



# MARY ELLIOT ACADEMY

## Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Version: **3**

Ratified by the Board of Trustees

Signed by the (Board of Trustees):

**December 2025**

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**December 2026**

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### Part One – Our Academy

This section outlines the understanding of the community that we serve, and our presenting needs for children, young people and their families.

It defines how the safeguarding and child protection policy aligns to other policy and procedures within our academy, and introduces key government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

This section provides details of all key safeguarding staff and an overview of some of the roles and responsibilities of those staff.

It provides an overview of how our curriculum ensures that the children and young people in our academy are taught about safeguarding and how we promote an open culture and ethos where children and staff can share concerns safely and their voices are heard.

All parts of this policy are underpinned by local and national guidance, law and procedure and this is defined within part one.

**Part Two – Taking Action**

This part explores what safeguarding is; and everyone's responsibility for safeguarding and includes the updated Families First processes.

It explains the expectations for all staff if they have a concern about a child or young person. Concerns regarding colleague's behaviour is covered in part five of the policy.

Professional curiosity is a key factor in this part and provides an emphasis on communicating with both the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Children's Services, plus an overview of sharing information to safeguard children and young people.

This part explains the requirements for recording safeguarding concerns in academy, and an overview of Walsall Right Help, Right Time continuum of need.

The 6 "R"s are at the end of this part of the policy.

**Part Three – Defining Abuse**

This part explains what constitutes abuse/harm under the four categories of abuse; physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.

Additionally it defines further specific risks and should be read alongside part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

Part four of the policy makes more specific reference to preventing and responding to incidents of child on child abuse.

**Part Four – Sexual Violence And Sexual Harassment Child On Child**

This part explains our commitment from prevention to responses and procedures for managing child on child sexual abuse.

The roles of police and Children's Services is explained, and how we will support both victims and alleged/convicted perpetrators of abuse.

A Harmful Sexual Behaviour toolkit is included to ensure the Right Support is offered at the Right Time.

## **Part Five – Safer Recruitment Practice And Managing Allegations Against Staff**

This part explains our safer recruitment procedures to support our safer culture in academy.

It provides examples of how our academy deters and prevents people unsuitable to work with children from being recruited to work in our academy.

Allegations about concerns regarding members of staff including supply staff, volunteers and contractors are explained; also what our academy will do in response to whether the harm threshold is met; or not.

Whistleblowing is briefly explained, with reference to the Trust Whistleblowing Policy.

Appendix 1- The Seven Golden Rules for Sharing Information

Appendix 2 - Children in specific circumstances-national guidance links

Key Contacts

### **1. Part One – Our Academy**

- 1.1. Mary Elliot Academy is a special provision for students aged 11-18 with severe and profound learning difficulties.
- 1.2. The academy is divided into four teaching pathways:  
Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) – Venture Pathway  
Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) – Aspire Pathway  
Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) – Endeavour Pathway  
Post 16 – Consists of all three pathways
- 1.3. This enables students to be grouped in classes based principally on learning need and therefore appropriate teaching approach, although account is taken of each student's age, social and emotional need.
- 1.4. Qualified teachers and experienced support staff work alongside each other to form Department teams using a mix of class teaching, specialist subject teaching group and individual work.
- 1.5. Our academy is aware of and assesses the risks/issues in the wider community when considering the well-being and safety of our students. We are aware of indicators of abuse and neglect and understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the academy, inside and outside of home and online.

- 1.6. Our students are supported to understand our responsibility to keep them safe and we share a child and young person version of our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, which is supported by appropriate Communication symbols. It is vital that we ensure students wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.
- 1.7. All parts of this policy are underpinned by local and national guidance, law and procedure and this is defined within part one.
- 1.8. Our academy follows the child protection procedures as defined by Walsall Safeguarding Partnership (<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/walsall-safeguarding-partnership/> ) and the multi-agency threshold guidance, Walsall Right Help, Right Time - A Continuum of Need. We work with partners to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and visitors to our academy as safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Our belief is that "**it could happen here**" and "**we have the interest of the children**" as our priority.
- 1.9. We facilitate a whole academy approach to safeguarding meaning that we ensure safeguarding and child protection is at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. We know that ultimately, all systems, processes and policies should operate with the best interests of the student at their heart.
- 1.10. We welcome feedback from all stakeholders on this policy, including staff, parents/carers, pupils and safeguarding partners.
- 1.11. We strive for a culture where children can confidently report abuse, know their concerns will be treated seriously, and know they can safely express their views and give feedback.
- 1.12. Our belief that "it could happen here" for all aspects of safeguarding and bullying supports us to address any underlying bias in order to achieve equality for all children and adults within our academy.
- 1.13. We encourage students to respect the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. We ensure that partisan political views are not promoted in the teaching of any subject in our academy and where political issues are brought to the attention of the students; reasonably practicable steps are taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views to students.
- 1.14. It is vital that we ensure children's wishes, feelings and voice are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

- 1.15. We are aware that students 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. We know children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This does not prevent our staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they have concerns about a child. Our staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people in our school that helps facilitate communication.
- 1.16. In our academy we acknowledge the negative experiences and distressing life events associated to Covid 19 and this can still affect the mental health of our students and their parents, we are well prepared to offer the right help at the right time.
- 1.17. This policy is shared with parents and carers via the academy's website <https://mary-elliott.thrive.ac/>, via 'Class DoJo' (on-line messaging system for parents), and a hard copy is available from the academy.
- 1.18. Our children and young people understand our responsibility to keep them safe. We share a child/young person version of our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.
- 1.19. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 is statutory guidance and is understood and followed by:
- Our governing body
  - Our senior leadership team
  - All staff and volunteers
- 1.20. In our school staff, volunteers and visitors will:-
- Be familiar with and understand our Child Protection and Safeguarding policies
  - Be subject to Safer Recruitment processes and checks, whether they are new staff, supply staff, contractors, volunteers, etc (see part 5)
  - Be involved in the implementation of individual education programmes, child in need plans, child protection plans and early help assessments where necessary (see part 2)
  - Be alert to signs and indicators of abuse (see part 2)
  - Participate in reviews undertaken by Walsall Safeguarding Partnership as required

1.21. This policy will be read and referenced alongside other school and trust policies:

- Staff induction procedures
- Safer recruitment Policy
- Online safety Policy
- Remote Learning Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Intimate care policy
- Behaviour and/or Positive Relationships policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- SEND policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy
- Exclusion Policy
- Safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, supply staff, contractors and volunteers policy

1.22. All staff members, including agency and volunteers are made aware of the safeguarding systems in our academy and these are explained as part of staff induction.

1.23. New Staff and volunteer Induction includes:

- Explanation/overview of the safeguarding policy (inclusive of procedures to deal with child on child abuse)
- Home Visits Process
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Online safeguarding training – through The National College online platform and Local Authority Level 2 training
- Our behaviour and relationships policy for students
- Our staff code of conduct policy
- Explanation of the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (including the identity of all Lead's).
- Explanation/overview of the behaviour policy and tiered approach for learners and where the policy can be located

- Whistleblowing policy (Document)
  - Explanation of the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education (CME)
  - A copy of Part One (and Annex B if they work directly with children) of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- 1.24. Staff, volunteers and visitors will also:
- Be subject to Safer Recruitment processes and checks, whether they are new staff, supply staff, contractors, volunteers etc
  - Be involved in the implementation of individual education programmes, education health care plans, child in need plans, child protection plans and early help assessments where necessary
  - Be alert to signs and indicators of abuse
  - Participate in reviews undertaken by Walsall Safeguarding Partnership as required.
- 1.25. Our academy signing in system also has a Statement for Child Protection which all staff members, volunteers, agency staff and visitors are required to read. There is a visitor's leaflet available by the sign-in tablet. This includes information on the safeguarding team, and details of the processes to follow if requiring support or to raise a concern.
- 1.26. Safeguarding implications for our children's broad range of Special Educational Needs - Our academy provides education and care for students with Severe Learning Disabilities (SLD), Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD) and Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC). By the nature of their differing abilities and modes of cognition and communication, our students are inherently more vulnerable.
- 1.27. Our staff understand this and are given continuous practical and theoretical input that supports them in identifying concerns, and supporting students to communicate concerns where at all possible.
- 1.28. As we have students in our care that are legally adults, we have included references to Adult Safeguarding processes and advice, not just children's services.

1.29.

