

SEGHILL FIRST SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY 2023

1. Policy statement and principles

Seghill First School fully recognises its responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This policy (* these policies are statutory) is one of a series in the school's safeguarding portfolio which includes for example:

- ✓ Attendance*
- ✓ Behaviour *
- ✓ School Suspensions & Exclusions*
- ✓ Personal and intimate care
- ✓ Complaints procedure*
- ✓ Tackling bullying
- ✓ Physical contact / safe touch
- ✓ Whistleblowing
- ✓ SEND*
- ✓ Recruitment and selection (this document will reference your single central record which is statutory*) guidelines/procedures
- ✓ Safe working practice (this may be your staff code of conduct)
- ✓ Staff discipline, conduct and grievance procedures including how you manage allegations*
- ✓ E-safety (which may include guidance on staff/pupil online communication)
- ✓ Handheld devices/mobile phones
- ✓ Confidentiality and information sharing
- ✓ Children Missing from School
- ✓ Relationships (primary) & Sex (secondary) education*
- ✓ Child on Child Abuse policy
- ✓ Children with health needs who cannot attend school*
- ✓ Supporting pupils with medical conditions*
- ✓ Protection of biometric information of children in schools and colleges (where used in school)*
- ✓ First Aid*
- ✓ Health and Safety*
- ✓ Equality Information and Objectives*

Early years settings, schools and further education and skills providers should be safe environments where children, learners and vulnerable adults can learn and develop. To ensure the school setting meets these requirements children's and learners' welfare is promoted and where timely and appropriate safeguarding action is taken for children or learners who need early help or who may be suffering, or likely to suffer, harm. By achieving this the school/setting is ensuring they meet the requirements set out by Ofsted who will 'evaluate how well providers fulfil their statutory and other responsibilities and how well staff exercise their professional judgement in keeping children and learners safe.' School policy and practice is also established to meet the requirements set out by our safeguarding partners Northumberland Children's and Adult's Strategic Safeguarding Partnership (NCASP)

The following terminology is used throughout this document -

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;

- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child Protection is a term used to describe the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or likely to suffer from significant harm

Staff refers to all those working for on behalf of the school, 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 stepparents, foster carers and adoptive parents

This policy is available on the school website, shared with all staff and made available to all visitors.

All relevant policies have been updated to reflect the increased use of remote learning and all necessary risk assessments have been completed and refer to safeguarding procedures.

Child protection statement

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

At Seghill First School pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online, through various teaching and learning opportunities and the school is fully committed to this as part of the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum.

This policy has been written with reference to key statutory guidance (as referenced throughout).

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers, visitors and governors and are consistent with those of the local safeguarding partnership, Northumberland Children's and Adults Safeguarding Partnership (NCASP).

Policy aims

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

Policy principles – schools should use from this list as they feel appropriate and can write their own (however the points in bold are good examples) the school may also wish to refer to their mission/ethos statement here to illustrate how this reflects safeguarding as a priority

- **The welfare of the child is paramount**
- **All children and young people, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection**
- The school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance**
- The school will maintain an attitude of "it could happen here"**

- **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
- safer children make more successful learners
- **This policy will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review**

Due to their day-to-day contact with pupils, school 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 school when they are in distress or at risk. It is vital that **all school staff** are alert to the signs of abuse and understand the procedures for reporting their concerns. The school will always act on identified concerns.

All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Leads) if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.

Roles and responsibilities

The named designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is Miss Tracey Chappell

Contact details: tracey.chappell@seghill.northumberland.sch.uk 0191 2370419 07785 180484

The deputy designated safeguarding lead is Mrs Anna Bell

Contact details: anna.bell@seghill.northumberland.sch.uk 0191 2370419

The nominated child protection governor is Mrs Marie-Anne Dowson

Contact details: admin@seghill.northumberland.sch.uk 0191 2370419

The head teacher is Miss Tracey Chappell

Contact details: email/phone tracey.chappell@seghill.northumberland.sch.uk 0191 2370419 07785 180484

The Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- has the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff;
- is appropriately trained, receiving annual updates and refresher training provided by the Local Authority, on behalf of the safeguarding partners every two years. In Northumberland the expectation is that the DSL attends a half day refresher, facilitated by the LA (Local Authority) every two years and on the alternate year they attend safeguarding training relevant to their school and local context, supporting their professional development and delivered by suitably qualified providers;
- acts as a source of support and expertise to the school 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 Northumberland Children and Adult Safeguarding Partnership (NCASP) procedures <https://www.proceduresonline.com/northumberlandcs/index.html>;

