



Wessex
Learning Trust

We Learn Together

Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy



Wessex Learning Trust

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

All children and young people will have the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise the additional needs of children from minority ethnic groups and disabled children and the barriers they may face, especially around communication.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.



Signature:

Name: Mr Gavin Ball

Date: 31/08/2025

Position: Chief Executive



Signature:

Name: Mr Paul Jacobs

Date: 31/08/2025

Position: Chair of the Board

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Part 1 – The Policy

1. Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- 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 safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined in the Children Act 1989 (section 47) as when a child is suffering or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Under statutory guidance and legislation, action must be taken to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

Effective safeguarding means everyone should understand and be sensitive to the factors, including economic and social circumstances and ethnicity, which can impact children and families' lives.

2. Introduction

At the Wessex Learning Trust (The Trust):

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who works with children, their families, and carers has a role to play.
- To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should always consider what is in the best interests of the child.
- We take an 'it can happen here' approach where safeguarding is concerned.
- Everyone who works with children has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action.
- Victims of harm should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for reporting an incident.

Academies/Settings in the Wessex Learning Trust are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children by:

- The provision of a safe environment in which children and young people can learn.

- Acting on concerns about a child's welfare immediately.
- Fulfilling our legal responsibilities to identify children who may need early help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

All actions taken by academies/settings in the Trust will be in accordance with:

- [Education Act 2002 Section 157 \(Independent schools incl Academies and CTC's\)](#)
- [The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
- [Teachers' Standards \(Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Information Sharing 2024](#)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#)
- [Filtering and monitoring standards in schools and colleges \(DfE\)](#)
- [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) Statutory Framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Local Guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships for North Somerset and Somerset:
 - [Who we are | Children's Safeguarding Board](#) – North Somerset
 - [Policies and Procedures - Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) – Somerset

2.1 Associated policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Trust Safeguarding Statement
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Dealing with Allegations Against Staff Policy
- Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Drugs Policy
- Relationship Policy
- Educational Visits Policy

Headteachers should ensure that the above policies and procedures, adopted by the Trust or academy, are accessible, understood, and followed by all staff. All Trust policies are available on the Wessex Learning Trust website and staff intranet (My Wessex).

3. Equality statement

We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children and families' diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of their ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, race, economic condition, disability, or religion.

With regards to safeguarding, we will consider our duties under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and our general and specific responsibilities under the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#).

3.1 General duties

General duties include:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations across all protected characteristics between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Ensure staff are aware of the additional barriers to recognising abuse and neglect in children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This will be in line with the individual academy's Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy.
- All academies in the Wessex Learning Trust adhere to the principles of and promote anti-oppressive practice in line with the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and the [Human Rights Act 1998](#).

4. Overall Aims

This policy will contribute to the safeguarding of children at all Trust academies by:

- Clarifying safeguarding expectations for members of the education setting's community, staff, Local Partnership Board, learners, and their families.
- Contributing to the establishment of a safe, resilient, and robust safeguarding culture in the setting built on shared values; and that our learners are treated with respect and dignity, taught to treat each other and staff with respect, feel safe, have a voice, and are listened to.
- Supporting contextual safeguarding practice, recognising that the setting's site can be a location where harm can occur.
- Setting expectations for developing knowledge and skills within the setting's community (staff, learners, parents/carers) to the signs and indicators of safeguarding issues and how to respond to them.
- Early identification of the need for vulnerable learners and provision of proportionate interventions to promote their welfare and safety.

- Working in partnership with learners, parents/carers, and other agencies in the Local Safeguarding Partnership, including Early Help.

5. Professional Expectations, Roles and Responsibilities

Each academy in the Trust is named as a relevant agency either to the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (Somerset Schools) or the North Somerset Safeguarding Partnership (North Somerset Schools). This policy outlines its statutory duty to cooperate, follow, and comply with the published arrangements set out by the relevant Safeguarding Partnership.

5.1 Roles and Responsibilities of All Staff:

- All staff will read and understand Part 1 of the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025). Those working directly with children will also refer to Annex B.
- Trustees, Local Partners, senior staff, designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) and their deputies and staff involved in the recruitment process will read the complete document of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).
- All staff will be aware of the systems in place which support safeguarding including reading this Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy; the Behaviour Policy and Anti Bullying Policy; the Staff Code of Conduct and be aware of the safeguarding response to children who go missing or absent from education; and the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- All staff will know how to contact the DSL and any deputies and the safeguarding representative from the Local Partnership Board at their academy.
- All staff will be able to identify vulnerable learners and take action to keep them safe. Information or concerns about learners will be shared with the DSL, including those:
 - who may need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse or neglect
 - requiring mental health support
 - who may benefit from early help
 - where there is a radicalisation concern
 - where a crime may have been committed
 - where child-on-child abuse has taken place
 - where a child is suspected to be missing or absent from education
 - where a child has been impacted by technology regarding online safety
- DSLs will be involved, where appropriate, in the implementation of individual plans to safeguard vulnerable learners further, understand their academic progress and attainment, and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort
- All staff will record concerns appropriately and promptly by using the setting's safeguarding recording systems.
- All staff will be aware of the need to raise with the senior leadership team any concerns they have about safeguarding practices within the academy.

5.2 Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- Details of our DSL and Deputy DSL are on each school's website and noticeboard within the school. Duties are further outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (Annexe C).
- The DSL is a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team and has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the setting.
- The DSL works with the Headteacher and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that learners in need are experiencing or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on learners' attendance, engagement, and achievement at school.
- Activities include the management of work undertaken by any Deputy DSLs.
- DSLs and Deputy DSLs manage early identification of vulnerability of learners and their families from staff through cause for concern or notifications. This will ensure detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.
- DSLs and Deputy DSLs manage referrals to Local Authority safeguarding partners where learners with additional needs have been identified. These can include those:
 - who need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse or neglect.
 - requiring mental health support.
 - who may benefit from early help.
 - where there is a radicalisation concern.
 - where a crime may have been committed.
- **The DSL will also:**
 - be a key point of contact for outside agencies about safeguarding.
 - support and advise other staff in making referrals to other agencies.
 - when required, liaise with the case manager and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) about child protection cases which concern a staff member.
 - coordinate regular safeguarding training and raise awareness and understanding within the school community around policies and practices about safeguarding.
 - help promote educational outcomes by sharing information about vulnerable learners with relevant staff. This includes ensuring that staff:
 - know who these children are;
 - understand their academic progress and attainment, and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort;
 - are supported in identifying the challenges that children in this group might face;
 - provide additional academic support or make reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential.
 - Ensure the secure transfer of the Safeguarding/Child Protection File when a child moves on to a new setting within 5 days for an in-year transfer or the first 5 days of the start of a new term.

- Arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out-of-hours/out-of-term activities, e.g. attendance at Strategy and Initial Child Protection Conferences out of term time.
- Take lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.

5.3 Role of the Local Partnership Board

The Local Partnership Board of each academy is responsible for its setting's safeguarding responsibilities to ensure that safeguarding and child protection practices and processes (including online safety) are effective and compliant with legislation, statutory guidance, and Local Authority Safeguarding Partnership arrangements.

Duties are further outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025, Part 2). The Local Partnership Board will:

- Ensure an appointed Safeguarding Partner from each academy liaises with the Headteacher and the DSL to produce an annual report for the Local Partnership Board and completes the S. 175/157 (annual safeguarding) audit for the relevant Local Authority Safeguarding Partnership.
- Ensure that the academy remedies any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to its attention without delay.
- Ensure that the DSL is an appropriate senior member of the academy's senior leadership team and ensure that they have adequate time, funding, training, resources, and support to carry out their role effectively.
- Ensure that the training and learning for the school community are robust and effective.
- Ensure that learners are taught about safeguarding on the curriculum, including online safety in compliance with statutory guidance [Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education](#), and for academies with early years foundation stage, the [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) Statutory Framework](#)
- Ensure that teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors, have appropriate checks carried out in line with statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025, Part 3).
- Ensure that there are procedures in place to manage safeguarding concerns or allegations against teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors who may not be suitable to work with or pose a risk to learners, including having a process to manage low-level concerns.
- Ensure that systems are in place for learners to effectively share a concern about a safeguarding issue they are experiencing, express their views and give feedback.
- Ensure that the setting has systems in place to prevent, identify and respond to child-on-child abuse (including sexual abuse and sexual harassment) and mental health concerns, and review the effectiveness of the setting's online safety practices, including filtering and monitoring.

- Appoint a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of Children Looked After.
- Whilst considering their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, Local Partnership Boards will be doing all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to risks from the settings' IT system. As part of this process, Local Partnership Boards will ensure that their schools have appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness. They should ensure that the Senior Leadership Team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place, manage them effectively, and know how to escalate concerns when identified.
- Local Partnership Boards consider the age range of their children, the number of children, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks.

6. Safeguarding Training for Staff

6.1 Safeguarding Training for All Staff

- Local Partnership Boards will ensure that all staff members undergo safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) training at induction.
- At induction, staff will read and sign the IT usage agreement and are reminded never to use their mobile phone to contact students or take photographs of students.
- Will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) refresher training at least annually (via formal training, email e-bulletins, and staff meetings).
- All staff must receive FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) awareness training and will understand their legal duty under the Mandatory Reporting Duty.
- All staff must complete PREVENT awareness training. This is to ensure that they can comply with the legal expectations under the PREVENT duty.
- All staff must complete Cyber Training.
- **Staff training includes explicit reference to the internal whistleblowing policy and guidance for escalating concerns.**

6.2 Training for Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

In addition to the all-staff training outlined above, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will undergo formal training provided by the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP) or North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSSCP) to provide them with the knowledge and skills (including online safety) training required to carry out the role. The training will be updated every two years. Deputy DSLs will be trained to the same level as the DSL.

The DSL and any Deputy DSLs will liaise with their relevant Safeguarding Children's Partnership to ensure that their knowledge and skills are updated via e-bulletins, attend DSL network meetings, and take time to read and digest safeguarding bulletins.

6.3 Other Training Considerations

- The Local Partnership Board will ensure that at least one person on any appointment panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training, in line with School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009. Staff responsible for recruitment administration will also be trained to the same level.
- Members of the senior leadership team will make themselves aware of and understand their role within the local safeguarding arrangements. This will ensure that those responsible for managing behaviour, inclusion, Special Educational Needs, attendance, and exclusions carry out their duties with a safeguarding consideration.
- The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children will undergo appropriate training to fulfil their role to promote the educational achievement of registered learners who are in care.
- The mental health lead has access to appropriate training.
- Training around safeguarding issues in Annex B (including online safety) will be integrated, aligned, and considered as part of a whole school safeguarding approach.
- Appropriate colleagues have received suitable training in relation to use of reasonable force and positive handling.
- Members of Local Partnership Boards and Trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training.

7. Safeguarding and the Curriculum

All Trust academies are committed to ensuring that children are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe, including online. We recognise that effective education should be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This includes:

- Working within statutory guidance in respect to [Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education](#); and [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) Statutory Framework](#)
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, to explore key issues at an age-appropriate stage such as:
 - healthy and respectful relationships
 - boundaries and consent
 - stereotyping, prejudice and equality
 - body confidence and self-esteem
 - how to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
 - the concepts of, and laws relating to - sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called 'honour'-based

violence such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support, and

- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence, and why these are always unacceptable.
- A whole-school preventative education approach that prepares children for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia and sexual violence/harassment.
- Appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to ensure that 'over- blocking' does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what learners can be taught about online teaching and safeguarding. (Further information can be found in KCSIE 2025, page 40)
- The curriculum will be shaped to respond to safeguarding incident patterns in the setting identified by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and safeguarding team (e.g., to respond to an increase in bullying incidents).
- Providing engagement opportunities with parents and carers to consult on key aspects of the curriculum.
- Learners can inform the curriculum via learner voice/school councils

8. Safer Recruitment and Safer Working Practice

8.1 Safer Recruitment

All Trust academies must pay full regard to the required safer recruitment practices detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part Three (2025), which include:

- Scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history, and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. References are always received, scrutinised and concerns resolved satisfactorily before the appointment is confirmed.
- Ensuring we maintain an accurate Single Central Record.
- Undertaking appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the barred list checks and prohibition checks (and overseas checks if proper), dependent on the role and duties performed, including regulated and non-regulated activity.
- Online searches will be used as part of our due diligence checks on short-listed candidates.
- Assurances are sought for contractors who are required on site, including identification checks on arrival.

