



**ALTERNATIVE  
CENTRE OF  
EDUCATION**

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# **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

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**September 2020**

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## **Policy statement and principals**

This policy is one of a series in the centre's integrated safeguarding portfolio which includes policies for child protection, staff behaviour, recruitment, allegations against staff, complaints, pupil behaviour and online safety.

This policy is available on the centre's website and is included in the staff handbook and stored electronically in the centre.

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- the centre's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance
- safer children make more successful learners
- policies will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

## **Child protection statement**

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all young people. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where young people are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff.

## **Policy principles**

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support

## **Policy aims**

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities
- To ensure consistent good practice
- To demonstrate the centre's commitment with regard to child protection to pupils, parents and other partners
- To contribute to the centre's safeguarding portfolio

## Terminology

**Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

**Child protection** refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

**Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the centre, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

**Child** includes everyone under the age of 18.

**Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

## Safeguarding legislation and guidance

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires local education authorities and the governors of maintained schools and further education (FE) colleges to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Section 157 of the same act and the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 require proprietors of independent schools (including academies and city technology colleges) to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

- The **Teacher Standards 2012** state that teachers, including headteachers should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.
- The statutory guidance **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018** covers the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services (including schools and colleges) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It also provides the framework for monitoring the effectiveness of local services.
- The statutory guidance **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020** is issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the Education (Non-Maintained Special Schools) (England) Regulations 2011. Schools and colleges must have regard to this guidance when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Unless otherwise stated, 'school' in this guidance means all schools, whether maintained, non-maintained or independent, including academies and free schools, alternative provision academies and pupil referral units. 'School' includes maintained nursery schools. 'College' means further education colleges and sixth form colleges as established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and relates to their responsibilities to children under the age of 18 (but excludes 16-19 academies and free schools, which are required to comply with relevant safeguarding legislation by virtue of their funding agreement)
- All staff must read Part One of this guidance and staff can find a copy in the staff room and on the shared drive

- **What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2016 - Advice for practitioners** is non statutory advice which helps practitioners (everyone who works with children) to identify abuse and neglect and take appropriate action. Staff can find a copy in the staff room and on the shared drive

In the UK, more than 50,000 children are annually subject to a child protection plan. Research suggests that one child a week dies from abuse and one child in six is exposed to violence in the home. The prevalence of neglect continues to be a major concern and online abuse is increasing. The sexual exploitation of children is a growing problem and disabled children are three times more likely to be abused and neglected.

Due to their day-to-day contact with pupils, centre staff are uniquely placed to observe changes in children's behaviour and the outward signs of abuse. Children may also turn to a trusted adult in the centre when they are in distress or at risk. It is vital that all centre staff are alert to the signs of abuse and understand the procedures for reporting their concerns. The centre will always act on identified concerns.

## Key Personnel

### The Designated Lead for Safeguarding and Child Protection:

Glendene Griffith – [g.griffith@alternativecentreofeducation.org](mailto:g.griffith@alternativecentreofeducation.org)

Chantelle Scantlebury – [c.scantlebury@alternativecentreofeducation.org](mailto:c.scantlebury@alternativecentreofeducation.org)

### The Deputy Designated Lead for Safeguarding and Child Protection:

Lami Fujah – [l.fujah@alternativecentreofeducation.org](mailto:l.fujah@alternativecentreofeducation.org)

Lucy Morgan – [l.morgan@alternativecentreofeducation.org](mailto:l.morgan@alternativecentreofeducation.org)

## Roles and responsibilities

### The Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- has the status and authority within the centre to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff
- is appropriately trained, with updates every two years
- acts as a source of support and expertise to the centre community
- encourages a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings
- is alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers
- has a working knowledge of local authority procedures
- makes staff aware of training courses and the latest policies on safeguarding
- has an understanding of locally agreed processes for providing early help and intervention
- keeps detailed written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely and flagged on, but kept separate from, the pupil's general file
- refers cases of suspected abuse to MASH
- notifies children's social care if a child with a child protection plan is absent for more than two days without explanation
- ensures that when a pupil attends the centre, their child protection information is shared by the school
- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences

- coordinates the centre's contribution to child protection plans
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies.
- ensures that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood the child protection policy
- ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated annually, working with appropriate others
- keeps a record of staff attendance at child protection training
- makes the child protection policy available publicly, on the centre's website or by other means
- ensures parents are aware of the centre's role in safeguarding and that referrals about suspected abuse and neglect may be made

### **The deputy designated person(s):**

Is/are appropriately trained and, in the absence of the designated person, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the designated person, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

### **The Head of Centre:**

- ensures that the safeguarding/child protection policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff
- allocates sufficient time, training, support and resources, including cover arrangements when necessary, to enable the DSL and deputy to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings
- ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle blowing procedures
- ensures that pupils are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online
- Centre leaders ensure that the child's wishes are taken into account when determining action to be taken or services to be provided
- liaises with the designated officer or team in the local authority where an allegation is made against a member of staff
- ensures that anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

## **Good practice guidelines and staff code of conduct**

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards pupils we need to agree standards of good practice which form a code of conduct for all staff. Good practice includes:

- treating all pupils with respect
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- involving pupils in decisions that affect them
- encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils
- being a good listener
- being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- reading and understanding the centre's child protection policy, staff behaviour policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, physical contact, sexual exploitation, extremism, online safety and information-sharing
- asking the pupil's permission before initiating physical contact, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during PE or administering first aid
- maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between pupils and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an

increased risk of abuse

- applying the use of reasonable force only as a last resort and in compliance with the centre's procedures
- referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the DSL, or, if necessary directly to police or MASH
- following the centre's rules with regard to relationships with pupils and communication with pupils, including on social media

## **Abuse of position of trust**

All centre staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the centre staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that pupil is over the age of consent.

## **Children who may be particularly vulnerable**

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse. It is important to understand that this increase in risk is due more to societal attitudes and assumptions or child protection procedures that fail to acknowledge children's diverse circumstances, rather than the individual child's personality, impairment or circumstances. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- disabled or have special educational needs
- young carers
- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental-health needs
- asylum seekers
- living away from home
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- living in temporary accommodation
- live transient lifestyles
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- at risk of sexual exploitation
- do not have English as a first language
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
- at risk of forced marriage
- at risk of being drawn into extremism

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for children with communication needs

## Missing children

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The DSL will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day including referrals to and attendance at **The Missing and Child Sexual Exploitation forum (MACSE)** when appropriate.

## Helping children to keep themselves safe

Children are taught to understand and manage risk through our personal, social, health and economic (PSHCE) education and sex and relationships lessons and through all aspects of the centre's life. Our approach is designed to help children to think about risks they may encounter and with the support of staff work out how those risks might be reduced or managed. Discussions about risk are empowering and enabling for all children and promote sensible behaviour rather than fear or anxiety. Children are taught how to conduct themselves and how to behave in a responsible manner. Children are also reminded regularly about online safety, the risks of sharing content and images online and tackling bullying, including cyber bullying procedures. The centre continually promotes an ethos of respect for children, and pupils are encouraged to speak to a member of staff of their choosing about any worries they may have.

## Support for those involved in a child protection issue

Child abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved.

We will support pupils, their families, and staff by:

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- nominating a link person who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact
- Where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a pupil, separate link people will be nominated to avoid any conflict of interest
- responding sympathetically to any request from pupils or staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety
- maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
- storing records securely
- offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support
- following the procedures laid down in our child protection, whistleblowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures
- co-operating fully with relevant statutory agencies.

## Complaints procedure

Our complaints procedure will be followed where a pupil or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a pupil that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Poor practice examples include unfairly singling out a pupil or attempting to humiliate them, bullying or belittling a pupil or discriminating against them in some way. Complaints are managed by the Head of Centre.

Complaints from staff are dealt with under the centre's complaints and disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Complaints which escalate into a child protection concern will automatically be managed under the centre's child protection procedures.

## Whistle blowing if you have concerns about a colleague

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. The school's whistleblowing code enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the Head of Centre. Complaints about the Head of Centre should be reported to management committee and

Staff may also report their concerns directly to children's social care or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

## Allegations against staff

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen.