- makes staff aware of NCASP training courses (all available through Learning Together <http://ncc.learningpool.com/>) and the latest policies and procedures on safeguarding;
- understands locally agreed processes for providing early help and intervention;
- keeps detailed written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely, but kept separate from the pupil's general file;
- refers cases of suspected abuse to children's social care or police as appropriate;
- notifies children's social care if a child with a child protection plan has unexplained absences;
- ensures that when a pupil leaves the school, their child protection file is sent securely to the new school (separately from the main pupil file and ensuring secure transit) and confirmation of receipt is obtained. The pupil's social worker should also be informed of the change in school;
- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences;
- coordinates the school's contribution to child protection plans;
- ensures that all appropriate staff members have a working knowledge and understanding of their role in case conferences, core groups and other multi-agency planning meetings, to ensure that they attend and are able to effectively contribute when required to do so;
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies including the NCASP;
- 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 governors and trustees;
- liaises with the nominated governor and headteacher (where the role is not carried out by the headteacher) as appropriate;
- ensures a record of staff attendance at child protection and safeguarding training is maintained;
- ensures staff are kept up to date with key priorities within the LA, including learning from serious practice reviews;
- makes the child protection and safeguarding policy available publicly, on the school's website
- ensures parents are aware of the school's role in safeguarding and that referrals about suspected abuse and neglect may be made;
- has the lead role for Operation Encompass and Operation Endeavour in the school and ensures the school meets all requirements set out in the LA procedures;
- reports concerns that a pupil may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, following the Prevent referral process and refer cases by e-mail to OneCall. If the matter is urgent then Police must be contacted by dialling 999. In cases where further advice from the Police is sought dial 101. The Department for Education has also set up a dedicated telephone helpline for staff and governors to raise concerns around Prevent (020 7340 7264);
- work with others to ensure that the school's filtering and monitoring systems are functional and effective;
- Meet all other responsibilities as set out for DSLs (Designated Safeguarding Leads) in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection, as set out above, remains with the designated safeguarding lead; this lead responsibility should not be delegated.

The deputy designated person:

Is 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.

If the DSL (or deputy) are not available, staff should contact a member of the leadership team to seek advice. Advice can also be sought from colleagues in One Call, the Local Authority's single point of access on 01670 536400 or from the School's Safeguarding Team on 07976850562.

The governing body:

Ensures that the school:

- The governing body of the school will ensure that all staff have read the appropriate sections of this guidance (Part 1 and Annex B or Annex A) and will ensure the necessary mechanisms are in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their roles and responsibilities;
- appoints a DSL for child protection who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has undertaken training in inter-agency working, in addition to basic child protection training;
- ensures that the DSL role is explicit in the role holder's job description;
- has a child protection policy and procedures;
- has a staff behaviour policy/code of conduct, which is reviewed annually and made available publicly on the school's website or by other means;
- has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the head teacher and allegations against other children;
- follows safer recruitment procedures that include statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children and disqualification by association regulations;
- develops a training strategy that ensures all staff, including the head teacher, receive information about the school's safeguarding arrangements, staff behaviour policy or code of conduct and the role of the DSL on induction, and appropriate child protection training, which is updated at least annually and will receive regular updates. The DSL receives face to face refresher training at two-yearly intervals and accesses an annual update in line with the Local Safeguarding Board requirements;
- ensures that all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers are provided with the school's child protection policy and staff behaviour policy;
- ensures that the school contributes to early help arrangements and inter agency working and plans;
- provides a coordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified;
- considers how pupils may be taught about safeguarding, including online as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

The governing body nominates a member (normally the chair) to be responsible for liaising with the local authority designated officer and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the head teacher.

It is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure that the school's safeguarding, recruitment and managing allegations procedures take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority, NCASP and national guidance.

An annual audit (s175) will be submitted, annually, to the local authority, including an action plan. Any weaknesses will be rectified without delay.

The head teacher:

- ensures that the safeguarding and 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;
- school leaders and governors ensure that the child's wishes are taken into account when determining action to be taken or services to be provided;
- contacts the LADO immediately an allegation is made against a member of staff, seeking advice and then works with the LADO to follow the advice received;
- 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 an active 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 school's safeguarding and child protection policy, staff behaviour policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, physical contact, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, extremism, e-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 school and NCASP procedures;
- referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the DSL, or, if necessary, directly to police or children's social care;
- following the school's rules about relationships with pupils and communication with pupils, including on social media.

Abuse of position of trust

All school 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 school staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that pupil is over the age of consent.

The school's Staff Behaviour Policy/Code of Conduct sets out the expectations of the staff and is signed by and available to all staff members.

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 a 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:

- displaying early signs of abuse and/or neglect;
- looked after or returned home after a period of care;
- disabled or have special educational needs;
- young carers;
- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental health needs or misusing substances themselves;
- asylum seekers;
- living away from home or in temporary accommodation;
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying;
- 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 or being radicalised;
- showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups;
- frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation (including County Lines);
- children who are absent from education;
- privately fostered;
- It is also worth noting that The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 came into force in February 2023 means that 16 and 17 year olds will no longer be allowed to marry or enter a civil partnership, even if they have parental consent. Any concerns that students may be getting married should be referred to the DSL.

Children can be at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, and radicalisation. This is sometimes referred to as contextual safeguarding

Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBT)

The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.

Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. At Seghill First School, we endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced by providing a safe space for them to speak to by providing a safe space for them to share their worries with an adult that they trust.

This updated list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive.

Helping children to keep themselves safe

We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult helps prevention. We will therefore raise awareness of child protection issues and equip children with the skills to keep them safe, this will include activities to improve their resilience. Children are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.