8.2 Visitors

All visitors to any Trust academy must complete a sign-in/out process, wear a school ID badge, and are provided with key safeguarding information, including the contact details of safeguarding personnel in the school.

Scheduled visitors in a professional role (e.g. fire officer, police, LA staff) are asked to provide evidence of their role and employment details (usually an identity badge) upon arrival at school. Careful consideration is given to the suitability of any external organisations.

If the visit is unscheduled and the visitor is unknown to the school, we will contact the relevant organisation to verify the individual's identity, if necessary.

8.3 Site Safety

Risk assessments are conducted and maintained in accordance with the school's health and safety policy. The school ensures that when our premises are hired or rented to other organisations (such as ASC, evening and weekend clubs), including shared site providers that work with children, those organisations adhere to the guidance for out-of-school settings: [After-school clubs, community activities and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/after-school-clubs-community-activities-and-tuition-safeguarding-guidance-for-providers).

8.4 Off-site visits

We conduct a risk assessment prior to any off-site visit and assign specific roles and responsibilities to each adult, whether employed or a volunteer. (Please refer to the Educational Visits Policy for more details).

8.5 Use of Reasonable Force

Reasonable force refers to the physical contact used to restrain and control children, using no more force than is necessary. The use of reasonable force is a matter of professional judgment for the staff member concerned and will be determined by individual circumstances. The vulnerability of any child with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) will also be considered.

The use of reasonable force will be minimised through positive and proactive behaviour support and de-escalation, and will follow government guidance outlined below:

- [Use of Reasonable Force in Schools \(2013\)](#)
- [Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention \(2019\)](#)

There is robust recording of any incident where positive handling or restraint has been used. Further review of the incident is carried out to reflect on how the incident could be avoided, this will involve the child and their family.

8.6 Concerns regarding staff members

The process around how the setting manages concerns where a professional may pose a risk to learners and our response to low-level concerns can be accessed in the Dealing with Allegations against Staff Policy, available on the Wessex Learning Trust website and intranet (My Wessex).

8.7 Whistleblowing Procedures

Staff must be aware of the following whistleblowing channels for situations where they feel unable to raise an issue with the senior leadership team or feel that their genuine concerns are not being addressed:

- Trust Whistleblowing Policy – available on the Wessex Learning Trust website, staff intranet (My Wessex) and the staffroom of each school.
- General guidance and advice on whistleblowing: <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>.
- The [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](#) is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can also call 0800 028 0285 or email help@nspcc.org.uk. Phone lines are open from 8 am to 8 pm, Monday to Friday.

9. Key Safeguarding Areas

Below are some themes that can impact children and families:

- Children in the court system
- Children affected by parental offending/imprisonment.
- Children missing from education (including persistent absence).
- Child Exploitation (including both Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation and county lines, modern day slavery and trafficking).
- Cybercrime.
- [Domestic Abuse](#)
- Homelessness.
- So-called 'Honour-based Abuse' (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage).
- [Online Safety](#)
- [Mental health](#)
- [Child-on-child abuse](#):
 - Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
 - Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
 - Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).

- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;(this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or engage in sexual activity with a third party.
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery).
- Up-skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, to view their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm.
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).
- [Preventing Radicalisation \(The Prevent Duty\)](#)
- [Serious Youth Violence](#)
- [Substance Misuse](#)
- [Young Carers](#)
- [Private Fostering](#)
- Additional information about key safeguarding areas can also be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).
- Local safeguarding resources are also available via:
 - Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership website: [Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership](#).
 - North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership website: [Children's Safeguarding Board | Children's Safeguarding Board \(nsscp.co.uk\)](#).

Part 2 – Procedures

1. Reporting concerns

All staff must be clear about recording and reporting concerns to the DSL/DSL deputies in a timely way. In the case that a learner is in immediate danger, staff should phone the Police on 999 and inform the DSL that they have done so.

Learners in each Trust academy will be told how to raise a concern and what mechanism they can use. They will be informed that any referral will be treated seriously.

2. Information Sharing

All Trust academies are committed to having due regard to relevant data protection principles, which allow for sharing and withholding personal information as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulations. This includes how to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information which is sensitive and personal and should be treated as 'special category personal data'.

Staff at the setting are aware that:

- 'Safeguarding' and 'individuals at risk' are processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data.
- Practitioners will seek consent to share data where possible in line with [Information Sharing for Safeguarding Practitioners 2024](#).

2.1 Sharing information without consent

There may be times when it is necessary to share information without consent, such as:

- To gain consent would place the child at risk.
- Not doing so would compromise a criminal investigation.
- It cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent.
- Or, if by sharing information it will enhance the safeguarding of a child promptly, but it is not possible to gain consent.

There are also times when Wessex Learning Trust Academies will not provide learner's personal data where the serious harm test under legislation is met, (by sharing the information the child may be at further risk). When in doubt the DSL will seek legal advice.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

3. Identifying and Monitoring the Needs of Vulnerable Learners

The DSL and Deputy DSL will regularly review and monitor those students who have been identified as vulnerable and those children who are potentially at greater risk or harm as detailed in KCSIE 2025, pages 48 - 56. This can include reviewing attendance data, behaviour data, attainment data, and safeguarding records. This is to ensure that:

- Proportionate and early interventions can be taken to promote the safety and welfare of the child and prevent escalation of harm.
- Information about vulnerable learners is shared with teachers and school leadership staff to promote educational outcomes.
- Learners who currently have, or have had, a social worker will have their academic progress and attainment reviewed, and additional academic support will be provided to help them reach their full potential.
- Reasonable adjustments are made in relation to school-based interventions – for example responding to behaviour.