<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)</b>	Rachael Bowen
<b>Head Teacher</b>	Rebecca Davies
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	Abdullah Khalid
<b>Trust Safeguarding and Attendance Manager</b>	James Simoniti
<b>Safeguarding Governor</b>	Simon Osborne
<b>Family Liaison and Multi-Agency Coordinator/DDSL</b>	Jade Downen
<b>Deputy DSL</b>	Rebecca Davies
<b>Deputy DSL</b>	Lara Latham
<b>Deputy DSL</b>	Katie Rogers
<b>Deputy DSL</b>	Grace Murphy
<b>Special Educational Needs Coordinator</b>	Katie Rogers
<b>Single Point of Contact (Preventing Radicalisation) (SPOC)</b>	Rachael Bowen
<b>Looked After Children Designated Teacher</b>	Lara Latham
<b>Designated Lead for online Safety (responsible to DSL)</b>	Rachael Bowen
<b>Senior Lead for Mental Health</b>	Rachael Bowen

### **ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD**

The local governing body have appointed Rachael Bowen as the academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead as they are the appropriate **senior member** of staff with the authority to perform the role and form part of the academy's leadership team. The designated safeguarding lead takes **lead responsibility** for safeguarding, child protection and online safety.

- 1.30. The designated safeguarding lead or a deputy will always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns and in exceptional circumstances this could involve contact electronically, via Teams, Zoom or Skype. If in exceptional circumstances, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. You should consider speaking to a member of the senior

leadership team and/or take advice from local Children's Services. In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as soon as is practically possible.

1.31. Rachael Bowen has responsibilities as follows:-

- Refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority Children's Services as required
- Support staff who make referrals to local authority Children's Services
- Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required
- Support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme;
- Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required;
- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required
- Liaise with staff (especially pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT Technicians SENCO and Mental Health Lead) on matters of safety and safeguarding (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies;
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff
- Be aware of students who have a social worker
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues with teachers and academy leadership staff
- Liaise with the appropriate staff to inform them of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This includes being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult.
- Identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring, including delivering appropriate training to staff on this system.
- Oversee online filtering and monitoring systems and act on issues identified or raised and receive recommendations on how to meet them. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-technology-for-your-school>
- Monitor all aspects of filtering and monitoring systems. Ensuring they use an educational provider, it meets the risk profile of the academy

and they are aware that this is working effectively e.g. [Walsall Council Online monitoring service](#)

- Meet the DFE [filtering and monitoring technical standards](#)
- Consider meeting the [Cyber security standards for schools and colleges.GOV.UK](#). including undertaking Cyber security training for all staff, including governors, trustees to improve cyber resilience. [Cyber security training for school staff - NCSC.GOV.UK](#). and [Walsall Council Schools Cybersecurity support](#)
- [Generative artificial intelligence \(AI\) in education - GOV.UK](#)

**If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available you must refer your concerns to someone else who is named as a deputy for this role.**

**All staff are aware of the process for making referrals to Children's Services and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral. Further information is outlined within part two.**

- 1.32. The DSL will be supported in their role by the Trust Safeguarding and Attendance Manager. This support may include safeguarding supervision, discussion of challenging cases and discussion of strategic plans.

### **THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LOCAL GOVERING BODY AND PROPIETORS**

- 1.33. Our Local Governing Body (LGB) are the accountable body for ensuring the safety of the academy.
- 1.34. Our local governing body will ensure there are appropriate policies and procedures in place in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- 1.35. Our governing body will ensure that the academy has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness.
- 1.36. Our local governing body will ensure we have in place appropriate safeguarding responses to children who are absent from education, for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and/or exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.
- 1.37. Our local governing body will ensure that the academy contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance Working Together

to Safeguard Children 2023. Our academy will work with Children's Services, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans.

- 1.38. Our local governing body will ensure that our safeguarding arrangements take into account the processes and procedures of the local authority. This includes the requirement to undertake the Section 175/Section 157 audit of the Education Act 2002 which placed a duty on:-
  - The local governing bodies of schools to have arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in place
  - The Local Authority to monitor compliance of maintained schools
- 1.39. Our local governing body recognises the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis. All staff contribute towards safeguarding processes and must review and understand the child protection and safeguarding policy.
- 1.40. Our governing body considers where appropriate, how children are taught about safeguarding, including consent, appropriate and inappropriate sexual behaviour through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. This may include covering relevant issues through PHSE, RSE, SMSC, British Values, online safety, assemblies, approved visitors etc, that are adapted to meet our learners needs and level of understanding.
- 1.41. Our local governing body, Head Teacher and Thrive Education Partnership CEO will ensure there are procedures in place to handle allegations against head teachers, senior leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and all other support staff.
- 1.42. Our local governing body will ensure that all staff members complete safeguarding, child protection and online training at induction. This training will be regularly updated and will be in line with advice from Walsall Safeguarding Partnership. Our governing body will ensure that, as part of the requirement for staff to undergo regular updated safeguarding training, that safeguarding training for staff, including online safety training, is integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole academy safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning.
- 1.43. Our local governing body ensure that all governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at

induction. This training equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in our academy are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole academy approach to safeguarding. Their training will be regularly updated.

- 1.44. Thrive Education Partnership Trustees and Local Governing Body review its policies/procedures annually. If there is a need to update safeguarding policies to ensure they are kept up-to-date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and/or to include lessons learnt locally or nationally then academy leaders, our DSL and Trustees may update safeguarding policies more regularly.
- 1.45. Our local governing body is aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements specified on page 22/23 of our policy.
- 1.46. The nominated governor for safeguarding in our academy is responsible for liaising with the head teacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead over all matters regarding child protection issues. The role is strategic rather than operational – they will not be involved in concerns about individual students.
- 1.47. The Thrive Education Partnership Trust CEO, Richard Chapman will be responsible for liaising with the local authority and other partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Head Teacher or the Trust Central Team.

#### **THE ROLE OF DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR LOOKED AFTER AND PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

- 1.48. The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect. Our governing body will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep looked after children/children in care safe. A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all our staff will have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe.
- 1.49. The designated safeguarding lead ([Rachael Bowen](#)) will have details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child.
- 1.50. Our Designated Teacher ([Lara Latham](#)) is aware that the virtual school head manages pupil premium plus for looked after children. Our designated teacher works with the virtual school head to discuss how funding can be best used to support the progress of our looked after

children in school and meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan. Our designated teacher will also work with the virtual school head to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children and those in kinship care.

Our governing body has appointed a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after or previously looked after and ensure that this person has appropriate training. On commencement of sections 4 to 6 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, designated teachers will also have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales. [Guidance for Designated Teachers](#).

### CURRICULUM

- 1.51. Our governing body considers how children are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. This may include covering relevant issues through PHSE, RSE, SMSC, British Values, online safety, assemblies, approved visitors etc, that are adapted to meet our learners needs and level of understanding.
- 1.52. Our academy makes use of the DfE "one stop" page for teachers on GOV.UK, outlined within. [Teaching about relationships, sex and health](#). This includes teacher training modules on the RSHE topics and non-statutory implementation guidance. At Mary Elliot Academy we use the PSHE association's SEND framework to support our PSHE and RSE curriculum.
- 1.53. We are familiar with the following resources to help us plan and teach about safeguarding:
  - [teaching online safety in schools](#)
  - UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) guidance [Education for a connected world](#)
  - UKCIS guidance [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)
  - The UKCIS [external visitors guidance](#) to ensure the maximum impact of any online safety sessions delivered by external visitors;
  - National Crime Agency's CEOP education programme [ThinkuKnow](#)
  - [Harmful Online Challenges and Online Hoaxes](#) this includes advice on preparing for any online challenges and hoaxes, sharing information with parents and carers and where to get help and support.
- 1.54. All of the resources above are used and adapted to ensure that our students are able to access this information. Students are taught to

recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it. Due to the range of Special Educational Needs we cater for, this takes many different methods include resources available in symbol format.

- 1.55. We will provide opportunities for students to develop skills, concepts, attitudes and knowledge that promote their safety and well-being. Relevant issues will be addressed through the curriculum, for example self-esteem, emotional literacy, assertiveness, power, exploitation, sex and relationship education, consent, online safety, British Values, bullying and sharing nudes/semi-nudes, where appropriate.
- 1.56. Our policies address issues of power and potential harm, for example bullying, equal opportunities, physical handling, positive behaviour, online safety, SEND, disabilities and other vulnerabilities and are linked to ensure a whole academy approach. Our safeguarding policy cannot be separated from the general ethos of the academy, which will ensure that students are treated with respect and dignity, taught to treat each other with respect, feel safe, have a voice, and are listened to.