The school will therefore:

- establish and maintain an environment and positive ethos where children feel secure, supported and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to, can learn, develop and feel valued.
- ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- include in the curriculum, activities and opportunities for PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Education) which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse, develop resilience and that they know to whom to turn for help. The curriculum covers-
 - health and well-being, relationships and living in the wider world.
 - The computing curriculum can be found on our school website. Every school year starts with a unit on teaching e-safety.
 - The RSE policy can be found on our school website.
- Children are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it. Seghill First School is a listening school, and all children and young people are encouraged to speak to a member of staff when they are worried about any issues.
- Provide 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;
- 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;
- where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a pupil, ensure that lines of communication are maintained;
- following the procedures laid down in our child protection, whistleblowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures;
- cooperating fully with relevant statutory agencies;
- providing access to supervision for those staff dealing with child protection issues.

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. Complaints are

managed by senior staff, the headteacher and governors. An explanation of the complaints procedure is available on the school's website, on the staff shared drive and in paper copy in the staffroom.

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

Complaints which escalate into a child protection concern will automatically be managed under the school'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 is available on the school's website, on the staff shared drive and in paper copy in the staffroom, it *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 teacher. Complaints about the head teacher should be reported to the chair of governors.

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

Allegations or concerns about an adult working in the school whether as a teacher, supply teacher, other staff, volunteers or contractors

At Seghill First School, we recognise the possibility that adults working in the school may harm children, including governors, volunteers, supply teachers and agency staff. Any concerns about the conduct of other adults in the school should be taken to the headteacher without delay; any concerns about the headteacher should go to the Chair of Governors who can be contacted by emailing Mrs Steph Hall, the chair of governors at admin@seghill.northumberland.sch.uk

Concerns may come from various sources, for example, a suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

The headteacher has to decide whether the concern is an allegation or low-level concern (see Appendix I for further information re low level concerns).

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 school 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, 2023)* and in the school's Managing Allegations Policy and Procedures.

Staff, parents and governors 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 school, 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 governors will receive a mandatory briefing during their induction, which includes the school's child protection and safeguarding policy, behaviour policy, staff behaviour policy, reporting and recording arrangements, and details for the DSL.

All staff, including the head teacher (unless the head teacher is the DSL) and governors will receive training that is regularly updated. The NCASP recommends staff receive annual updates and a detailed programme (either online or face to face) at least every three years.

The DSL (and deputies) will receive annual safeguarding training, with subjects reflecting local and national priorities and including a refresher session on their roles and responsibilities every two years.

All staff sign to confirm they have received a copy of the child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff code of conduct and have read *Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part 1 and Annex B)*

Governor Training

Members of the Governing Body of the school take part in mandatory safeguarding training to ensure that they can 'assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective.' This training is regularly updated.

Supply staff and other visiting staff will be given the school's Visiting Staff Leaflet, which will be made available to them on their arrival.

Safer recruitment

Our school endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ safe staff by following the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)* and the school's Staff Recruitment procedures (available from the headteacher).

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

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

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

The school 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 (2023) Annex E.

Volunteers

Volunteers, including governors will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the school 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.

Supervised volunteers

Volunteers who work only in a supervised capacity and are not in regulated activity will undergo the safe recruitment checks appropriate to their role, in accordance with the school's risk assessment process and statutory guidance.

Contractors

The school checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks and barred list checks where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity.

Site security

Visitors to the school, 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 school's safeguarding and health and safety regulations to ensure children in school are kept safe. The head teacher will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitors should be escorted or supervised while on site.

Extended School, out of school providers 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 school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures apply. When we host out-of-school providers on the premises it should be noted that whilst the provider is responsible for their own safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, the school may refer any concerns they have about the provider to the local authority. The school uses [the DfE Keeping-children-safe-in-out-of-school-settings-code-of-practice](#) as best practice guidance.

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 parental consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications);
- 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.

E-Safety

Our pupils increasingly use electronic equipment on a daily basis to access the internet and share content and images via social networking sites including 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 school's **e-safety policy**, available on the school website, explains how we try to keep pupils safe in school and protect and educate pupils in the safe use of technology. This includes reference to the four C's – content; contact; conduct and commerce at relevant, age-appropriate opportunities in the curriculum. 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 child protection procedures.

Rules for students on site usage in school should be laid out here, including reference to acceptable use policy/procedures and how records of signed procedures are saved. You may also wish to state where the e-safety policy can be found and how it can be accessed and what advice you make available to parents).

All staff receive e-safety training and the school's e-safety coordinator is Mrs Sarah Kembrey.

The school considers e-safety as a priority and included in this is how we manage pupils' use of their own electronic devices on the school site, and in particular mobile phones. When pupils use the school's network to access the internet, they are protected from inappropriate content by our filtering and monitoring systems, which are regularly reviewed for their effectiveness.