4. Multi-Agency Working

Trust Academies will work together with appropriate agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including identifying and responding to their needs. This is in compliance with statutory guidance [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK](#).

4.1 Occasions that warrant a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989:

- If the child is in need under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (including when a child is a young carer and or subject to a private fostering arrangement).
- Or if the child needs protection under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 where they are experiencing significant harm, or likely to experience significant harm.

Referrals in these cases should be made by the DSL (or Deputy DSLs) to Children's Social Care in the Local Authority in which that child resides.

Where the child already has a social worker, the request for service should go immediately to the social worker involved or, in their absence, to their team manager. If the child is a child in care, notification should also be made to Virtual School.

All Academies in the Trust will co-operate with any statutory safeguarding assessments conducted by children's social care: this includes providing written reports and ensuring representation at appropriate inter-agency meetings such as integrated support plan meetings initial and review child protection conferences and core group meetings.

4.2 Additional Considerations

- Where a learner and/or their family is subject to an inter-agency child protection plan or a multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) meeting, the setting will contribute to the preparation, implementation, and review of the plan as appropriate.
- In situations where a child in care may be put on to part time timetable, the school will consult with relevant agencies and the virtual school.

4.3 If a crime has been suspected or committed

- If a crime has been suspected or committed that involved the bringing of an offensive weapon on to the school site, the setting will liaise with the Police who will consider a proportionate response.
- If there is a risk of harm, the police should be called via 999. For other concerns of criminality, the [when-to-call-the-police--guidance-for-schools-and-colleges.pdf](#)

npcc.police.uk) may be helpful or contact can be made with the local policing team by calling 101.

4.4 Death or serious injury of a child

In the rare event that a child death occurs, or a child is seriously harmed, the school must notify the Chief Executive of the Trust and the relevant Safeguarding Children's Partnership as soon as possible to ensure the appropriate action is taken.

5. Suspensions, Permanent Exclusions and Commissions Alternative Providers

This section should be read in conjunction with the Academy's Behaviour Policy and Anti Bullying Policy and the Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy.

When the fixed-term or permanent exclusion of a learner is being considered and where additional vulnerabilities are identified it is important that the learner's welfare is a paramount consideration.

The Headteacher will consider their legal duty of care when sending a learner home as the result of an exclusion.

5.1 Legal duties in relation to suspensions and exclusions

Wessex Learning Trust academies will exercise its legal duties in relation to its use of such interventions. These include:

- Consideration of whether a statutory assessment should be considered in line with the [Children Act 1989](#)
- Decisions being made in an anti-discriminatory manner in line with the [Equality Act 2010](#) and the [SEND Code of Practice](#)
- Consideration of the learner's rights under the [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
Interventions being consistent with statutory guidance [School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

5.2 Actions to Take

- An assessment of need should be undertaken with multi-agency partners with a view to mitigate any identified risk of harm, in line with identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable learners.
- If the child is subject to a child protection plan or where there is an existing child protection file, we will call a multi-agency risk-assessment meeting prior to making the decision to exclude.

- In the event of a one-off serious incident resulting in an immediate decision to exclude, the risk assessment must be completed prior to convening a meeting of the partnership body

5.3 Commissioning Alternative Provision

In the event where an academy in the Trust commissions an Alternative Provision they will have regard to statutory guidance:

- [Additional health needs guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Clear agreement of roles and responsibilities must be in place to maintain safeguarding arrangements and daily monitoring of attendance arrangements for learners who are not taught on site.

Where the learner is on roll the academy will continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that learner and will make necessary checks on the provider to ensure they are meeting the needs of the learner.

Written confirmation from the Alternative provider will be obtained to confirm that the relevant checks on staff have been completed and are satisfactory and compliant as would be performed for our own staff.

Academies must use the Trust alternative provision checklist when securing alternative provision services to ensure they are compliant.

6. Children Missing or Absent from Education

A learner missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, or maybe an indicator of need for Early Help support. Staff should follow procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. These should be discussed with the DSL.

6.1 Guidance

Academies in the Wessex Learning Trust will follow the guidance detailed in [Children Missing Education \(2016\)](#) and their relevant Local Authority Safeguarding Policy for Children Missing or Absent from Education.

This will include notifying the local authority in which the child lives:

- of any learner who fails to attend school regularly.
- of any learner who has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

- or who has been recorded with code I (illness) and who the academy has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

6.2 Elective Home Education

The school will notify the Local Authority whenever a parent or carer chooses to withdraw their child from school to be educated at home. Any concerns about the suitability of home education will be shared with the Education Safeguarding/Engagement Service. If there are significant safeguarding concerns, appropriate action will be taken to ensure the right support is put in place to keep the child safe.

7. Responding to Incidents of Child-on-Child Abuse

All staff should recognise that children can abuse their peers, including online abuse. It is important that incidents of abuse and harm are treated in line with the Safeguarding Policy and in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy and Anti Bullying Policy.

Concerns regarding the welfare of learners and any subsequent support process will be recorded on their safeguarding file.

Examples of child-on-child abuse can be found in the Key Safeguarding Areas [section of this policy](#). Child-on-child abuse can happen in any environment and is not restricted to school settings and/or online.

Child-on-child abuse is not tolerated, passed off as “banter” or seen as “part of growing up”. The different forms of child-on-child abuse is likely to include, but not limited to:

- bullying (including cyber bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm
- ‘upskirting’ or any picture taken under a person’s clothing without their permission or them knowing to obtain sexual gratification or cause humiliation, distress or alarm.
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting)
- sexual violence and sexual harassment between children, as defined by Sexual offences act 2003 which considers rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault, all types of sexual violence. Sexual violence and sexual harassment can be between two children, or a group of children and can occur online and offline.

7.1 Reporting concerns

There are clear systems in place for learners to report any abuse knowing their concerns will be treated seriously and respectfully. Consequently, child-on-child abuse is dealt with as a safeguarding issue and recorded as such, not managed through the systems set out in the behaviour policy.