A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some professionals do pose a serious risk to pupils and we must act on every allegation.

Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not the default option and alternatives to suspension will always be considered. In some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected. In the event of suspension, the centre will provide support and a named contact for the member of staff.

The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2019)* and in the centre's Managing Allegations policy and procedures.

Staff, parents and management committee are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing, including content placed on social media sites

Allegations concerning staff who no longer work at the centre, or historical allegations will be reported to the police.

## Staff training

It is important that all staff receive training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern.

New staff and the management committee will receive a briefing during their induction, which includes the centre's safeguarding/child protection policy and staff behaviour policy, reporting and recording arrangements, and details for the DSL. All staff will receive training that is regularly updated and the DSL will receive training updated at least every two years including training in inter-agency procedures.

Supply staff and other visiting staff will be given the school's **Visiting Staff Leaflet**.

All staff will be made aware of the increased risk to abuse of certain groups, including disabled and SEN children, looked after children and young carers

## Safer recruitment

The Centre endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ safe staff by following the



centre's Safer Recruitment policy and procedures.

Safer recruitment means that applicants will:

- complete an application form which includes their employment history and explains any gaps in that history
- provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children
- provide evidence of identity and qualifications
- if offered employment, be checked in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) regulations as appropriate to their role. This will include an enhanced DBS check and a barred list check for those engaged in Regulated Activity
- if offered employment, provide evidence of their right to work in the UK
- be interviewed, if shortlisted.

The centre will also

- verify the preferred candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- obtain references for all shortlisted candidates, including internal candidates
- carry out additional or alternative checks for applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK
- ensure that applicants for teaching posts are not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State

At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.

All new members of staff will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the centre's child protection policy and staff behaviour policy and identification of their child protection training needs.

All staff sign to confirm they have received a copy of the child protection policy and staff behaviour policy.

The centre obtains written confirmation from supply agencies or third-party organisations that agency staff or other individuals who may work in the centre have been appropriately checked.

Trainee teachers will be checked either by the centre or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained.

The centre maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken.

## Regulated Activity

Schools are 'specified places' which means that the majority of staff and volunteers will be engaged in regulated activity. A fuller explanation of regulated activity can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) part three.

## Volunteers

Volunteers will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the centre and contact with pupils. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised or be allowed to engage in regulated activity.

## Contractors

The centre checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS checks and barred list checks where appropriate. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or in regulated activity

## Site security

Visitors to the centre, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given a badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in. All visitors are expected to observe the centre's safeguarding and health and safety regulations to ensure children in the centre are kept safe. The Head of centre will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

## Extended school and off-site arrangements

All extended and off site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Where extended centre activities are provided by and managed by the centre, our own child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

When our pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work related activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

## Photography and images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent and legitimate reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or distributing images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place.

To protect pupils we will:

- seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- seek parental consent
- use only the pupil's first name with an image
- ensure pupils are appropriately dressed
- encourage pupils to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

## Online Safety

Our pupils increasingly use electronic equipment on a daily basis to access the internet and share content and images via social networking sites such as facebook, twitter, MSN, tumblr, snapchat and instagram.

Unfortunately, some adults and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to grooming and enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings.

Pupils may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate websites that promote unhealthy lifestyles, extremist behaviour and criminal activity.

The centre's **online safety policy** explains how we try to keep pupils safe in the centre and protect and educate pupils in the safe use of technology. Cyberbullying and sexting by pupils will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. Serious incidents may be managed in line with our sexual exploitation policy or child protection procedures

## **Staff/pupil relationships**

The centre provides advice to staff regarding their personal online activity and has strict rules regarding online contact and electronic communication with pupils. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action or child protection investigation.

## **Child protection procedures**

### **Recognising abuse**

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone, or leaving knives or matches within reach of an unattended toddler.

Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

### **Four categories of abuse**

#### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is 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. (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy, but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

#### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond 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 cyber bullying), 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.

#### **Sexual abuse**

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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

## Neglect

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

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

**Definitions taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016.**

## Bullying

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's wellbeing and in very rare cases has been a feature in the suicide of some young people.