- Filtering refers to the technology preventing access to harmful or inappropriate content, whilst monitoring refers to the practical steps staff take to ensure harmful or inappropriate access is not made. Monitoring can include-
 - Physical monitoring
 - Live software monitoring
 - Monitoring user logs
 - Monitoring individual devices
- We make sure that any school devices used away from the school site are also subject to filtering and monitoring procedures.
- Each year (at least) our designated safeguarding lead, along with our IT team and a governor, review our filtering and monitoring procedures to ensure that they effectively prevent access to harmful or inappropriate content. They also ensure that the systems we have in place to report any difficulties with the system are understood by all staff and reports are effectively managed.
- All our staff undertake training to understand the risks of poor filtering and monitoring, and know how to share their concerns
- All our staff have taken part in annual cybersecurity training

However, many pupils are able to access the internet using their own data plan. To minimise inappropriate use, we as a school we discourage the use of personal mobile phones. When Year 4 pupils are allowed to walk home on their own in the summer term, all mobile phones must be handed to and collected from the class teacher.

The school complies with the guidance as set out in

Staff/pupil relationships

The school 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. Further details can be found in the staff code of conduct.

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

The four types of abuse are physical, sexual, emotional and neglect.

Details of the definitions of the 4 types of abuse are included as Appendix A

Detailed below are a number of specific categories where there is evidence of increased vulnerability, and all school staff understand the need to be particularly vigilant, taking advice from the DSL if they believe they identify a child who may need extra support or referred to an external agency.

- **Children Who Are Absent from Education**

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important the school or college's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about others safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay.

We will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not at school. This means we need to have a least two up to date contacts numbers for parents/carers. Parents should remember to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change.

In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) the school has:

1. Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
2. Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions).

3. Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
4. Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll when they:
 - a. leave school to be home educated
 - b. move away from the school's location
 - c. remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
 - d. are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards); or
 - e. are permanently excluded

We will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school, but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.

When a pupil leaves the school, we will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date.

The school's behaviour and attendance lead will submit a monthly return to the LA, indicating children missing education and the DSL must review this submission before it is sent to ensure they are aware of any concerns or can add additional information.

The school procedures reflect the latest DfE guidance

[Working-together-to-improve-school-attendance](#) and [Children-missing-education guidance](#)

The LA guidance is available on the Virtual School web page

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Looked-after/Virtual.aspx#childrennotinschool>

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their child protection policy reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- 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

- **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 policy/procedures on joining the school and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in RHSE education. If the bullying is particularly serious, or procedures implemented to address the bullying are deemed to be ineffective, the head teacher and the DSL will consider implementing child protection procedures.

- **Looked After Children and Previously Looked After children**

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school 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 teacher.

- **Children with sexually harmful behaviour (please also refer to Appendix E)**

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school'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.

The management of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the school will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school 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**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

The school includes the risks of sexual exploitation in the RHSE 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.

[Child Sexual Exploitation \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)

- **Criminal Exploitation of Children**

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity and includes drug networks or gangs grooming and exploiting children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns.

See Appendix A for further details

[Gang Activity, Youth Violence and Criminal Exploitation Affecting Children \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)

- **Female Genital Mutilation**

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 Appendix A for further details

[Female Genital Mutilation \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)

- **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.

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 Appendix A for further details

[Forced Marriage \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)

- **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. Nationally, Islamic extremism is the most widely publicised form however schools should also remain alert to the risk of radicalisation into white supremacy and extreme right wing factions. 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).

[Prevent - Safeguarding Children and Young People against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380595/SMSC_Guidance_Maintained_Schools.pdf

See Appendix A for further details.

- **Private fostering arrangements**

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative care 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.

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.

When a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement, they will raise this with the DSL and the school should notify the local authority of the circumstances.

- **Child on Child Abuse**

Staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves as child-on-child abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), physical abuse, sexual violence, gender-based violence, initiation- type violence and rituals and sending nude images. Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or part of growing up. Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse and this must always be considered when cases are reviewed. This school maintains a zero-tolerance approach to any forms of sexual violence or sexual harassment. At our school we believe that all children have the right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm from adults and other children. We recognise that some students will negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's behaviour policy.

Occasionally, allegations may be made against students by others in the school which are of a safeguarding nature. This could include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation and also include girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation, some of the following features will be found –

- the allegation is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger or more vulnerable pupil;
- is of a serious nature, including a criminal offence;
- raises risk factors for other pupils in school;
- indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student;
- indicates that young people outside the school may have been affected by this behaviour.

To support young people in this situation we will follow our usual safeguarding procedures ensuring all information is recorded and reported to the DSL, with reference being made to NCASP guidance on abuse by children and young people (Plus see Annex E).

[Child Sexual Exploitation \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)

In cases of 'sexting' we will adhere to the guidance given to schools and colleges by the DfE - Sharing Nudes and Semi Nudes: how to respond to an incident, published December 2020.

[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

- **Domestic Violence**

Our school is fully engaged in Operation Encompass and we recognise the importance of all staff having a basic understanding in relation to domestic violence and the impact it can have on children. The school notifies all parents that we are partners with the LA and police in relation to Operation Encompass and new staff receive a briefing as part of their induction.