### TRAINING

- 1.57. All staff and volunteers will receive Safeguarding Children and Young People training. This level 2 training is delivered by the DSL through whole staff training and staff will then be required to complete the compulsory online training to secure learning as stated in 1.23, all staff and volunteers will receive Induction Training –
- 1.58. Our designated safeguarding lead and deputies, will attend training every two years; and in addition to formal training, their knowledge and skills will be refreshed at regular intervals, at least annually.
- 1.59. All of our other staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates as required, and at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.
- 1.60. Safer Recruitment training is available to all relevant staff and governors who are involved in the recruitment process (see part five). This is available through the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership, Walsall Council and through The National College online platform.
- 1.61. Walsall Safeguarding Partnership and Walsall Council offers training in Safeguarding Children and Young People, Child Protection, Safer Recruitment and other topics relating to safeguarding children. Staff training is not only crucial in protecting children and young people, but also makes them aware of how they can protect themselves against allegations. Further information about these courses can be accessed via the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership website at <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/walsall-safeguarding-partnership/>

### **THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK AND LEGISLATIVE DUTIES**

- 1.62. In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, our academy will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:
- The Children Act 1989
  - The Children Act 2004
  - Education Act 2002 (section 175/157)
  - Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Child Protection Procedures
  - The Education (Student Information) (England) Regulations 2005
  - Children and Social Work Act 2017
- 1.63. The Children Act 2004 places a statutory responsibility as follows:-  
Education and schools: - All people working in education and schools contribute to the safeguarding and promoting of children's welfare. All schools and further education institutions have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Consequently, staff in these establishments play an important part in safeguarding children from abuse and neglect by early identification of children who may be vulnerable or at risk of harm and by educating children, about managing risks and improving their resilience through the curriculum. All schools and further education institutions should create and maintain a safe environment for children and young people, and should be able to manage situations where there are child welfare concerns.

### **LOCAL AND NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 1.64. Our academy will fulfil our local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following documents:-
- [Keeping children safe in education 2025](#)
  - [Teaching online safety in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
  - [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
  - [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#)
  - [Welcome to the Walsall Children's Services Procedures Manual](#)
  - [Children's Procedures \(walsall.gov.uk\)](#)
  - [Walsall Safeguarding Partnership > Professionals & Volunteers > Procedures and Guidance > Adults Procedures](#)
  - [The Education Act 2002 s157/s175](#)

- [What to do if you're Worried a Child is being Abused March 2015](#)
- [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners - GOV.UK \(\[www.gov.uk\]\(http://www.gov.uk\)\)](#)
- [Education inspection framework](#) (until November 2025, where it will be replaced with the [new framework](#)).

## 2. Part Two – Taking Action

### **SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN**

- 2.1. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, always, what is in the best interests of the child.
- 2.2. No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.
- 2.3. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:-
  - Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
  - Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
  - Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
  - Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
  - Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- 2.4. Our staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating.
- 2.5. All our staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
- 2.6. We have a designated safeguarding lead (and trained deputies) who provide support to staff and volunteers to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as Children's Services.

- 2.7. We are trained and prepared to identify children who may benefit from support at the earliest point. Families First means we will work with children and families to provide support as early as possible, when an issue is identified at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.
- 2.8. Any staff member who has a concern about a child's welfare follows the referral processes. Our staff understand they may be required to support social workers and other agencies following any referral.
- 2.9. The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers, including head teachers, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

### DEALING WITH CONCERNS AND DISCLOSURES

- 2.10. All staff are trained and aware that:-
- A student may disclose something that has upset or harmed them
  - Someone else might report something that a child has told them, or that they believe that a student has been or is being harmed
  - A student might show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no explanation
  - A student's behaviour, including any observed changes to behaviour 'usual' for that student may suggest he or she is being abused
  - The behaviour or attitude of one of the workers towards a student may cause concern
  - A student demonstrating worrying behaviour towards other students may indicate abuse.
  - A student may display indicators of poor mental health
- 2.11. We know that being **professionally curious** is not simply about asking the question. It is about the language used, creating a trusting relationship, a safe space in which to disclose and giving time to children and young people so they do not feel pressured.
- 2.12. All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the academy, inside and outside of home, and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

- 2.13. All staff and volunteers are alert to the potential need for early help/referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for a student who:
- Is a young carer;
  - Has a mental health need
  - Is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups;
  - Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care;
  - Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
  - Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or exploitation;
  - Talking about or spreading misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories;
  - Has experienced multiple suspension, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit;
  - Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse;
  - Has returned home to their family from care;
  - Is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect;
  - Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
  - Is a privately fostered child;
  - Has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending.
- 2.14. All of our learners have additional needs and an Education, Health and Care Plan, meaning that they will already have some form of multi-agency input. This does not exclude them from receiving early help or additional support.
- 2.15. We are aware that to consult with our designated safeguarding lead does not mean a referral has been made. This decision is mainly the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead for child protection who will contact the appropriate agency as and when required. However, all staff are aware that they can and should make referrals/consult with Walsall MASH.
- 2.16. As all of our learners have additional needs, we are conscious that they often have very specific, individualised needs that might not always be understood by other professionals who work with the child less frequently. We therefore will always ensure that when we do seek multi-

agency support, the needs are clearly communicated. Where appropriate, the DSL will seek the views of the SENDCO to ensure that these needs are fully understood in a safeguarding context.

- 2.17. **Our staff know that if they are unhappy with the response received from our designated safeguarding all staff/volunteers have the right to contact Walsall Children's Services**
- 2.18. Our staff will always discuss concerns with parents/carers unless to do so would:
- place the child at risk of significant harm or further risk of significant harm.
  - place a vulnerable adult at risk of harm
  - compromise any enquiries that need to be undertaken by Children's Services or the police
- 2.19. Our academy will endeavour to ensure that parents understand the responsibilities placed on the academy and staff for safeguarding children.

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL STAFF LEAVE THE ACADEMY WITHOUT DISCUSSING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS WITH SOMEONE.**

Only a minority of children actively disclose abuse. In most child abuse is disclosed accidentally or through observation by an adult of a child's behaviour, words and physical appearance.

When a child does disclose abuse, this needs to be taken very seriously. It is important that any disclosure is dealt with appropriately, both for the wellbeing of the child and also to ensure that our actions do not jeopardise any legal action against the abuser.

**PROCEDURES FOR WHEN SOMEONE IS CONCERNED ABOUT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON INCLUDING FAMILIES FIRST**

- 2.20. When staff have concerns about a child or young person, they must record their concern on CPOMS as soon as possible.
- 2.21. Where agency staff have concerns they are to notify the class teacher who will notify the DSL who will meet with the agency member of staff.
- 2.22. Records should be based on fact, not opinion, and must be that staff member's own record – we should never make a record on behalf of another member of staff.

- 2.23. This record should include:
- a clear and comprehensive summary of your concern;
  - details of how the concern was followed up and resolved;
  - a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.
  - The rationale for the action taken including where a decision to refer, or not, to external agencies has been made.
- 2.24. If the concern needs urgent attention, for example there are concerns about the child going home that day, concerns may be reported verbally. However, these must **always** be followed up in writing on CPOMS.
- 2.25. The record will then be reviewed by a DSL or deputy. All concerns shared with the designated safeguarding lead will be considered alongside Walsall's Safeguarding Partnership '**Right Help, Right Time:** Multi Agency Guidance on the continuum of Need.'
- 2.26. Where a child is suffering, or likely to suffer from harm, a referral to the appropriate Children's Services will be made by a DSL or deputy without delay. See section 'Making a referral' for further details.
- 2.27. If you are in doubt about recording requirements, you should discuss this with the DSL (or deputy).
- 2.28. **"Where possible, share information with consent, and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. Under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 we may share information without consent if, in our judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk."**

### MAKING A REFERRAL

- 2.29. We will be asked to provide as much information as possible, such as the student's full name, date of birth, address, academy, GP, languages spoken, any disabilities the student may have, details of the parents, other siblings, chronology of previous concerns. If we do not have all these details, we will still make the call.
- 2.30. Staff will follow up the verbal referral in writing, within 24 hours. This will be done on a MARF (multi agency referral form). This can be downloaded from [Walsall Safeguarding Partnership website](#)

### Call the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Tel: 0300 555 2866 Monday–Thursday 8.45am–5.15pm, Friday 8.45am–4.45pm

Tel: 0300 555 2922 or 0300 555 2836 Emergency Response Team

### **Disabled Children and Young People Team (DCYP)**

A large number of students at Mary Elliot Academy are allocated to social workers and specialist family support workers in the DCYP team.

**Tel: 01922 652 860**

### **Adults Social Care**

Once students reach the age of 18 they are normally referred to the Adult Transition team within the Learning Disabilities Department.