- Any child who may have been victimised and/or displayed such harmful behaviours, along with any other child affected by child-on-child abuse, will be supported through the school's safeguarding team and pastoral system and the support will be regularly monitored and reviewed.
- We will address inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) as this can be an important intervention that may help prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.
- We acknowledge that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported. Staff maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.

7.2 Minimising risk

Each academy in the Trust will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by providing:

- a relevant, effective curriculum, that helps children to develop their understanding of acceptable behaviours, healthy relationships and keeping themselves safe. The curriculum is updated to reflect changes in legislation, and the mandatory teaching of Relationship Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education,
- established/publicised systems for children to raise concerns with staff, knowing they will be listened to, supported and valued, and that the issues they raise will be taken seriously,
- training to all staff so they understand that child-on-child abuse can and does happen and are trained to be alert to any behaviours that could cause concern,
- a clear procedure for all staff to report all incidents as a safeguarding concern to the school DSL/ Deputy DSL.

7.3 Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment

The DSL will follow local and national guidance when there has been a report of sexual violence and harassment between children, including referring to Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. The [Somerset Harmful Sexual Behaviour Protocol - Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) should be utilised to inform assessment of risk and what actions to subsequently take. This will include liaising with other professionals to develop robust risk and needs assessments and multi-agency safety planning with appropriate specialist targeted work for children who are identified as posing a potential risk to other children. Any assessments need to take a Contextual Safeguarding approach to consider

risks posed by any wider environmental factors present in a child's life. The DSL will record specifically the time and location of the incident, and any action required to make the location safer.

- The NSPCC has a dedicated helpline 0800 136 663 to provide children who are victims of sexual abuse in schools with appropriate support and advice. The helpline also provides support to parents and professionals.
- The Lucy Faithful Foundation's Shore Space offers a confidential chat service for teenagers worried about sexual behaviour. [Home - Shore](#)
- Where the report includes an online element, the setting will follow [Searching, screening and confiscation at school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). The key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child. The highlighted advice provides more details on what to do when viewing an image is unavoidable.
- It is important that academies consider sexual harassment in broad terms. Sexual harassment creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.
- When an incident involves an act of **sexual violence** (rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault) the starting point is that this should be passed on to police **regardless** of the age of criminal responsibility (10 years old). This must be reported directly via 101 for recording purposes and accountability. A concurrent referral to social care must also be made.

7.4 Serious violence

We recognise that success in learning is one of the most powerful indicators in the prevention of youth crime.

All staff are aware of the indicators, which may signal 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 educational performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, 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 and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

7.5 Contextual Safeguarding Approach to Child-on-Child Abuse

Each Trust academy will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse taking place by adopting a contextual approach to safeguarding. This enables us and other support services to better identify high-risk groups, areas and environments within our community that increase the risk of abuse occurring and take appropriate action.

7.6 The DSL and Deputy DSL's will review and consider whether any practice or environmental changes can be made in relation to any areas for development. This might include making changes to staffing and supervision, making changes to the physical environment and considering the utilisation and delivery of safeguarding topics on the curriculum.

8. Responding to Allegations and Whistleblowing

Staff must report any concerns or allegations about a professional's behaviour (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors and those from organisations or individuals using the school premises) where they may have:

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

8.1 Low Level Concerns

This should be read in conjunction with the staff code of conduct and Keeping children Safe in Education (2025). A low-level concern is not insignificant. This process should be used in events where a concern about professional conduct does not meet the threshold set out.

The Academies in the Trust provide a clear procedure for sharing low level concerns. Reports should be made to the DSL/Deputy DSL (or the Headteacher if it is regarding the DSL). All schools should create an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer where they have found themselves in a situation.

- The DSL will address unprofessional behaviour and support the individual to correct it at an early stage providing a responsive, sensitive, and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised.
- Review and correct any deficits in the setting's safeguarding system.

Further information on this topic is available in the Dealing with Allegations Against Staff and the Whistleblowing policy, both of which are available on the Wessex Learning Trust website and staff intranet (My Wessex).

9. Mental Health and Well-being

Each academy in the Trust is committed to undertake the following:

- Early identification of vulnerability to mental health problems by reviewing attendance, behaviour, attainment, and safeguarding records at least on a termly basis.
- The appointment of a senior mental health lead who can support the development of knowledge and act as a point of expertise to promote the wellbeing and mental health of learners. This colleague will have sufficient training in mental health and safeguarding for them to carry out their role effectively.
- Ensure that learners can report and share concerns.
- Staff will follow a safeguarding process in terms of reporting concerns outlined in Appendix B so the DSL/Deputy DSLs (and wider members of the safeguarding team such as the SENDCo) can assess whether there are any other vulnerabilities can be identified and proportionate support considered.
- Staff will ensure the immediate health and safety of a learner who is displaying acute mental health distress. This may require support from emergency services via 999 if the learner is at risk of immediate harm.
- DSLs/Deputies will consider whether a case can be managed internally, through early help, or should involve other agencies as required.
- The setting will communicate and work with the learner and parents/carers to ensure that interventions are in the best interests of the child.
- DSLs will liaise with staff to ensure reasonable adjustments are made and develop ways to support achieving positive educational outcomes.
- Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem – DSLs and the senior leadership team should be able to access specialist advice through targeted services.

9.1 Contextual Safeguarding Approach to Mental Health

Each Trust academy will ensure that preventative measures in terms of providing safeguarding in the curriculum will provide opportunities for learners to identify when they may need help, and to develop resilience.

The setting will take a whole-school approach to:

- Delivering high quality teaching around mental health and well-being in the curriculum.
- Having a culture that promotes mental health and well-being.
- Having an environment that promotes mental health and well-being.
- Making sure learners and staff are aware of and able to access a range of mental health services.
- Supporting staff well-being.
- Being committed to learner and parent/carer participation.

10. Online Safety

Online safety is an integrated and interwoven theme with other safeguarding considerations.

10.1 DSL role in ensuring online safety

It is essential that the DSL takes a lead on ensuring that interventions are effective. This means co-ordinating support and engaging with other colleagues in the setting who may have more technological expertise such as the IT manager/IT Support.