Staff understand that violence perpetrated by a child on their parent (Child to Parent Violence and Abuse CPVA (Child to Parent Violence and Abuse)) is also a form of domestic violence and as such will seek advice from the DSL when they are made aware of such incidents

See Appendix 1

[Domestic Violence and Abuse \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)

Mental Health

All staff in Seghill First School are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

School staff are not expected, or trained, to diagnose mental health conditions or issues, but may notice behaviours that may be of concern.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

The school's Senior Mental Health Lead is Miss Tracey Chappell. She can be contacted-

tracey.chappell@seghill.northumberland.sch.uk

0191 2370419 or 07785 180484

Contextual Safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside the school or college. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Children's social care assessments should consider such factors so it is important that schools and colleges provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse. See Appendix A for additional information regarding contextual safeguarding.

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.

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 acting 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, 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 written record using the record of concern sheet;
- 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, or their patterns of attendance may have altered. 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 concern form *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.

Concerns which do not meet the threshold for child protection intervention will be managed through the Early Help process. Relevant **Early Help Support Request forms can be found here:**

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Family/Support.aspx#> **HYPERLINK**

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 does the pupil’s mother think about all this;
- at an appropriate time tell the pupil that to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on and explain to whom and why;
- 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 senior person; 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.

Sexual Violence or Sexual harassment

Considering confidentiality and anonymity

This school recognises that in cases related to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment there may be situations where the young person asks the school not to tell anyone about the incident and all staff are aware of their duty to report concerns to the DSL.

Risk Assessments

Report of sexual violence or sexual harassment will include the time and location of the incident and subsequent risk assessments will include any actions required to make the location safer.

Impact on any siblings

The school recognises the importance of understanding intra-familial harms and will identify any necessary support for siblings following incidents of sexual violence or sexual harassment.

Notifying parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively, and the DSL will contact the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure. However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care.

Referral to children's social care

- **The DSL will make a referral to children's social care** 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 a referral is being made, unless doing so would increase the risk to the child.
- Any member of staff may make a direct referral to children's social care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child.
- The DSL should keep relevant staff informed about actions taken, they do not need to share all information, but staff must be confident their concerns have been actioned

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 DSL, head teacher or chair of governors (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

However, following several cases where senior leaders in school had failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)* 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 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, including Operation Encompass and Operation Endeavour notifications will be stored separately from the pupil’s school file and the school 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 school 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 teacher or DSL.

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 school’s confidentiality and information-sharing policy is available to parents and pupils on request, and is available on the shared drive.

The child’s wishes.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, governing bodies, proprietors and school or college leaders should ensure the child’s wishes and feelings are considered when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place for children to express their views and give feedback. All systems and processes should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

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 (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) if:

- the situation is an emergency and the DSL, their deputy, the head teacher and the chair of governors 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.

	name	designation	Last trained
Our designated safeguarding lead who has responsibility for Child Protection issues	Tracey Chappell	Headteacher	December 2022
Deputising arrangements	Anna Bell	Deputy headteacher	December 2022
Lead governor for Safeguarding	Marie-Anne Dowson	Lead governor for Safeguarding	December 2022
Our E-Safety Coordinator	Sarah Kembrey	E-Safety Coordinator	
Safer Recruitment and Selection face to face training	Tracey Chappell	Headteacher	March 2023
Safer Recruitment and Selection face to face training	Anna Bell	Deputy headteacher	March 2023

Document Record

Version	Reason for Amendments/Update/Review	Date of Adoption by Seghill First School	Date of next review
1.0	New policy and procedure provided by NCC	14.11.2023	14.11.2024

APPENDICES	
A	Definitions of Abuse and Other Harmful Behaviour
B	LA and NCASP contacts
C	School Paperwork for Recording & Reporting Concerns
D	Raising Safeguarding Concerns about a Child – this is the generic flowchart and schools may choose not to include this, having outlined their own procedures in Appendix C
E	Dealing with Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
F	Standards for Effective Child Protection Practice in Schools
G	Frequently asked questions
H	E-Safety: Children Exposed to Abuse through the Digital Media
I	Dealing with Allegations Against People Who Work with Children

APPENDIX A Definitions of Abuse and Other Harmful Behaviour

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 (FI).

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 as far 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

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 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.

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 DSL.

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.

Additional examples of abuse are outlined below, with details provided in Appendix B of KCSiE (Keeping Children Safe in Education) 2023

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

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

Indicators of child sexual exploitation may include:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones, etc. without plausible explanation;
- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks;

- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college, or work;
- Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late;
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls;
- Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections;
- Evidence of/suspicious of physical or sexual assault;
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups;
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers);
- Frequenting areas known for sex work;
- Concerning use of the Internet or other social media;
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours; and
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

Potential vulnerabilities include:

Although the following vulnerabilities increase the risk of child sexual exploitation, it must be remembered that not all children with these indicators will be exploited. Child sexual exploitation can occur without any of these issues.

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse;
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic violence or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example);
- Recent bereavement or loss;
- Social isolation or social difficulties;
- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality;
- Economic vulnerability;
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status;
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited;
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work;
- Having a physical or learning disability;
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories); and
- Sexual identity.

Child criminal exploitation: 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 and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market, and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered. Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years;
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Domestic Abuse

In April 2022, the Domestic Abuse Act 2022 received Royal Assent and introduced a statutory definition for the first time. Definition:

The Domestic Abuse Act 2022 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

- (a) physical or sexual abuse;
- (b) violent or threatening behaviour;
- (c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
- (d) economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services); and
- (e) psychological, emotional, or other abuse.