**Adult social care - Tel: 0300 555 2922**

For queries email - [learningdisabilityteam@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:learningdisabilityteam@walsall.gov.uk)

If a staff member has safeguarding concern regarding a student aged 18 they must follow the same procedures as a student under 18 and liaise with the DSL/DDSL. If there are concerns the DSL/DDSL will call Adults Social Care. If further investigation is required a referral to Initial Intake is to be completed and emailed to [initialintake@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:initialintake@walsall.gov.uk).  
<https://walsallsp.walsall.gov.uk/Report-a-concern/Report-a-concern-for-an-adult>

**If you believe a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm call 999 in an emergency**

**Some of our students may not reside within Walsall Local Authority and we are aware that we should locate the number for the child's Local Authority's child protection referral team via <https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>**

### **Key Processes Family Help – Identifying and Understanding Needs**

- 2.31. Our school is committed to following the key features of the Families First approach to enable us to understand and meet children's needs as early as possible, appreciating that it is essential to help parents and carers – it is by doing so they will be able to care for their children as best they can.
- 2.32. Our focus is on developing quality and consistency of relationships, undertaking work to understand needs and get the right help and plans in place, and building networks around families. And are committed to becoming part of Team around the family arrangements.
- 2.33. All our staff, including volunteers are aware of the Walsall Families First pathway, focusing on getting the right help and support in place at the right time as defined in Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Right Help, Right Time – Continuum of Need Guidance: - <https://walsallsp.co.uk/children/professionals/professionals-working-with-children/right-help-right-time/>

Options will therefore include:

- managing any support for the child internally via our school own pastoral support processes or
  - Family Help assessment or
  - a referral for statutory services, for example as the child might be in need, is in need or suffering or likely to suffer harm.
- 2.34. All staff are prepared and trained to identify children (and parents) who may benefit from additional support from Family Help Universal needs (previous level 1), Extra Support needs (previously Level 2) Targeted Needs, (previously level 3) in addition to identifying risks of Multiple/Substantial Needs/Significant Harm (Previously level 4).
- 2.35. Prior to receiving Family Help, children and families will be supported through universal and early support family services such as Family Hubs, schools and education providers, GPs and universal health services as well as the voluntary and community services.
- 2.36. For early support from specialist services such as housing, social care, police and wider services when we require additional support from our multi agency colleagues, we will request a Locality Conversation, accessed: <https://www.walsallfamilyhubs.co.uk/family-hubs/walsall-family-hubs/families-first-children-partnership-page/our-family#main>
- 2.37. The support provided must also empower families to become resilient over time and build connections to their local community. Our school has attended the Families First Training and follows the pathway as outlined. [Families First for Children - Instruction Manual \(Procedures and Processes\) Final.pdf](#)
- 2.38. If Family Help is appropriate our designated safeguarding lead/deputy will lead/contribute to the Family First Assessment, accessed: <https://www.walsallfamilyhubs.co.uk/family-hubs/walsall-family-hubs/families-first-children-partnership-page/our-family#main> liaising with external agencies and complete any required requests and/or assessments. Wider school staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals contribute to information gathering and take the role of Family Help Coordinator.
- 2.39. All children and families receiving additional support will be part of the ongoing review process with consideration given to any escalating needs/concerns which may require a referral to Children's Services for assessment for statutory services.
- 2.40. [Child in Need](#) - A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Local authorities are required to provide services

for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

- 2.41. [Children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm](#) - Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquires under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.
- 2.42. Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to local authority children's social care and if appropriate the police is made immediately. Referrals should follow the local referral process:  
[when-to-call-the-police--guidance-for-schools-and-colleges.pdf](#)  
[\(npcc.police.uk\)](#)
- 2.43. Such enquiries enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment, including all forms of abuse and neglect, female genital mutilation or other so-called honour based violence, and extra-familial threats like radicalisation and sexual exploitation. This includes all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- [The role of the Local Authority](#)
- 2.44. The local authority will make a decision, within one working day of a referral being made, about the type of response that is required and should let the referrer know the outcome, the referrer should follow up if this information is not forthcoming.
- 2.45. If, after a referral, the child's situation does not appear to be improving, our academy will consider following local escalation procedures to ensure our concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves.
- 2.46. When our staff members have any concerns about a student (as opposed to a student being in immediate danger) they will decide what action to take. Where possible, this will be through a conversation with the designated safeguarding lead to agree a course of action.
- 2.47. Where there is a safeguarding concern our academy will ensure the student's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

**Remember you have a statutory duty under the Education Act 2002 to pass on any child protection concerns about the child.**

### Children with Social Workers

- 2.48. In our academy we recognise that when a student has a social worker, it is an indicator that the student is likely to be more at risk than most students.
- 2.49. This may mean that they are more vulnerable to further harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and poor mental health.
- 2.50. We take these needs into account when making plans to support students who have a social worker.
- 2.51. In Walsall, in addition to their statutory duties, the role of virtual school heads was extended in June 2021, to include a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of children with a social worker.
- 2.52. In offering advice and information to workforces that have relationships with children with social workers, virtual school heads will identify and engage with key professionals, helping them to understand the role they have in improving outcomes for children. This should include Designated Safeguarding Leads, social workers, head teachers, governors, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, mental health leads and other local authority officers.
- 2.53. Non-statutory guidance on promoting the education of children with a social worker and kinship care arrangements contains further information on the roles and responsibilities of virtual school heads. More information can be found here [Virtual School Head roles for children with a Social Worker](#) and here [Children's social care: virtual school head role extension](#).

### RESPONDING TO A CONCERN – THE “6 R's RESPONSE”

- 2.54. **Receive Reassure React Record Refer Reflect**

#### Receive

If a child wants to talk to you, never ask them to come back later. Ask them what they want to talk to you about and, if you are concerned about their welfare, give them the time to speak to you.

Never promise confidentiality, inform the child that you are happy to talk to them but if they tell you anything that you believe may be putting them at harm that you will have to talk to someone.

Listen carefully to the child. Do not stop a child who is freely recalling information.

Where a child is visibly upset or has an obvious injury, it is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how an injury was caused, or respond to a child wanting to talk to you to help clarify vague concerns and result in the right action being taken.

### Reassure

Ensure that the child is aware that they have done the right thing in talking to you and that they have not done anything wrong.

If you have any concerns that the child has been, or is at risk of harm, you must tell them that you will speak to someone to get help.

### React

If you need to clarify information, ask open-ended questions e.g. "Is there anything you'd like to tell me?", "Can you explain to me...", "Can you describe to me...."

Never ask leading or suggestive questions e.g. 'Did he/she do anything that they shouldn't have done?'

Never ask 'accusing' questions e.g. "Why didn't you tell someone earlier?"

Never criticise the alleged perpetrator, it may be someone that they will continue to live with.

Never ask the student to repeat their allegation for any other member of staff, it is your responsibility to share the information

These four factors may compromise enquiries that need to be made later by Children's Services or Police.

### Record

Make notes as soon as possible afterwards using the words that the child has used and record on CPOMS.

Do not record your assumptions and interpretations, just what you heard and saw.

Do not destroy original notes even if you later write things up more neatly and fully.

Record the date, time and place of the disclosure.

Sign any written records and identify your position in the school/academy setting.

Do not ask a child to write and account or sign any of your documentation as this may compromise enquiries that need to be made later by Children's Services or Police.

### Refer

If you have immediate concerns for the safety of the child, verbally inform the DSL or deputy who will progress the concern appropriately. In the absence of anyone being available in school/academy, contact the Local Authority (see the 'Making a referral' section above).

### Reflect

Ask yourself if you have done everything you can within your role.

Refer any remaining concerns to the designated teacher, e.g. any knowledge of siblings in the school/academy, or previous contact with parents.

Dealing with disclosures can be difficult and disturbing; you should seek support for yourself via the support within your school/academy or an alternative source but be aware of principles of confidentiality.

## DATA PROTECTION AND INFORMATION SHARING

- 2.55. We understand that information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect, and in promoting children's welfare, including their educational outcomes. Schools are required to keep be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions made including the rationale for those decisions. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as LA children's social care or the Prevent program etc.
- 2.56. We have clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes as reflected in our Information Sharing policy and procedure; and privacy notices.
- 2.57. The Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure, this is **not** a barrier to sharing information where

the failure to do so would result in a child being placed at risk of harm. Fears about sharing information **will not** be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

- 2.58. When children leave our school, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt will be obtained; this will be transferred separately from the main pupil file. If we are the receiving school we will ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and SENCOs, are aware as required.

