be considered within practitioners' wider safeguarding responsibilities that include a duty to co-operate under the Children Act 2004 and take account of the need for children to 'be healthy' and 'stay safe'.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child, and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm.

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

A **Child in Need** is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services or a child who is disabled.

A **Child in need of Protection** is a child who is suffering, or at risk of, significant harm. Significant harm is often a combination of significant events, both acute and long-standing, which interrupt, change or damage the child's physical and psychological development. Some children live in family and social circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For them, it is the corrosiveness of long-term emotional, physical or sexual abuse that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant harm. In each case, it is necessary to consider any maltreatment alongside the family's strengths and supports.

Sexting (also known as youth-produced sexual imagery) is the sharing of sexual imagery (photos or videos) by children.

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

Female Genital Mutilation is defined in the Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education as "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs". FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

Radicalisation is defined as the act or process of making a person more radical or favouring of extreme or fundamental changes in political, economic or social conditions, institutions or habits of the mind.

Extremism is defined as the holding of extreme views, particularly those advocating illegal or violent actions to achieve specific ideological changes, whether political, religious or social.

Appendix 3: Child protection and safeguarding roles, responsibilities, training and support within the school

Role	Responsibilities	Training and support to enable fulfilment of responsibilities
All staff, supply teachers, trainees, volunteers and governors	Identify and report concerns regarding a child's wellbeing	<p>Support from the DSL</p> <p>Staff supervisions to provide support, coaching and training, promote the interests of children and allow for confidential discussions of sensitive issues.</p> <p>Training at induction and regularly thereafter, including on whistleblowing</p> <p>Training on Prevent (the government's anti-radicalisation strategy)</p> <p>Regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings) as required, but at least annually</p> <p>Recruit supply staff from an agency which provides comprehensive safeguarding training in line with the school's recruitment policies</p>
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	<p>Overall responsibility for ensuring children are safe and protected</p> <p>Available for staff to consult with during working hours</p> <p>Contactable via email and personal mobile outside working hours</p> <p>Contribute to assessments of children</p> <p>Make direct referrals to relevant agencies, or support others to do so</p> <p>Take part in multi-agency discussions, or support others to do so</p> <p>Liaise with local authority lead case-workers or designated officers for child protection concerns</p>	<p>Undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years</p> <p>Update knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments)</p> <p>Undertake Prevent awareness training</p>
Deputy DSL	Cover for DSL when needed	As for DSL
Governing body	<p>Approve policy & reviews</p> <p>Ensure they comply with legislation</p> <p>Hold headteacher to account for implementation of the policy</p>	<p>Receive safeguarding training</p> <p>Appoint a representative with lead responsibility for ensuring safeguarding procedures are in place and operating effectively</p>
Chair of governors	<p>Monitor effectiveness of the policy, in conjunction with Full Governing Body</p> <p>Where appropriate, act as case manager if a complaint is made against the headteacher</p>	Training in managing allegations should a complaint be made against the headteacher

<p>Headteacher</p>	<p>Ensure effective filtering and monitoring systems in place, documenting decisions on what is blocked and why</p> <p>Ensure that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers are informed in their induction of systems which support safeguarding, and that they undertake appropriate training and update it regularly.</p> <p>Communicate this policy to parents.</p> <p>Ensure that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent.</p> <p>Act as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate.</p> <p>Ensure that the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable (nursery).</p> <p>Ensure each child in the Early Years Foundation Stage is assigned a key person (nursery setting only).</p>	
<p>Recruitment panels</p>	<p>Ensure recruitment practices are safe, and comply with the procedures set out in the recruitment policy.</p>	<p>At least one person conducting any interview for a post at the school will have undertaken safer recruitment training. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.</p>

Appendix 4: Safeguarding Information Sheet

CHILD PROTECTION CONTACTS	
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Dan Brearey 07748 716489 – direct line 01989 562256 - Brampton 01989 562623 - Bridstow
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Andy Pullen (Bridstow) Catherine Shuck (Bridstow) Sara Herriott (Brampton) Claire Lewis (Brampton) Lara Parry-Roberts (Brampton)
All concerns should be recorded on a Child Protection Log Form	
Prevent Lead	Dan Brearey
LAC Designated Teacher	Dan Brearey
SENCO	Claire Lewis (Brampton) & Catherine Shuck (Bridstow)
Governor for Safeguarding & LAC	Paul Mason

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONTACTS	
Educational Visits Coordinator	Sara Herriott (Brampton) & Andy Pullen (Bridstow)
First Aid at Work	Anne Henesey/Dawn Kear (Brampton) & Fiona Turner (Bridstow)
Paediatric First Aid	Chantelle Evans / Andrea Price (Brampton) Nicola Wallin / John Thorne (Bridstow)
Health & Safety Governor	Roger Hanson

USEFUL CONTACTS		
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Terry Pilliner	01432 261739 lado@herefordshire.gov.uk
Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	Anne-Marie Kemp	01432 260800 anne-marie.kemp@herefordshire.gov.uk
Out of hours referrals	before 9am or after 5pm	01905 768020
Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Board (HSCB)		01432 260100
LA Exclusion Guidance	Clare Sankey	01432 383321 clare.sankey@herefordshire.gov.uk
Prevent officer	DS 512 Phil Colley	01905 747210 07736 08471
Prevent information	Neville Meredith	01432 383268

**IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT A CHILD PLEASE FILL IN A CONCERNS FORM.
ALWAYS REMEMBER TED : Tell, Explain, Describe.**