All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through our tackling-bullying procedures. All pupils and parents receive a copy of the procedures on joining the centre and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in PSHE education. If the bullying is particularly serious, or the tackling bullying procedures are deemed to be ineffective, the Head of Centre /DSL will consider implementing child protection procedures.

## Indicators of abuse

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

**It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.**

A child who is being abused, neglected or exploited may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- frequently miss school, arrive late or leave the school for part of the day
- show signs of not wanting to go home

- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their schoolwork
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new ‘friends’

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.

**It is very important that staff report their concerns – they do not need ‘absolute proof’ that the child is at risk.**

## Impact of abuse

The impact of child abuse, neglect and exploitation should not be underestimated. Many children do recover well and go on to lead healthy, happy and productive lives, although most adult survivors agree that the emotional scars remain, however well buried. For some children, full recovery is beyond their reach, and the rest of their childhood and their adulthood may be characterised by anxiety or depression, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, unequal and destructive relationships and long-term medical or psychiatric difficulties.

## Taking action

**Any child, in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”.**

Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, if necessary, call 999
- report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL, definitely by the end of the day
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a record of concern
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

## If you are concerned about a pupil’s welfare

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk, but have no ‘real’ evidence. The pupil’s behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical but inconclusive signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the pupil the opportunity to talk. The signs they have noticed may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill or an accident has occurred. It is fine for staff to ask the pupil if they are ‘OK’ or if they can help in any way.

Staff should use the **record of concern** to record these early concerns. If the pupil does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL.

## If a pupil discloses to you

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive.

If a pupil talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, **the staff member will need to let the pupil know that they must pass the information on** – staff are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which they tell the pupil this is a matter for professional judgement. If they jump in immediately the pupil may think that they do not want to listen, if left until the very end of the conversation, the pupil may feel that they have been misled into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

During their conversations with the pupils staff will:

- allow them to speak freely
- remain calm and not overreact – the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting their listener
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m so sorry this has happened’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’
- not be afraid of silences – staff must remember how hard this must be for the pupil
- **under no circumstances** ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what the pupil’s mother thinks about all this. Do remember your TED questions: Tell me.... Explain..... Describe.....
- at an appropriate time tell the pupil that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ or ‘I can’t believe what I’m hearing’ may be the staff member’s way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong
- tell the pupil what will happen next. The pupil may agree to go to see the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Otherwise let them know that someone will come to see them before the end of the day.
- report verbally to the DSL even if the child has promised to do it by themselves
- write up their conversation as soon as possible on the **record of concern form** and hand it to the designated person
- seek support if they feel distressed

## Notifying parents

The centre will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with the school’s child protection officer and their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DSL will only make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure after consultation with the pupil’s school.

However, if the centre believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from MASH.

## Enquiry to MASH

The DSL will make an enquiry to MASH if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that an enquiry is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

Any member of staff may make a direct enquiry to children's social care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child.

## **Children with sexually harmful behaviour**

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the centre's **anti-bullying procedures** where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a pupil's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures. In particular, research suggests that up to 30 per cent of child sexual abuse is committed by someone under the age of 18.

The management of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the centre will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the centre community. Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator. Staff, who become concerned about a pupil's sexual behaviour, including any known online sexual behaviour, should speak to the DSL as soon as possible.

## **Sexual exploitation of children**

Sexual exploitation involves an individual or group of adults taking advantage of the vulnerability of an individual or groups of children or young people, and victims can be boys or girls. Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into sexual exploitation through the offer of friendship and care, gifts, drugs and alcohol, and sometimes accommodation. Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking.

The centre includes the risks of sexual exploitation in the PSHE and SRE curriculum. A common feature of sexual exploitation is that the child often doesn't recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and doesn't see themselves as a victim. The child may initially resent what they perceive as interference by staff, but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse.

All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSL.

The centre will engage with and make referrals to the MACSE process and the REACH Team when and where appropriate and make an enquiry to MASH for any child that goes missing if they are not known to Children's Services.