### 3. Part Three – Defining Abuse

#### DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT AND EXPLOITATION

- 3.1. **Abuse:** A form of maltreatment of a child.
- 3.2. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.
- 3.3. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.
- 3.4. All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school/college, inside and outside of home, and online.
- 3.5. Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the academy. Our staff, especially the designated safeguarding lead will be considering the context of such incidents and/or behaviours. Such contextual safeguarding means our assessments of children will consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.
- 3.6. Additionally, Children's Services assessments should consider where children are being harmed in contexts outside the home, so it is important that we provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This allows any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm.

- 3.7. All staff are aware of safeguarding issues and aware that behaviours linked to the likes of drug taking, alcohol abuse, truanting and sexting unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk put children in danger.
- 3.8. **Physical abuse:** A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, 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.
- 3.9. The following may be indicators of physical abuse **(this is not designed to be used as a checklist):**
- Multiple bruises in clusters, or of uniform shape;
  - Bruises that carry an imprint, such as a hand or a belt, including a liner bruise;
  - Bite marks;
  - Round burn marks;
  - Multiple burn marks and burns on unusual areas of the body such as the back, shoulders or buttocks;
  - An injury that is not consistent with the account given or the development/ability of the child;
  - Changing or different accounts of how an injury occurred;
  - Bald patches;
  - Symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication or poisoning;
  - Unaccountable covering of limbs, even in hot weather;
  - Fear of going home or parents being contacted;
  - Fear of medical help;
  - Fear of changing for PE;
  - Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance;
  - Violence or aggression towards others including bullying; or
  - Isolation from peers
- 3.10. **Emotional Abuse:** The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are

worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

- 3.11. 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 from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.
- 3.12. The following may be indicators of emotional abuse **(this is not designed to be used as a checklist)**:
- The child consistently describes him/herself in very negative ways – as stupid, naughty, hopeless, ugly;
  - Over-reaction to mistakes;
  - Delayed physical, mental or emotional development;
  - Sudden speech or sensory changes;
  - Inappropriate emotional responses, fantasies;
  - Neurotic behaviour: rocking, banging head, regression, tics and twitches;
  - Self-harming, drug or solvent abuse;
  - Fear of parents being contacted;
  - Running away;
  - Compulsive stealing;
  - Appetite disorders - anorexia nervosa, bulimia; or
  - Soiling, smearing faeces, enuresis.
  - High criticism, low warmth observed from the parents/carers

N.B. Some situations where children stop communication suddenly (known as "traumatic mutism") can indicate maltreatment.

- 3.13. **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. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

3.14. The following may be indicators of sexual abuse **(this is not designed to be used as a checklist)**:

- Sexually explicit play or behaviour or age-inappropriate knowledge;
- Anal or vaginal discharge, soreness or scratching;
- Reluctance to go home;
- Inability to concentrate, tiredness;
- Refusal to communicate;
- Thrush, persistent complaints of stomach disorders or pains;
- Eating disorders, for example anorexia nervosa and bulimia;
- Attention seeking behaviour, self-mutilation, substance abuse;
- Aggressive behaviour including sexual harassment or molestation;
- Unusual compliance;
- Regressive behaviour, enuresis, soiling;
- Frequent or open masturbation, touching others inappropriately;
- Depression, withdrawal, isolation from peer group;
- Reluctance to undress for PE or swimming; or
- Bruises or scratches in the genital area.

3.15. We understand that staff need support when managing cases of sexual abuse and will access materials from CSA Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse which has free evidence-based practice resources to help professionals working with children and young people to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of child sexual abuse.

3.16. [Supporting Practice in tackling child sexual abuse](#)

- 3.17. **Neglect:** The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:
- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
  - protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
  - ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
  - ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- 3.18. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
- 3.19. The following may be indicators of neglect **(this is not designed to be used as a checklist)**:
- Constant hunger;
  - Stealing, scavenging and/or hoarding food;
  - Frequent tiredness or listlessness;
  - Frequently dirty or unkempt;
  - Often poorly or inappropriately clad for the weather;
  - Poor school attendance or often late for school;
  - Poor concentration;
  - Affection or attention seeking behaviour;
  - Illnesses or injuries that are left untreated;
  - Failure to achieve developmental milestones, for example growth, weight;
  - Failure to develop intellectually or socially;
  - Responsibility for activity that is not age appropriate such as cooking, ironing, caring for siblings;
  - The child is regularly not collected or received from school; or
  - The child is left at home alone or with inappropriate carers

### **RESPONSES FROM PARENTS**

- 3.20. Research and experience indicates that the following responses from parents may suggest a cause for concern across all categories of abuse:-
- Delay in seeking treatment that is obviously needed;
  - Unawareness or denial of any injury, pain or loss of function (for example, a fractured limb);
  - Incompatible explanations offered, several different explanations or the child is said to have acted in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development;
  - Reluctance to give information or failure to mention other known relevant injuries;
  - Frequent presentation of minor injuries;
  - A persistently negative attitude towards the child
  - Unrealistic expectations or constant complaints about the child;
  - Alcohol misuse or other drug/substance misuse;
  - Parents request removal of the child from home; or
  - Violence between adults in the household.
- 3.21. **FURTHER SPECIFIC RISKS** - All staff will have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education, references to misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories and sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) put children in danger.
- 3.22. Annex B Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2025 will be provided at induction, read and understood by all staff/volunteers working directly with children outlining risk as below:-

### **CHILDREN AND THE COURT SYSTEM**

- 3.23. Children are sometime required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children 5-11years old [Young witness booklet for 5 to 11 year olds - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) and 12 -17 year olds [Young witness booklet for 12 to 17 year olds - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).
- 3.24. The guides explain each step of the process, support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained.
- 3.25. Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on

the dispute resolution service [Get help with child arrangements - GOV.UK \(justice.gov.uk\)](https://www.justice.gov.uk/get-help-with-child-arrangements) This may be useful for some parents and carers.

- 3.26. We will recognise these vulnerabilities and offer early help where necessary for the children, young people and their families to safeguard emotional wellbeing; we will access resources as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

### **CHILDREN ABSENT FROM EDUCATION**

- 3.27. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.
- 3.28. Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Children absent from education, particularly persistently, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse, and child sexual and criminal exploitation. We have procedures in place in response to children absent from education which support identification of such abuse and also helps prevent the risk of them going missing in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority Children's Services and need a social worker (such as on a child in need or child protection plan, or as a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay – see our Attendance Policy for further details. We will always follow up with parents/carers when students are not at school. This means we need to have a least two up to date contacts numbers for parents/carers. Parents are reminded to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change.
- 3.29. Our academy has:
- Staff who understand what to do when children and young people do not attend regularly
  - Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for students who are absent from education (especially on repeat occasions)
  - Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take students off-roll when they:

- leave the academy to be home educated (see below)

- move away from the academy's location
  - remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
  - are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to the academy afterwards); or
  - are permanently excluded
- 3.30. We know that many home educated children and young people have an overwhelmingly positive learning experience. We expect parents/carers decisions to home educate to be made with their child's best education at the heart of the decision. However, we know this is not the case for all, and home education can mean some children and young people are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their needs.
- 3.31. When a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from our academy with a view to educating at home, we will work together with other key professionals to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. Ideally, this would be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker. We refer to [Elective Home Education guidance](#) to support our processes and decisions.
- 3.32. We will inform our Local Authority of all deletions from our admission register when a student is taken off roll.
- 3.33. We will ensure that students who are expected to attend the academy but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.
- 3.34. When a student leaves the academy, we will record the name of the student's new provision and their expected start date.
- 3.35. Our academy will inform the local authority of any student who fails to attend the academy regularly or has been absent without the academy's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the academy and the local authority.

### **CHILDREN WITH FAMILY MEMBERS IN PRISON**

- 3.36. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. We will work with the children and their families as much as possible to mitigate the harm by offering early

help and emotional wellbeing support where necessary and recognise additional risks such as witnessing arrests, trauma of prison visits, concerns regarding an offenders release and return home.

### **CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CCE and Child Sexual Exploitation – CSE)**

- 3.37. Sexual abuse 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 clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.
- 3.38. CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence, and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship or may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants.
- 3.39. 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 internet or other social media;

- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours; and
  - Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.
- 3.40. 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 abuse 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);
  - Sexual identity.
- 3.41. Our academy refers to Walsall Safeguarding Partnership procedures to consider completion of the screening tool and/or NWG risk assessment. See [Walsall Safeguarding Partnership website](#) and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners>,
- 3.42. Our Principal Exploitation Reduction Officer & Exploitation and Missing Team Manager is Lisa Bowen who manages our Exploitation team, if you are worried about exploitation or missing concerns about a child please refer to MASH or the child's social worker. You should also copy [missingexploitedchildren@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:missingexploitedchildren@walsall.gov.uk) in to any referrals.