All academies are committed to addressing online safety issues around content, contact, conduct and commerce. This includes:

- Ensuring that online safety is concerned in relevant policies and procedures.
- Online safety is interwoven in safeguarding training for staff and safeguarding in the curriculum for learners.
- Acknowledging that child-on-child abuse can happen via mobile and smart technology between individuals and groups.
- Provision of education via remote learning will comply with governmental advice [Safeguarding and remote education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/safeguarding-and-remote-learning)
- The effectiveness of the setting's ability to safeguarding learners in respect to filtering and monitoring, information security and access management alongside the above will be reviewed annually.
- Preparing children with information for any online challenges and hoaxes, sharing information with parents and where to get help.
- Staff, visitors and volunteers must never use a personal mobile phone to contact students or take photographs of students. Each school in the Trust will publish its own procedures relating to the use of mobile phones and smart technology by students in their educational setting.

Appendices

Appendix A – Reporting concerns flowchart

Appendix B - Dealing with a disclosure of abuse

Appendix C – Multi-agency contacts for safeguarding in education

- Somerset Contacts
- North Somerset Contacts

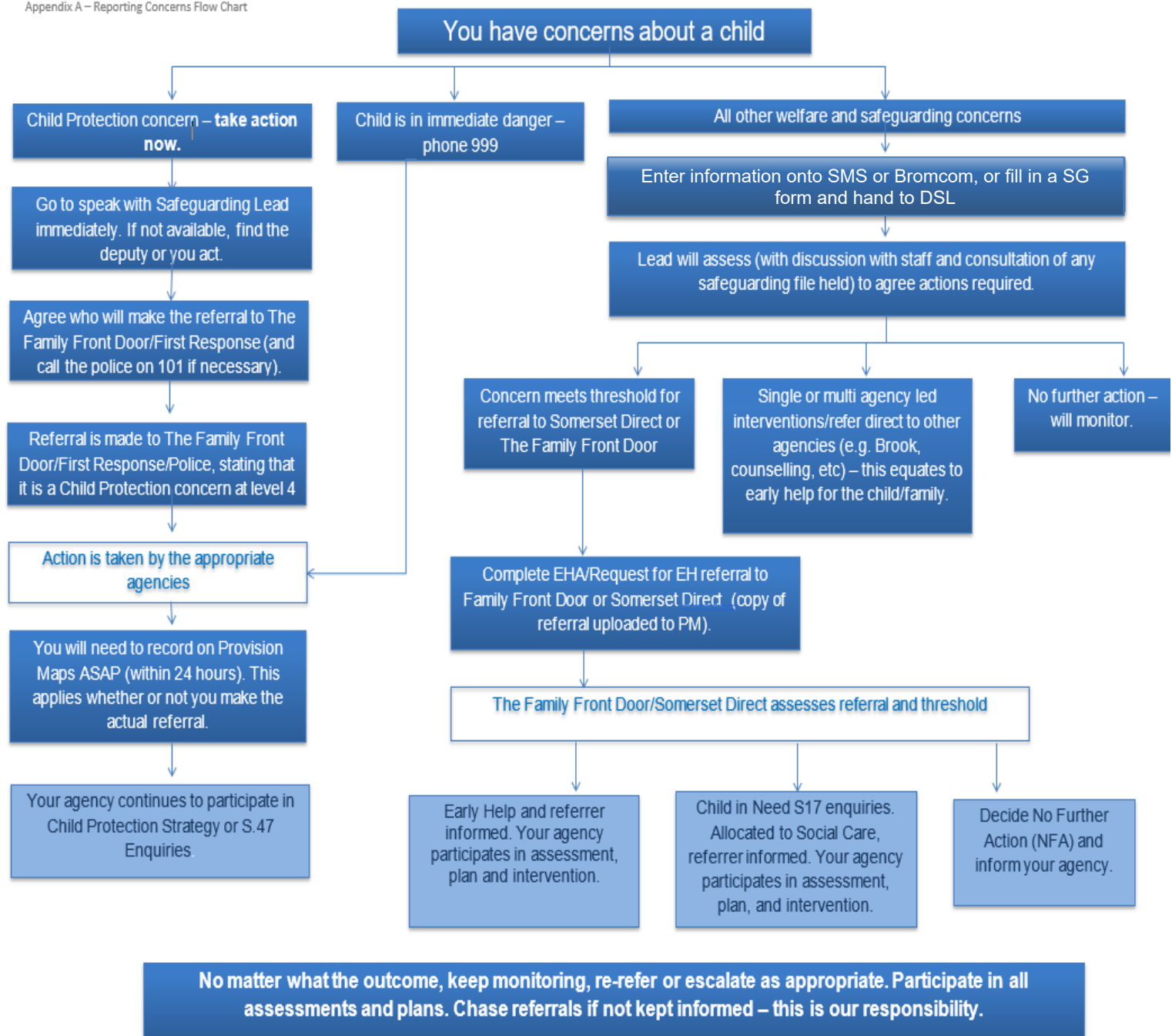
Appendix D – Safeguarding Response to Mental Health and Child on Child Abuse

Appendix E – Types of abuse and neglect

Appendix F – Specific actions to take on topical safeguarding issues

Appendix A: Reporting concerns flowchart

Appendix A – Reporting Concerns Flow Chart



Appendix B: When a child tells me about abuse they have suffered, what must I remember?

- Stay calm.
- Do not communicate shock, anger or embarrassment.
- Reassure the child. Tell them you are pleased that they are speaking to you.
- Never promise confidentiality. Assure them that you will try to help but let the child know that you may have to tell other people in order to do this. State who this will be and why.
- Encourage the child to talk but do not ask "leading questions" or press for information. Use 'Tell Me, Explain to me, Describe to me' (TED) questioning.
- Listen and remember.
- Check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you.
- Praise the child for telling you. Communicate that they have a right to be safe and protected.
- It is inappropriate to make any comments about the alleged offender.
- Be aware that the child may retract what they have told you. It is essential to record all you have heard.
- At the end of the conversation, tell the child again who you are going to tell and why that person or those people need to know.
- As soon as you can afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's own language. Include any questions you may have asked. Do not add any opinions or interpretations.