## **Honour-Based Violence**

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

## **Female Genital Mutilation**

FGM is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It has no health benefits and harms girls and women in many ways. The practice, which is most commonly carried out without anaesthetic, can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

FGM is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so centre staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female pupil about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. Any person found guilty of an offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 is liable to a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment or a fine, or both. *(See school or DSCB guidance for further information. Add a weblink or append guidance to this policy)*

## Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Children may be married at a very young age and well below the age of consent in England. Centre staff receive training and should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a pupil about being taken abroad and not be allowed to return to England.

Since June 2014 forcing someone to marry has become a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. *(See school or DSCB guidance for further information. Add a weblink or append guidance to this policy)*

## Radicalisation and Extremism

The government defines extremism as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Some children are at risk of being radicalised: adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. Islamic extremism is the most widely publicised form and schools should also remain alert to the risk of radicalisation into white supremacy extremism.

Schools are now required to take appropriate steps with regards to keeping pupils safe from the dangers of radicalisation and preventing extremism, and to raise awareness of all staff with regards to what is done when it is suspected that pupils are vulnerable to the related influences of these concepts. What may come under scrutiny is the centre's response to any extremist or discriminatory behaviour shown by pupils. As such it is important to highlight to staff what to do if they suspect pupils are becoming radicalised or engaging in extremism.

School staff receive training to help to identify signs of extremism. Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable pupils to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the school follows the DfE advice Promoting fundamental British Values as part of SMCS (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools (2014)

**Further information on Preventing Radicalisation'** has been included in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* in line with:

[Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales](#), published in March 2015 as part as the UK's Counter Terrorism strategy. (p.10-15 for schools, registered childcare providers and further education).

[The Prevent Duty, Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers](#), published in June 2015. This non-statutory departmental advice is for governing bodies, Headteachers / Principals, Designated Safeguarding Leads and school staff. The document clarifies what the *prevent* duty means for schools and what actions are necessary to demonstrate compliance with the duty. It also provides sources of information, advice and support.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/380595/SMSC\\_Guidance\\_Maintained\\_Schools.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380595/SMSC_Guidance_Maintained_Schools.pdf)

*(See school or DSCB guidance for further information. Add a weblink or append guidance to this policy)*



## Private fostering arrangements

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16, or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. Children looked after by the local authority or who are placed in a residential school, children's home or hospital are not considered to be privately fostered.

Private fostering occurs in all cultures, including British culture and children may be privately fostered at any age.

Most privately fostered children remain safe and well but safeguarding concerns have been raised in some cases so it is important that schools are alert to possible safeguarding issues, including the possibility that a child has been trafficked into the country

By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible. *(See school or DSCB guidance for further information. Add a weblink or append guidance to this policy)*

## LGBTQ

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying is the targeted abuse of an individual who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or someone who is questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity (LGTBQ). Or someone who is perceived to be. Children who are victims of harassment due to their sexual orientation or gender will likely find the experience stressful and distressing, and in all likelihood will adversely affect their educational attainment. Our school takes all victims seriously and they will be offered the appropriate support. We do not accept that it is 'just a joke'. Our school will manage such incidents the same way by considering the need to undertake an immediate risk and needs assessment and as with any other Child Protection concern we will follow the same procedures.

## Serious Crime

All staff are made aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in well-being, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs. School staff are aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to measure these. Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance.

## Criminal Exploitation including County Lines

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of County Lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs, weapons and money for them. Key to identifying potential involvement may be 'missing episodes' when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs, weapons or money. Our school will consider a referral using the Newham pathways or a direct referral using the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for human trafficking.

## Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent child relationships. Our school will make appropriate

referral to relevant agencies such as; children's social care, to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra- familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices.

## **Gangs**

There are a number of areas in which young people are put at risk by gang activity, both through participation in and as victims of gang violence which can be in relation to their peers or to a gang-involved adult in their household. A child who is affected by gang activity or serious youth violence may have suffered, or may be likely to suffer, significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect.

## **Forced Marriage**

Forced marriage is child abuse under the age of 18 years. Forced marriage is where one or both spouses do not consent to marriage, but they are coerced into it. Teachers and support staff have a key role to play in dealing with forced marriage. All staff will have access to training to ensure that they recognise the presenting symptoms, how to respond if there are concerns and where to turn to for advice. All staff will deal with concerns by referring to appropriate services, including social care and the Police or the forced marriage unit.