### **CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION: COUNTY LINES**

- 3.43. Our staff/volunteers are aware that some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting

or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

- 3.44. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.
- 3.45. Our staff are alerted to the fact that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same; however, we are aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. We know that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.
- 3.46. Some of the following can be indicators of Child Criminal Exploitation:
- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
  - children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
  - children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
  - children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
  - children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- children who are regularly absent from school or education or do not take part in education.
- 3.47. County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”.’
- 3.48. Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.
- 3.49. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.
- 3.50. Our Principal Exploitation Reduction Officer & Exploitation and Missing Team Manager is Lisa Bowen who manages our Exploitation team, if you are worried about exploitation or missing concerns about a child please

refer to MASH or the child's social worker. You should also copy [missingexploitedchildren@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:missingexploitedchildren@walsall.gov.uk) in to any referrals

### **CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH**

- 3.51. All our staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a student has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- 3.52. We are clear in our academy that only appropriately trained professionals will attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Our staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. We understand that when children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences (especially in the context of Covid 19), this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. We know that early help is critical when supporting children and young people who are suffering trauma, depression, anxiety, low mood and other indicators of mental health.
- 3.53. If our staff have a mental health concern about a student they know that it is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action will be taken as with all other vulnerabilities. Records will be made and reported immediately to our Designated Safeguarding Lead and Special Educational Needs Coordinator.
- 3.54. At Mary Elliot Academy we offer additional support by having Mental Health First Aiders available to speak with students. We work closely with medical professionals trained to support students with mental health needs, such as CaMHS.
- 3.55. Our academy promotes resilience as part of a whole academy approach to social and emotional wellbeing, and this is tailored to our students.
- 3.56. Further advice can be found via
  - [Senior mental health lead training - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
  - [Preventing and tackling Bullying](#)
  - [Mental Health and behaviour in Schools](#)
  - [Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing](#)
  - [Rise Above PHSE curriculum support](#)

Every Interaction Matters

Wellbeing for Education recovery including s bereavement, loss, anxiety, stress and trauma

**CONSIDERING THE RANGE OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS PRESENT IN OUR CHILDREN**

- 3.57. As an academy where every student has a learning disability or cognitive impairment, there are a wide range of additional considerations and arrangements we make to support positive child protection and safeguarding.
- 3.58. We pay full attention to the DfE practical guidance - Safeguarding Disabled Children – Practice and Guidance:
- 3.59. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-disabled-children-practice-guidance>
- 3.60. The table below outlines a range of the considerations we make for the students we work with, all of whom have additional needs:

<b>Additional Need/Barrier/Concern</b>	<b>How this is addressed by the academy</b>
<p><b>Communication and Dependence</b> Students who are non-verbal or unable to communicate their needs, feelings, to explain what is happening in their life.</p> <p>We also have a vast proportion of students that are entirely dependent on adults for their daily care.</p>	<p>The academy has skilled staff that are able to communicate with young people in a broad range of methods.</p> <p>Students are in classes where staff form strong bonds and understand students with communication difficulties, and are able to identify to their needs, emotions and wishes through the intensive social and communication work they do.</p>
<p><b>Contextual/ Demographic/ and developmental levels.</b> Students not understanding what may be going on in their environment.</p> <p>Students developmentally unable to understanding right, wrong, what is</p>	<p>Students are supported by well trained, empathetic and supportive teams of staff and visiting professionals.</p> <p>Staff are able to support</p>

<p>happening to them or others around them.</p> <p>Students witnessing or experiencing abuse and not able to say or do not understand.</p>	<p>communication, and through strong relationships and appropriate CPD are able to identify where there may be concerns. Staff are also trained to understand the changes in behavioural patterns may signify distress or issues.</p> <p>Due to specific and complex needs, information sharing regarding students is crucial to ensure that the individual's communication and behaviours needs are identifiable by staff. Staff will then be able to identify any changes in communication/behaviour.</p>
<p><b>Parents with SEND themselves</b></p> <p>A higher proportion of students in our academy have parent/s who have SEN difficulties who do not fully understand how to care for their child's individual needs.</p>	<p>The academy ensures that appropriate support is in place for the family via the early help and subsequent auxiliary support mechanisms, and escalations of support processes (i.e. CIN/ CPP)</p>
<p>If home and academy relationships are not trusting or lack of parental engagement - signs maybe missed.</p> <p>This may also manifest itself as disguised compliance.</p> <p><a href="https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1334/learning-from-case-reviews_disguisedcompliance.pdf">https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1334/learning-from-case-reviews_disguisedcompliance.pdf</a></p>	<p>The academy works hard to engage with families. We will always be open and honest with a family, even if the conversation is challenging, with the underlying principle always being that the wellbeing of the young person will be the first priority. Where there is</p>

	<p>non-compliance over a safeguarding issue, or suspected disguised compliance, academy will refer to Children's Services via MASH.</p>
<p>Students who self-harm, display challenging behaviours may appear with more physical markings resulting in questioning - difficult to identify if this is result of behaviour or miss-handling/abuse</p>	<p>Accurate record keeping is important to document all behaviours that lead to possible markings. Just as important is keeping accurate behaviour plans. Nevertheless, a marking on a self-harmer is investigated in the same way as those for whom it is not a common occurrence.</p>
<p>Lack of SEN support in the community/through services to support parents/families</p>	<p>Our academy actively engages with community support groups, and welcomes open conversation. We also liaise and build relationships with new stakeholders where we feel there is benefit to our students.</p>
<p>Information sharing with all agencies must be consistent and regular, sharing past and present information to ensure no gaps in records - missing pieces of a puzzle</p>	<p>We have a number of Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads in post, in addition to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, based on the high proportion of students that have multi-agency involvement. This supports our pastoral system in academy in making sure information sharing and communication is well-organised and thorough.</p>
<p>Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and</p>	<p>Staff are trained to recognise that 'it could</p>

injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration.

happen here' and be professionally curious. They are also trained to understand the learners that they will be working with, and the usual behaviours that they may display.

### CHILDREN WHO ARE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, OR GENDER QUESTIONING

- 3.61. A child or young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, they can sometimes be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are.
- 3.62. However, the Cass review identified that caution is necessary for children questioning their gender as there remain many unknowns about the impact of social transition and children may well have wider vulnerabilities, including having complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases additional diagnoses of autism and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.
- 3.63. It recommended that when families/carers are making decisions about support for gender questioning children, they should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice. When parents are supporting pre-pubertal children, clinical services should ensure that they can be seen as early as possible by a clinical professional with relevant experience
- 3.64. Risks can be compounded where children lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where they can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

LGBT inclusion is part of the statutory Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum and a range of support is available to us to help counter homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and abuse as below

### DOMESTIC ABUSE

- 3.65. We know that domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children and young people can be victims of

domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

- 3.66. Our staff understand that exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on students. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.
- 3.67. Domestic Abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse, and can be perpetrated by intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.
- 3.68. **Controlling behaviour** - Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.
- 3.69. **Coercive behaviour** - Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.
- 3.70. Our academy is signed up to Operation Encompass, the Walsall Joint Agency Protocol for Domestic Abuse – notifications to Schools. This protocol sets out the Walsall plan for a multi-agency operation to notify schools when a student has experienced domestic abuse in their household, which will allow the academy to provide appropriate early intervention and support in a timely manner. Our DSL and Family Liaison and Multi-Agency Coordinator will receive notifications and ensure the student receives the right help at the right time.
- 3.71. Additional support is available from Operation Encompass and provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members from educational settings who may be concerned about children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse.
- 3.72. The helpline is available 8AM to 1PM, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990 (charged at local rate).
- 3.73. Further information can be accessed via:-
  - [Domestic violence and abuse](#)
  - NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse signs symptoms effects

- Refuge what is domestic abuse/effects of domestic abuse on children
- Safelives: young people and domestic abuse

### **EXTENDED ACADEMY AND OFF-SITE ARRANGEMENTS**

- 3.74. Where extended academy activities are provided by and managed by our academy, our own child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures apply.
- 3.75. When our local governing body hire or rent out academy facilities/premises to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations, and service providers to run community or extra-curricular activities) they will ensure that appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are in place to keep children and young people safe.
- 3.76. When services or activities are provided by our governing body, under the direct supervision or management of our academy staff, our arrangements for child protection will apply.
- 3.77. However, where services or activities are provided separately by another body this is not necessarily the case. Our governing body therefore seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed); and ensure that there are arrangements in place to liaise with the academy on these matters where appropriate. In the event a Position of Trust (POT) is raised regards staff working at the organisation using the premises the academy would follow their policy and procedures for reporting. This applies regardless of whether or not the children and young people who attend any of these services or activities are students on our academy roll.
- 3.78. Our governing body will also ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.
- 3.79. When students attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work related activities, our academy will ensure that the proprietors of the activity/venue operate safe practices to maintain the safety of our children/young people and liaise with investigating agencies in the locality relevant to where the concern has taken place.