NB It is not education staff's role to seek disclosures. Their role is to observe that something may be wrong, ask about it, listen, be available and try to make time to talk.

- "The 5 R's" are helpful in understanding what professional's duties are in relation to responding to an incident.

Recognise – Respond – Reassure – Refer – Record

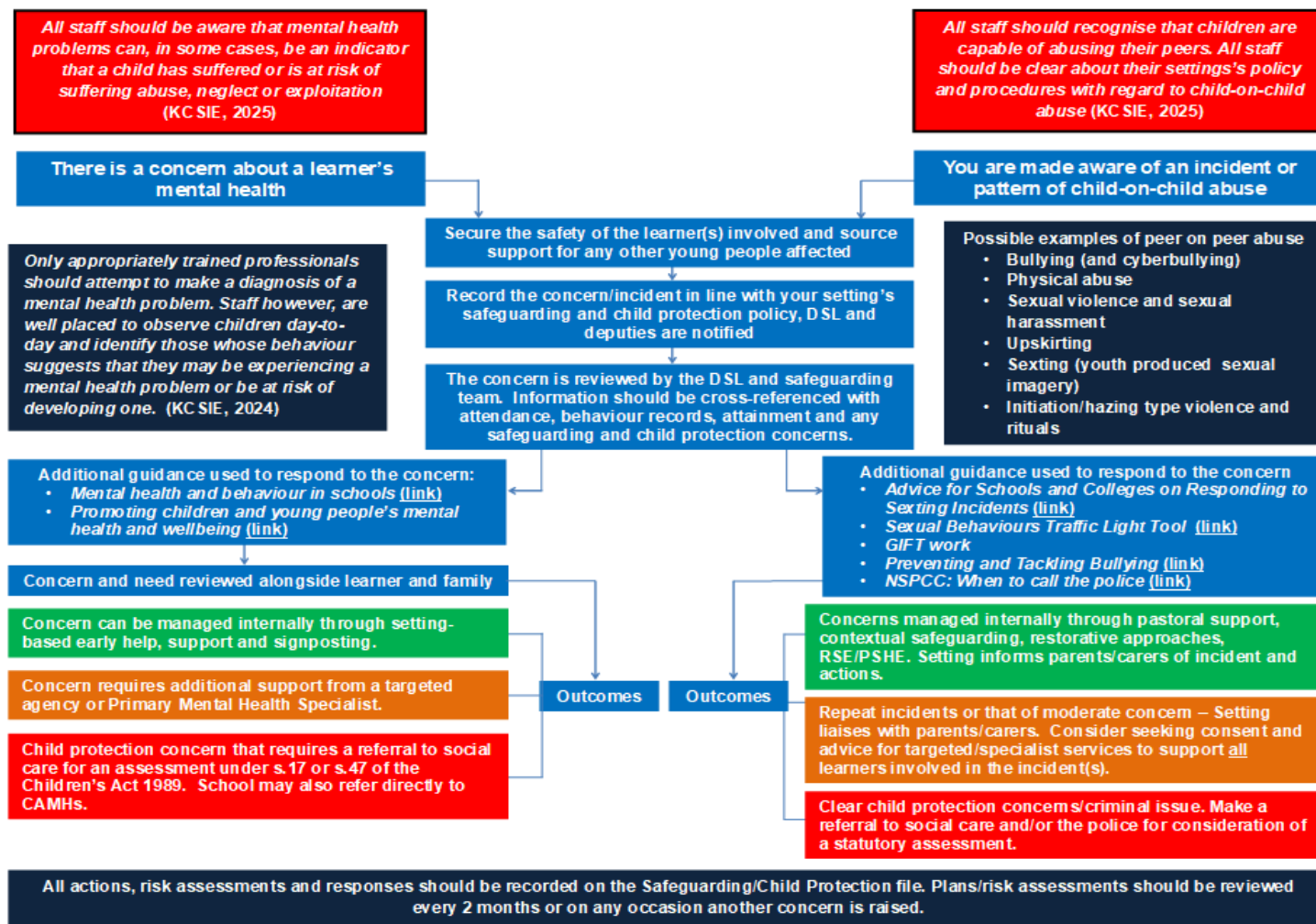
Appendix C: Multi-Agency Contacts for Safeguarding in Education

If a child is at immediate risk call the POLICE	Call the POLICE on 999
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If you have concerns about a child or young person in Somerset		
To make an URGENT referral (i.e., a child is likely to suffer or is suffering significant harm)	Somerset Direct 0300 122 2224	
To make a NON-URGENT referral, complete an Early Help Assessment and send to	Email SDInputters@somerset.gov.uk	
To raise concerns or ask for advice about radicalisation	Phone PREVENT DUTY on 01278 647466 or Email PreventSW@avonandsomerset.police.uk Local Authority Prevent Lead prevent@somerset.gov.uk	
To liaise with the specialist Safeguarding Police unit	Lighthouse Safeguarding Unit – Avon and Somerset Police 01278 649228	
DSL Consultation Line 0300 123 3078	Inclusion Advice Line 0300 123 2224	Critical Incident Support EPS 01823 357000
Education Safeguarding Leads	Email Educsafeguardinglead@somerset.gov.uk	
Child sexual exploitation & child criminal exploitation	Operation Topaz (Avon and Somerset Police) www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/forms/vul	
Young Carers – advice and support	Phone 0300 123 2224 YoungCarersmailbox@somerset.gov.uk	
CAMHS	Single Point of Access CAMHS Single Point of Access (SPA) - CAMHS (somersetft.nhs.uk) 0300 1245 012 camhsspa@somersetft.nhs.uk	
If you have concerns about a professional working with a child in Somerset		
To raise concerns and ask for guidance in relation to the conduct of someone who works with children	Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Allegations Management - Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership	