## **Upskirting**

Staff and students are made aware that 'upskirting' is now a criminal offence. The definition describes upskirting as, "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". Students are made aware of the seriousness of this offence and cases will be reported to the police.

## **Mental Health**

Looking out for children's mental health fits into the safeguarding responsibilities of all staff. By supporting children's mental health, we are helping them to get the best outcomes. Mental health needs can leave children more vulnerable to abuse or be an indicator of abuse. By looking out for signs of poor mental health and acting on them we are helping to protect children from maltreatment and ensuring safe and effective care. All staff must be alert to factors that might influence a child's mental health in order to initiate early help. In some cases, mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. However, staff are well placed to observe children day to day and identify any behaviours that may suggest they are developing or are at risk of developing mental health problems. Any concerns about a child's mental health must be reported as a safeguarding concern to the DSL/DDSL.

## **Confidentiality and sharing information**

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the pupil and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

However, following a number of cases where senior leaders in school had failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016)* emphasises that **any** member of staff can contact children's social care if they are concerned about a child.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. Information sharing is guided by the following principles. The information is:

- necessary and proportionate
- relevant
- adequate
- accurate
- timely
- secure

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share

Record of concern forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access, and sensitive information should not routinely be stored on laptop computers, which, by the nature of their portability, could be lost or stolen. Child protection information will be stored separately from the pupil's school file and the centre file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held.

The DSL will normally obtain consent from the pupil and/or parents to share sensitive information within the centre or with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSL may share information *without* consent, and will record the reason for not obtaining consent.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Head of Centre.

The Data Protection Act does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

The centre's confidentiality and information-sharing policy is available to parents and pupils on request.

## **Reporting directly to child protection agencies**

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC if:

- the situation is an emergency and the Designated Safeguarding Lead, their deputy, the Head of Centre are all unavailable
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety
- for any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

## **Related safeguarding portfolio policies**

- Staff behaviour/code of conduct
- Physical intervention and the use of reasonable force
- Behaviour
- Complaints procedure
- Anti-Bullying
- Physical contact
- Safe working practice
- Whistleblowing

- SEN
- Missing children
- Recruitment and selection
- Managing allegations
- Grievance and disciplinary
- Online Safety
- Hand held devices
- Confidentiality and information sharing

## Special Circumstances

### Looked after children

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The centre ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The designated teacher for looked after children and the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head for children in care.

### Work Experience

The centre has detailed procedures to safeguard pupils undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervise pupils on work experience which are in accordance with the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016) part three*.

# Appendix 1

## PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM ABUSE

### (Including Definitions and Categories)

LAs, schools and other educational establishments, have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Every member of staff can help to protect children from abuse by being alert to possible indicators of abuse e.g. bruises, signs of neglect and distress, knowing what action to take, and knowing the name of the designated person responsible for child protection matters.

**‘What To Do If You’re Worried A Child Is Being Abused’**, issued to all schools, is practice guidance which focuses on what you should do if you have concerns about children, what will happen once you tell someone and what further contribution you may be asked to make. It also contains some basic information about the legislative framework for safeguarding children and useful guidance about information sharing.

Every member of staff should be familiar with the processes contained in this guidance, which includes some useful definitions and categories of abuse summarised below. More detailed guidance can be found in the **London Child Protection Procedures**.

**CHILDREN IN NEED:** Those unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health and development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of services

**SIGNIFICANT HARM:** Threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. The local authority is under a duty to make enquiries, or cause enquiries to be made, where it has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm.