People are 'personally connected' when they are or have been married to each other or civil partners; or have agreed to marry or become civil partners. If the two people have been in an intimate relationship with each other, have shared parental responsibility for the same child, or they are relatives.

The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person.

(The definition can be found here:

["https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/part/1/enacted"/17/part/1/enacted\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/part/1/enacted)

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

Human Trafficking

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking and ensuring they receive appropriate care. A trafficking case may involve a range of agencies such as the police, local authorities, and charities and the NRM makes it easier for these agencies to work together. If you think a child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999. If you receive information on a potential trafficker or think a child is a victim of trafficking:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modern-slavery-how-to-identify-and-support-victims>

Honour Based Abuse

So-called 'honour-based' violence (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubt, staff should speak to the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead). Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA

The national charity [Karma Nirvana](#) provides a range of resources and advice relating to HBA

Female genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is illegal in the UK.

FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old; however, it is believed that the majority of cases happen between the ages of 5 and 8.

Risk factors for FGM include:

- low level of integration into UK society
- mother or a sister who has undergone FGM
- girls who are withdrawn from PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Education)
- a visiting female elder from the country of origin
- being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin
- talk about a 'special' procedure to become a woman

Symptoms of FGM

FGM may be likely if there is a visiting female elder, there is talk of a special procedure or celebration to become a woman, or parents wish to take their daughter out-of-school to visit an 'at-risk' country (especially before the summer holidays), or parents who wish to withdraw their children from learning about FGM. Staff should not assume that FGM only happens outside the UK.

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:

- difficulty walking, sitting, or standing and may even look uncomfortable.
- spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating.
- spending lengthy periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems.
- frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems.
- prolonged or repeated absences from school or college, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (for example, withdrawal or depression) on the girl's return
- reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations.
- confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.
- talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023), paragraph 44 says 'whilst **all** staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific **legal duty on teachers**. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police'.

What is often less well-known is what a teacher should do next to make a report.

Below is a brief summary and must be read in conjunction with the mandatory reporting guidance. (See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information>)

The mandatory reporting procedures say: 'It is recommended that you make a report orally by calling 101, the single non-emergency number.' And 'where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm, professionals should report the case immediately to police, including dialling 999 if appropriate'.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A

lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play a key role in safeguarding children from forced marriage. School and college staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fm@fco.gov.uk and more information can be accessed using the following link

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/322307/HMG_MULTI_AGENCY_PRACTICE_GUIDELINES_v1_180614_FINAL.pdf

Recognising Extremism

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- showing sympathy for extremist causes
- glorifying violence, especially towards other faiths or cultures
- making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school
- evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- advocating messages like illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- out of character changes in dress, behaviour, and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes, and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with groups may not be apparent.)
- secretive behaviour
- online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race, or sexuality
- graffiti, artwork or writing that displays extremist themes
- attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views
- advocating violence towards others

Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual Safeguarding has been developed by Carlene Firmin at the University of Bedfordshire over the past six years to inform policy and practice approaches to safeguarding adolescents. 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.

Therefore, children's social care practitioners need 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. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.

For more information check out the Contextual Safeguarding Network

<https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/>

APPENDIX B Local Authority & NCASP (Northumberland Children and Adults Safeguarding Partnership) contacts

Advice Area	Contact
For advice on making a referral or to make a referral for Children's Social Care or Early Help	<p>OneCall: 01670 536400 Please note you may call to raise/discuss your initial concerns; however, they must then be submitted in writing. If you are submitting a referral, please use the link below Forms (northumberland.gov.uk)</p>
For further discussion about an open case or advice on the operation of child protection/safeguarding procedures of a specific case	If known, contact the allocated social worker or early help worker or OneCall 01670 536400
For generic advice on the operation of child protection/safeguarding procedures	Justine Clephane - 07879 874168 Vicky Kinneavy - 07966 325300 Carol Leckie - 07584313178
Allegations against people working with children	<p>Call: 07500 606174 Email address - LADO@northumberland.gov.uk</p> <p>The Northumberland LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) is Louise Prudhoe, but please use the generic contact information to ensure you get a response The referral form can be accessed here</p>
Queries in relation to the model CP (Child Protection) policy for schools or other related guidance	Carol Leckie - 07584313178
HR (Human Resources) advice for schools	SchoolsHR@northumberland.gov.uk
MAPPA – Risk Management re individuals who may pose a risk to children	Sharron Pearson Senior Manager Specialist Services 07966323954 Sharron.Pearson@northumberland.gov.uk
<p>MARAC This is the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference, a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases</p>	<p>Sarah Wintringham, Principal Education Welfare Officer 07584273772 sarah.wintringham@northumberland.gov.uk</p> <p>Jenny Mollon, Lead Education Welfare Officer 07592272944 Jenny.mollon@northumberland.gov.uk</p>