### **ALTERNATIVE PROVISION**

- 3.80. In the event that our students attend alternative education provision we understand that this cohort of students often have complex needs. We

ensure that the management committee or local governing body of these settings are aware of the additional risk of harm that the students may be vulnerable to.

- 3.81. We obtain written confirmation from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment, i.e. those checks that our academy would otherwise perform in respect of our own staff as defined in part five.
- 3.82. This includes written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform our school of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e. staff changes), so that our school can ensure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff.
- 3.83. We will obtain the address of any provider that we use, including any subcontracted provision or satellite sites. We will review the suitability of the provision at least half-termly. If any safeguarding concerns arise with the provision, we will review and consider termination, where they are not satisfactorily addressed.
- 3.84. We retain safeguarding responsibilities where learners attend alternative provision, though it is important that we work in tandem with the provision to ensure that procedures are robust.

### **HOMELESSNESS**

- 3.85. Our staff understand that being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. Our designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) are aware of contact details and referral routes in to the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.86. We are aware that indicators may be:-
  - household debt
  - rent arrears
  - domestic abuse
  - anti-social behaviour
  - the family being asked to leave a property
- 3.87. We recognise in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a level of intervention and support.
- 3.88. Further explanation is found at Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets [Homeless reduction factsheet](#)

### HONOUR BASED ABUSE (FORCED MARRIAGE, FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION AND BREAST IRONING)

- 3.89. So-called 'honour-based' abuse (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 honour based abuse are serious (regardless of the motivation) and will be handled and reported as such.
- 3.90. If our staff have a concern regarding a student that might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they will speak to our designated safeguarding lead (or deputies). We understand that if FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on **teachers** that requires a different approach as below.

#### Female Genital Mutilation

- 3.91. 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.
- 3.92. 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.
- 3.93. 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
  - 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
- 3.94. 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 will not assume that FGM only happens outside the UK.
- 3.95. 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 long 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 (e.g. 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

3.96. We know that where a teacher (including HLTA's and cover supervisors) discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18, there is a statutory duty upon that individual to report it to the police. We know teachers (including HLTA's and cover supervisors) **must** personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless our teachers (including HLTA's and cover supervisors) have good reason not to, they will still consider and discuss any such case with our academy's designated safeguarding lead (or deputies) and involve Children's Services as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases i.e. where teachers (including HLTA's and cover supervisors) do not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers (including HLTA's and cover supervisors) will follow our safeguarding procedures and those set out in Walsall's procedures.

[Mandatory reporting of FGM factsheet](#)

### Forced Marriage

3.97. The legal age at which a marriage can take place is now 18 and applies to non-binding, unofficial marriages as well as legal marriages. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent

can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage. We can play an important role in safeguarding children and young people from forced marriage, our staff have been briefed on the indicators of possible forced marriage and honour based abuse and will refer any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead immediately.

### [Guidance for forced marriage](#)

### [The Right to Choose-guidance on forced marriage](#)

### **ONLINE SAFETY**

- 3.98. We know students increasingly work online, it is essential that children and young people are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. The designated safeguarding lead has responsibility for ensuring all online access is appropriately, filtered, monitored, risk assessed, reviewed and updated as necessary.
- 3.99. The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm.
- 3.100. The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:
- Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
  - Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults; and
  - Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying;
  - Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your students, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).
- 3.101. Where children and young people are being asked to learn online at home the DfE has provided advice to support schools and colleges do so safely.

- 3.102. We are in regular contact with parents and carers. These communications are used to reinforce the importance of children and young people being safe online. We hope parents and carers find it helpful to understand what systems we use to filter and monitor online use. It is especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be clear who from the academy (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.
- 3.103. Whilst considering our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, our governing body will do all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the academy's IT system. As part of this process, our governing body and trust ensures our academy has appropriate technological filtering and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness. They ensure that our leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified. Our governing body is committed to consider the age range of our students, the number on roll, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs verses safeguarding risks. Staff are also aware that they need to fully and actively monitor the use of technology both in the classroom and any tasks set at home.

#### **CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE**

- 3.104. Staff are aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child on child abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to:
- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
  - Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children and young people (also known as teenage relationship abuse)
  - Physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
  - Sexual violence and sexual harassment
  - Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
  - Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party

- Upskirting (which is a criminal offence), which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm
  - Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals
- 3.105. Abuse is abuse and will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter” or “part of growing up”, or “having a laugh”, it can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours. Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child on child abuse.
- 3.106. In our academy we believe that all children and young people have a right to attend and learn in a safe environment. Children and young people should be free from harm by adults in the academy and other students.
- 3.107. We recognise that some students will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be supported and reviewed under the academy's Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying policy and Online Safety policy.
- 3.108. Allegations may be made against students or staff reporting on the behalf of students in the academy which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a student, some of the following features will be found.
- 3.109. The allegation:
- is made against an older student and refers to their behaviour towards a younger student or a more vulnerable student
  - is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
  - raises risk factors for other students in the academy
  - indicates that other students may have been affected by this individual
  - indicates that young people outside the academy may be affected by this student
- 3.110. **All victims will be taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff are aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND, who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Gender questioning are at greater risk.**
- 3.111. Our staff will record and report all issues of child on child abuse to our designated safeguarding lead (or deputies) and ensure the best action

is taken to safeguard children and young people in our academy. We have categories set up on CPOMS that highlight and 'track' these behaviours. Our curriculum, where appropriate for our learners needs and level of understanding, endorses child on child abuse is not acceptable and our actions are supported by associated safeguarding policy and procedures in our academy (Anti Bullying, Student Behaviour, Online Safety, Acceptable Use and broader child protection procedures).

- 3.112. Children and young people who abuse others will be responded to in a way that meets their needs as well as protecting others within the academy community through a multi-agency risk assessment. We ensure that the needs of children and young people who abuse others will be considered separately from the needs of their victims. Risk assessments will be recorded (paper or electronic) and will be kept under review. At all times we will be actively considering the risks posed to all our students and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe. Our risk assessment is not intended to replace the detailed assessments of expert professionals. Any such professional assessments will be used to inform our approach to supporting and protecting our students and updating our own risk assessment.

### PREVENTING RADICALISATION

- 3.113. Our staff are aware that students can be susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation into terrorism. Similar to protecting children and young people from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children and young people from this risk is part of our academy's safeguarding approach.
- 3.114. As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools have a duty to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. This has become known as the 'Prevent Duty'.
- 3.115. Where our staff are concerned that children and young people are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalised, they will discuss this with the designated safeguarding lead.
- 3.116. Radicalisation is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence. Although there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism, there are factors that may indicate concern. [Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/managing-risk-of-radicalisation-in-your-education-setting)
- 3.117. Our designated safeguarding lead has received training about the Prevent Duty and tackling extremism and is able to support staff with any concerns they may have. The Prevent duty should be seen as part

of schools' and colleges' wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) and other senior leaders in education settings should familiarise themselves with the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 141-210, which are specifically concerned with education (and also covers childcare). The guidance is set out in terms of three general themes: leadership and partnership, capabilities and reducing permissive environments. [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114222/prevent-duty-guidance-england-and-wales-2023.pdf)

- 3.118. Staff are alert to changes in student's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff use their judgement in identifying students who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) making a Prevent referral.
- 3.119. We are committed to ensuring that our students are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that aims to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Teaching the academy's core values alongside the fundamental British Values supports quality teaching and learning, whilst making a positive contribution to the development of a fair, just and civil society. Where appropriate, we use the curriculum to ensure that children and young people understand how people with extreme views share these with others, especially using the internet.
- 3.120. Where we have visiting speakers in school, we ensure that the content that they deliver is appropriate and in line with fundamental British values.
- 3.121. Recognising Extremism - Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:
- showing sympathy for extremist causes
  - glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures
  - making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside the academy
  - evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
  - advocating messages similar to 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 particular 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, art work 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

3.122. We recognise that our learners are especially vulnerable to radicalisation as a result of their needs. Our academy governors, the Head Teacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will therefore assess the level of risk within our academy and put actions in place to reduce that risk. We have produced a Prevent risk assessment in line with the Prevent Duty guidance which is available upon request.

### Channel

3.123. Our academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead (and any deputies) are aware of local procedures for making a Channel referral. Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation.