#### **WHAT IS ABUSE AND NEGLECT?**

A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children & young people may be abused in a family, institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

- **PHYSICAL ABUSE:** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child, including by fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health
- **EMOTIONAL ABUSE:** persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person, age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, causing children frequently to feel frightened, or the exploitation or corruption of children.
- **SEXUAL ABUSE:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- **NEGLECT:** 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, such as failing to provide adequate food, shelter & clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

**The following is a list of warning signs which MAY be an indicator that a child is being, or has been abused or neglected, or is at risk of abuse. Education professionals should be alert to these warning signs, but should be careful not to assume that abuse is the reason. Some signs can be present in children who are not abused at all. Nor should**

**assumptions be made that they point to any particular form of abuse, simply because a pupil presents with any of these problems.**

- Unexplained or inconsistently explained physical injuries
- Repeat bruising; bruising of different colours; burn injuries
- Reluctance to talk about an injury
- Dramatic changes in behaviour e.g. more introverted, lacks confidence, more aggressive or more bullying, anti-social behaviour, truancy
- Peer relationship problems
- Regression to wetting or soiling
- Frequent urinary tract infection or trips to the toilet
- Decline in performance or punctuality
- Low motivation
- Emotional dependence on adults other than parents
- Unwillingness to talk about home life or parents
- Frequent request to see the school nurse
- Avoidance of PE or swimming lessons (possibly hiding injuries or fear of vulnerability when changing)
- Self-harming
- Weight loss or gain; Eating disorders
- Poor hygiene; dirty clothing
- Substance misuse
- Attention seeking beyond norm for age
- Sexualised play or sexualised language beyond norm for age
- Unexplained access to large amounts of money or high spending patterns
- Withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility
- Unreasonable restriction by those with parental responsibility e.g. not being allowed to attend extracurricular activities, 'house arrest'
- Appears frightened of, or is abnormally attached to, parent/s or carer/s

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **GUIDELINES FOR SAFE PRACTICE**

**IT IS VITAL THAT STAFF ACT QUICKLY WHEN A CHILD IS SUSPECTED OF BEING ABUSED OR AT RISK OF ABUSE**

#### **DELAY MAY WELL LEAD TO THE CHILD SUFFERING FURTHER HARM**

- Know the centre's child protection arrangements and who the designated person is.
- Gifts to individual children should be part of an agreed reward system; other gifts should be of insignificant value & given equally. Do not single a child out for special treatment. Do not accept gifts regularly or ones of significant value; declare any which may be misconstrued
- Maintain professional boundaries. Do not give out your address, home/mobile phone number or e-mail address unless agreed with senior management and parents. Do not send

pupils text messages and follow internal guidance about internet/e-mail use. Do not socialise with pupils or take them to your home.

- Report any concerns that a pupil has developed a crush on a member of staff. If a child touches you inappropriately, record and report it to the designated person. It may be innocent, but could indicate a problem that needs to be explored. Avoid clothing which could give the wrong messages.
- Physical contact should be needs led, age and gender appropriate. Involve another member of staff where contact may be misinterpreted. Avoid conduct which could be misinterpreted e.g. horseplay, tickling or fun fights. Avoid children sitting on your lap.
- Where physical contact is necessary to demonstrate the use of an instrument or equipment e.g. PE, games and music tuition, ensure that this is within appropriate boundaries.
- Do not do anything personal for a child that they can do for themselves. If bathing or changing a child with special needs, try to have another person present. Follow the agreed care plan for children requiring intimate care on a regular basis. Supervising children showering or changing should be age and gender appropriate and sensitive to potential embarrassment.
- Record and report incidents involving a child, including injuries, according to relevant procedures e.g. Child Protection, Physical Intervention, Health and Safety.
- Do not make, or encourage others to make, comments which are sarcastic, demeaning or insensitive, or humiliating, or might be interpreted as such.
- Avoid meetings with pupils in secluded areas. Ensure visual access and/or open door in 1 to 1 situations and avoid 'engaged' signs. Avoid being alone with a pupil in transport.
- Plan and agree arrangements for out of centre activities in advance e.g. overnight stays & adult/pupil ratio. Follow Health and Safety rules.
- Adhere to the centre's policy on sex and relationships education and the wishes of parents. Ensure materials used relate to planned learning outcomes and cannot be misinterpreted.
- Only use photography etc. as appropriate to a school lesson or activity and ensure a senior member of staff is aware. Avoid 1 to 1 sessions. Be clear about the use and disposal of images. Be sensitive to children who appear uncomfortable being photographed. Recognise potential for misinterpretation. Ensure all images are available for scrutiny. Do not take, display, or distribute images without consent.
- Report any concerns about a colleague's behaviour and/or attitude toward children to the Head of Centre.