Advice Area	Contact
Advice re Prevent or Prevent Referrals	Referral Form northumberland-prevent-referral-form-updated-July-2022.docx (live.com)
Attendance & Elective Home Education	Sarah Wintringham, Principal Education Welfare Officer 07584273772 sarah.wintringham@northumberland.gov.uk
Children Missing Education	Sarah Wintringham, Principal Education Welfare Officer 07584273772 sarah.wintringham@northumberland.gov.uk Dawn Westerby, Lead Education Welfare Officer 07795450751 dawn.westerby@northumberland.gov.uk
Education Support for Looked After Children	Tara Prescott, Deputy Virtual School Head Teacher Tara.Prescott@northumberland.gov.uk
Early Help	Emma Walker, Early Help Team Manager Emma.Walker@northumberland.gov.uk Or Emma Foote, Early Help Education Team Emma.foote@northumberland.gov.uk
CPVA (Child to Parent Violence and Abuse)	Emma Walker, Early Help Team Manager Emma.Walker@northumberland.gov.uk
Monitoring/Quality Assurance re operation of schools safeguarding arrangements	Jane Walker: Jane.Walker@northumberland.gov.uk Carol Leckie: Carol.Leckie@northumberland.gov.uk Dorothy Chambers: dorothy.chambers@northumberland.gov.uk
NCASP Business Managers	Children's - Saira Park: saira.park@northumberland.gov.uk Adult's – Emma Beniams: emma.beniams@northumberland.gov.uk

Appendix C - School Paperwork for recording concerns

Seghill First School record of concern raised			
Part 1- to be completed by the member of staff			
Name of child		Class	
What did you see or hear- describe in detail			
What were you told- describe in detail			
Where was the child when this happened- describe in detail			
Did you tell the child about your concern?	yes	No	
What explanation did the child give- write down what they said using their words			
Did you tell the parent/carer about your concern?	yes	no	
What explanation did the parent/carer give- write down what they said using their words			
Do these two explanations concur?	yes	no	some variation
Date this was recorded		Date this form was completed	
Date this form was passed to the DSL			
Staff name			

Seghill First School record of concern raised	
Part 2- to be completed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead	
Date this form was passed to the DSL	
Details of further action taken- please tick and add detail	
Noted and filed with no further action	Noted and discussed with the child's parent/carer then filed with no further action- include names, dates and times
Noted and discussed with the child's parent/carer then filed with further action taken- include names, dates, times and outcomes	Noted and reported as a concern to Children Services- include names, dates, times and outcomes
Noted and reported as a concern to the school nurse-include names, dates, times and outcomes	Final outcome
Records of meetings, telephone calls and emails must be attached to this sheet.	
Date this was closed	
Date this was placed in the child's safeguarding file	
Signed	

APPENDIX E Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

In line with the latest guidance the Governing bodies and proprietors will ensure that the school has

- procedures to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse;
- the systems in place (which are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible) for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously;
- how allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with;
- clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any other children affected by child-on-child abuse will be supported;
- a recognition 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;

Child on Child abuse is also clearly referenced in the school's Behaviour policy.

APPENDIX F Standards for effective child protection practice in schools

A school should measure its standards regarding safeguarding against the expectations of the Ofsted Framework Ofsted handbooks and frameworks - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsted-handbooks-and-frameworks>

and the arrangements of the Northumberland Children's and Adults Safeguarding Partnership

<https://www.proceduresonline.com/northumberlandcs/index.html>

In best practice, schools:

- operate safe recruitment practices including ensuring appropriate DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) and reference checks are undertaken according to DfE (Department for Education) guidance on safer recruitment, including the maintenance of a single central register of all staff (including volunteers) with DBS numbers and training record;
- have an ethos in which children feel secure, their viewpoints are valued, and they are encouraged to talk and are listened to;
- provide suitable support and guidance so that pupils have a range of appropriate adults to whom they can turn if they are worried or in difficulty;
- work with parents to build an understanding of the school's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children and a recognition that this may occasionally require children to be referred to investigative agencies as a constructive and helpful measure;
- are vigilant in cases of suspected child abuse, recognising the signs and indicators, have clear procedures whereby teachers report such cases to senior staff and are aware of local procedures so that information is effectively passed on to the relevant professionals;
- monitor children who have been identified as at risk, keeping, *in a secure place*, clear records of pupils' progress, maintaining sound policies on confidentiality, providing information to other professionals, submitting reports to case conferences, and attending case conferences;
- provide and support child protection updates regularly to school staff and to designated teachers every two years to ensure their skills and expertise are up to date;
- contribute to an inter-agency approach to child protection by developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies;
- use the curriculum to raise pupils' awareness and build confidence so that pupils have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others, considering sex and relationships guidance. [OOB]
- provide clear policy statements for parents, staff and children and young people on this and on both positive behaviour policies and the school's approach to bullying;
- have a clear understanding of the various types of bullying - physical, verbal, and indirect, and act promptly and firmly to combat it, making sure that pupils are aware of the school's position on this issue and who they can contact for support;
- take particular care that pupils with additional needs in mainstream and special schools, who may be especially vulnerable to abuse, are supported effectively with particular attention paid to ensuring that those with communication difficulties are supported to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate communicative skills;
- have a clear policy about the handling of allegations of abuse by members of staff, ensuring that all staff are fully aware of the procedures and that they are always followed correctly, using the guidance
- have a written whole school policy, produced, owned, and regularly reviewed by schools' staff and which clearly outlines the school's position and positive action in respect of the standards.