If you have concerns about a child or young person in North Somerset	
North Somerset Front Door to Wellbeing and Children's Social Care	<p>Consultation and Advice Line All enquiries from professionals in relation to Child Protection phone 01275 888690 childrens.frontdoor@n-somerset.gov.uk.</p> <p>Monday-Thursday 9:00am-5.00pm, Friday 9:00 am-4.30pm</p> <p>Out of hours/weekends - 01454 615165</p> <p>Remember in an emergency please ring 999</p>
To raise concerns or ask for advice about radicalisation	01275 888690
If you have concerns about a professional working with a child in North Somerset	
To raise concerns and ask for guidance in relation to the conduct of someone who works with children	<p>lado@n-somerset.gov.uk 01275 888690</p>

Appendix D: Responding to Mental Health and Child on Child Abuse



Appendix E: Types of abuse and neglect

Abuse and neglect are defined as the maltreatment of a child or young person whereby someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

All school staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another. For children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) additional barriers can exist when identifying abuse and neglect, these include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
- being more prone to peer group isolation than other children.
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

To address these additional challenges, schools should consider extra pastoral support for children with SEND (KCSIE, 2025).

The following are the definition of abuse and neglect as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 however, the ultimate responsibility to assess and define the type of abuse a child or young person may be subject to is that of the Police and Children's Services – our responsibility is to understand what each category of abuse is and how this can impact on the welfare and development of our children and where we have concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of abuse and neglect (one or more categories can apply) to take appropriate action as early as possible.

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

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

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

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

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

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.

The Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse has useful resources and training [Home | CSA Centre](#).

Appendix F: Specific actions to take on topical safeguarding issues

General or national guidance will not be included here. A summary of specific duties are in [Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE 2025 Annex B](#) and Access to local guidance can be found in [Appendix A](#) of this document.

In recognition that the threshold of child protection is 'likely to suffer' significant harm, schools in the Wessex Learning Trust may need to make a referral to children's social care. Where possible, this will involve notifying the parent/carer if it does not place the learner at further risk of harm.

It is also important to recognise the importance of liaising with other education settings who may have siblings attending. It is likely that they may hold additional information which will support early identification of harm and in turn develop your assessment of need.

Child Exploitation – both Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Schools in The Wessex Learning Trust will ensure that early help intervention is provided as soon as a concern of exploitation is identified. Discussion and advice will be sought from targeted services to consider what support may be available. The learner and their families will be part of any planning and interventions.

- If the learner is at risk of CSE or there is intelligence which indicates that the learner or peer group are at risk of CSE, schools will share information with Operation Topaz (the police). This information will support proactive activity to disrupt criminal activity in relation to sexual exploitation.
- If the learner is at risk of CCE information should be shared with Somerset's Violence Reduction Unit - The VRU can advise and support settings to manage risk. Targeted support maybe available to disrupt learners from getting involved with criminality.
- Agencies will share 'Missing persons' notifications (which a learner is reported missing from home or care) with education settings with a view to support them to take proactive action and reasonable adjustments in relation to behaviour management and achieving positive educational outcomes. These should be stored securely on the learner's Safeguarding/Child Protection file.

Domestic Abuse

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members.

Experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

Operation Encompass is a national operation where local police forces notify when the police are called to an incident to domestic abuse. Avon and Somerset have their own version of this and will notify education settings through the Education Engagement Service (EES) whenever they have responded to a domestic abuse incident. This will enable the education setting to take proactive action and reasonable adjustments in relation to behaviour management and achieving positive educational outcomes. When a setting is concerned about the amount of police notifications they receive or disclosures of domestic abuse they should consider seeking further advice and completing an Early Help Assessment or DASH to support the family.

Female Genital Mutilation

Mandatory reporting duty: [Click here for government guidance](#)

There is a legal duty for all professionals undertaking teaching work to report known cases of FGM to the police via 101. This is when they:

1. are informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
2. observe physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on.

These cases must be referred to the DSL who will support them to carry out their duty. It is also advised any referrals made to the police under the mandatory reporting duty is followed up with children's social care, so an assessment of need and support is concurrently considered.

Online Safety

- **Paragraph 134 to 143 of Keeping Children Safe in Education highlights additional actions schools should take to keep learners safe online.**
- For concerns around individual cases where a child has been harmed through online mediums, advice and guidance can be made through the **Professional Online Safeguarding Helpline**, T: 0344 381 4772, E: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
- Where there have been established cases of online abuse or grooming, the school settings should alert - **Child Exploitation and Online Protection command (CEOPS)**
<https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/>

Mental health – In the main body of this document

Child on Child Abuse - In the main body of this document

Serious Youth Violence

To be read in conjunction with the above section around Child Criminal Exploitation

It is important to note that should a weapon be used or there is threat of use, the police should be called immediately.

- The same day a weapon is found the school should call for a multi-disciplinary assessment of risk.
- Whilst it is acknowledged that the decision to exclude remains with the Head Teacher it is recommended that consultation with other agencies to ensure there is no further risks

- Alternatives to exclusions should be considered first in recognition that by doing so a learner it may be at further risk of harm out in the community.
- Police must be notified

Preventing Radicalisation - The Prevent Duty

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard¹⁰⁹ to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.¹¹⁰ This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools’ and colleges’ wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads and other senior leaders should familiarise themselves with the revised [Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales](#), especially paragraphs 57-76, which are specifically concerned with schools (and also covers childcare).

The guidance is set out in terms of four general themes:

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

Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child:

- under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled)
- by someone other than a parent or close relative (*Close family relative is defined as a ‘grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt’ and includes half-siblings and stepparents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.)
- with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

Cases of private fostering arrangements must be reported to children’s social care to ensure that needs are adequately made.

Statutory guidance states that this should be done at least 6 weeks before the arrangement is due to start or as soon as you are made aware of the arrangements. Not to do so is a criminal offence.

Further support and reasonable adjustments should be made by the education setting to promote achievement of positive educational outcomes.

Young Carers

A young carer is a person under 18 who regularly provides emotional and/or practical support and assistance for a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally unwell or who misuses substances. Support for Young Carers can be accessed by completing an EHA/Request for Early Help.