Appendix G - Frequently Asked Questions

What do I do if I hear or see something that worries me?

- *Report to the designated safeguarding lead or head teacher. Please remember all reports must be recorded, reporting verbally is not enough*
- *If that is not possible, telephone Children's Services (OneCall 01670 536400) as quickly as possible. (In an emergency call 999 for the police)*

What are my responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection?

- **To know the name of your designated safeguarding lead and who to contact if they are not available**
- **To respond** appropriately to a child and ensure the child/young person knows you are taking their concerns seriously
- **To report** to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or directly to Social Care if that is not possible
- **To record** your concerns, using your school's agreed paperwork
- **Do not do nothing**

Can I go to find someone else to listen?

- *No! You should never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events; however, you may want to have a colleague with you who is recording the child's disclosure while you actively listen, giving them 100% of your attention*

Can I promise to keep a secret?

- *No! The information becomes your responsibility to share to protect. As an adult, you have a duty of care towards a child or young person*

Can I ask the child questions?

- *You should never ask probing questions*
- *However, you **can** ask a child to repeat a statement or for clarification*
- *Do not make judgements or say anything about the alleged abuser; it may be construed as contriving responses.*

Do I need to write down what was said?

- **Yes**, *as soon as possible, exactly what was said. Use your school's agreed paperwork and make sure you date and sign the record*
- *Make sure you record facts and not opinions*

Appendix H - E-safety Social Media Guidance

Northumberland Children's and Adults Safeguarding Partnership Procedures can be found at the following link - [E-Safety: Children Exposed to Abuse through the Digital Media \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)

Appendix I Dealing with allegations against people who work with children

Allegations or concerns about an adult working in the school whether as a teacher, supply teacher, other staff, volunteers, or contractors.

At Seghill First School, we recognise the possibility that adults working in the school may harm children, including governors, volunteers, supply teachers and agency staff. Any concerns about the conduct of other adults in the school should be taken to the headteacher without delay; any concerns about the headteacher should go to the Chair of Governors who can be contacted by emailing Mrs Steph Hall via admin@seghill.northumberland.sch.uk

Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff, supply teachers, volunteers or contractors should be reported to the headteacher.

Concerns may come from various sources, for example, a suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent, or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or because of vetting checks undertaken. The headteacher/principal must decide whether the concern is an allegation or low-level concern. The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (see below).

Allegations

It is an allegation if the person* has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (also includes behaviour outside the school).

(*Person could be anyone working in the school or a college that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers, volunteers, and contractors.)

Allegations should be reported to the LADO 'without delay'.

Before contacting the LADO, schools and colleges should conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help them determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation.

LADO's role is not to investigate the allegation, but to ensure that an appropriate investigation is carried out, whether that is by the police, children's social care, the school or college, or a combination of these.

Low-level Concerns

Concerns may be graded Low-level if the concern does not meet the criteria for an allegation; and the person* has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work. Example behaviours include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;

- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, or offensive language.

Schools should ensure that their Code of Conduct is clear about what low-level concerns are and why it is important that such concerns are shared.

If the concern has been raised via a third party, the headteacher/principal should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

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

Reports about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Staff should be encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

Low-level concerns should be recorded in writing, including:

- name* of individual sharing their concerns
- details of the concern
- context in which the concern arose
- action taken.

(* if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible)

Records must be kept confidential, held securely, and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018. Schools and colleges should decide how long they retain such information, but it is recommended that it is kept at least until the individual leaves their employment.

Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

If a concerning pattern of behaviour is identified and now meets the criteria for an allegation, then the matter should be referred to the LADO.

The records' review might identify that there are wider cultural issues within the school or college that enabled the behaviour to occur. This might mean that policies or processes could be revised, or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

What is a Local Authority Designated Officer or LADO?

The role of LADO was initially set out in the HM Government guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 and continues in Working Together 2018.

The LADO works within Children's Services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child

- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

This role applies to paid, unpaid, volunteer, casual, agency and self-employed workers and all adults outside the school workforce. They capture concerns, allegations, or offences; this can include concerns about their own personal life, e.g., incidents of domestic violence or child protection concerns relating to their own family.

If there is an allegation against the Headteacher then concerns should be reported directly to the Chair of Governors and LADO.

The LADO is involved from the initial phase of the allegation through to the conclusion of the case. They will provide advice, guidance and help to determine whether the allegation sits within the scope of the procedures. **Schools should seek advice from the LADO as soon as an allegation is made.**

The LADO coordinates information-sharing with the right people and will also monitor and track any investigation, with the aim to resolve it as quickly as possible – the LADO for Northumberland is **Louise Prudhoe**

lado@northumberland.gov.uk 01670 623979

For safeguarding information for professionals, including LADO contact details, please follow this link: [lado-information-and-flowchart.pdf \(proceduresonline.com\)](#)

To make a referral use this form
[LADO Agency Referral Form \(office.com\)](#)