#### [Channel guidance](#)

3.124. Our academy refers to Educate Against Hate, a website developed to support and equip academy leaders, teachers, and parents with information, tools and resources (including on the promotion of fundamental British values) to help recognise and address extremism and radicalisation in young people. [Prevent duty training: Learn how to support people susceptible to radicalisation |](#)

3.125. If a member of staff has concerns that a student may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they will speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Statutory guidance on Channel is available at: Channel guidance and Channel training from the Home Office. [Channel and Prevent Multi-Agency Panel \(PMAP\) guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

3.126. Additional training is available through The Safeguarding and Prevent - The Education and Training Foundation ([etfoundation.co.uk](http://etfoundation.co.uk)) provides online training modules for practitioners, leaders and managers, to support staff and governors/Board members in outlining their roles and

responsibilities under the duty. [Safeguarding and Prevent - The Education and Training Foundation \(et-foundation.co.uk\)](http://www.et-foundation.co.uk)

- 3.127. **Niall Markham is the Walsall Prevent Coordinator -**  
[niall.markham@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:niall.markham@walsall.gov.uk)
- 3.128. For further information please see the Mary Elliot Academy Prevent Policy which is available upon request.

### **PRIVATE FOSTERING ARRANGEMENTS**

- 3.129. Our staff are aware that a private fostering arrangement is essentially one that is made privately (that is to say without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. Private foster carers may be from the extended family, such as a cousin or great aunt. However, a person who is a relative under the Children Act 1989 i.e. a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of the full or half blood or by marriage) or step-parent will not be a private foster carer. A private foster carer may be a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child, or someone previously unknown to the child's family who is willing to privately foster a child.
- 3.130. It is the duty of local authorities to satisfy themselves that the welfare of children who are, or will be, privately fostered within their area is being, or will be, satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted, but our responsibility to be aware and refer children who may be privately fostered.
- 3.131. If our academy makes arrangements for children to have learning experiences where, for short periods, the children may be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to whom they are not related then we will consider whether the arrangement where children stay with UK families could amount to "private fostering"
- 3.132. All staff in our academy will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or their deputies) of any children that fall into the category of private fostering.

### **REASONABLE FORCE**

- 3.133. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for our staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This

can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between students or blocking a student's path, or active physical contact such as leading a student by the arm out of the classroom.

- 3.134. When using reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving children and young people with SEN or disabilities or with medical conditions we will consider the risks carefully and recognise the additional vulnerability of these students.
- 3.135. Any member of staff who uses reasonable force must make a record as soon as possible on CPOMS. This will then be reviewed by the DSL and the following will take place:
- When required, first aid will be administered as a priority
  - The parents/carers of the pupil will be notified
  - There will be a debrief with the pupil, and staff when appropriate
  - The antecedent will be explored to identify triggers to the behaviour and how this can be mitigated in the future
  - A behaviour plan will be developed for the pupil if they do not already have one. If there is already one in place, this will be updated to reflect any new information.
  - Further information - [Use of Reasonable force in Schools](#)

**For further information on Behaviour support please see our Behaviour and Relationships Policy.**

### **SERIOUS VIOLENCE**

- 3.136. Our staff are aware of the indicators, which may signal children and young people are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from the academy, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children and young people have been approached by, or are involved with; individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and also may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

3.137. Staff are aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as:

- being male
- having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from the academy
- having experienced child maltreatment
- having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery
- Further information - Preventing youth violence and gang involvement

### YOUNG CARERS

3.138. We understand that a young carer is someone aged 18 or under who helps look after a relative who has a condition, such as a disability, illness, mental health condition, or a drug or alcohol problem.

3.139. Most young carers look after one of their parents or care for a brother or sister. They do extra jobs in and around the home, such as cooking, cleaning, or helping someone to get dressed and move around.

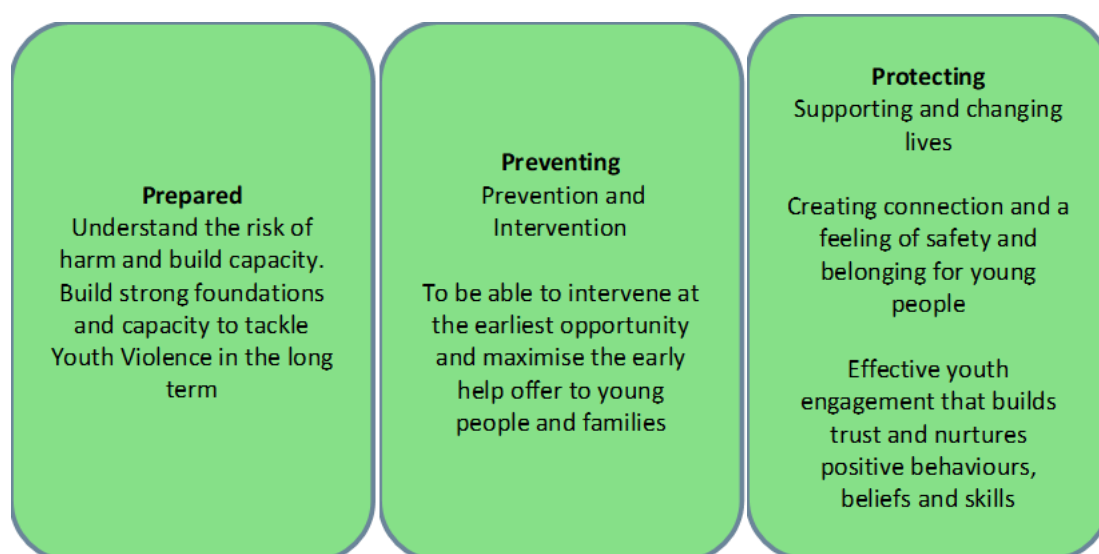
3.140. Some children give a lot of physical help to a brother or sister who is disabled or ill. Along with doing things to help your brother or sister, you may also be giving emotional support to both your sibling and your parents. Information is available via <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/early-help/early-help-children-and-young-people/young-carers>

3.141. We know that some of the risks associated with being a young carer are risk of truancy, under-achievement, isolation, mental and physical ill health, poverty and stress.

3.142. We will follow our safeguarding and child protection procedures if we are concerned and contact the **Early Help Senior Project Officer Young Carers**, [Joanne.Phillips@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:Joanne.Phillips@walsall.gov.uk) and can complete the Young Carers screening and assessing tool using our local procedures; found at <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/early-help/early-help-children-and-young-people/young-carers#assess>

#### 4. Part Four – Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children/Child on Child Abuse

- 4.1. All of our staff and volunteers are aware that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children or young people of any age and sex from primary through to secondary stage and into colleges. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. We know this abuse may be driven by wider societal factors beyond our academy, such as everyday sexist stereotypes and everyday sexist language and adapt our curriculum as below to overcome this wherever we can.
- 4.2. We make it clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated and it will never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”. We will challenge physical behaviour (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts.
- 4.3. Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.



4.4. All staff in our academy are regularly provided with updated and appropriate safeguarding training that enables them to understand:

- Their role in preventing child-on-child abuse
- How to identify the indicators of abuse
- What to do if they have a concern about a child
- How to respond to a report of abuse
- How to offer support to the victim(s) and alleged perpetrator(s)
- Where to go if they need support
- That children can abuse other children inside and outside of the academy, as well as online, and that online abuse can take the form of:
  - Abusive, harassing and misogynistic messages
  - Non-consensual sharing of indecent nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, especially around chat groups
  - Sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who don't want to receive such content
- That they need to maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here**'
- That even if there are no reports in school, **it doesn't mean it's not happening**
- The importance of challenging inappropriate and abusive behaviour
- That girls are more likely to be victims and boys are more likely to be perpetrators
- Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers – which is especially relevant in our setting
- To keep in mind that certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation;
- Abuse may be a sign they have been abused themselves or a sign of wider issues that require addressing within the culture of our academy

4.5. We teach our students:

- What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context)

- About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe
- That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact
- How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard
- How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so
- Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources
- They will be taken seriously
- They will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment
- They will never be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

4.6. The curriculum includes teaching about the below where suitable for our students level of understanding:

- Healthy and respectful relationships
- What respectful behaviour looks like
- Consent
- Gender roles, stereotyping and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Prejudiced behaviour
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment (delivered through targeted work)

4.7. **Sexual violence is defined as:**

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (We are aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.)

Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)

#### 4.8. **Consent is defined as:**

Having the freedom and capacity to choose.

Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

#### 4.9. **Sexual consent**

- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity
- the age of consent is 16
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape

Consent at Mary Elliot Academy is covered within our PSHE curriculum. Please see 1.56 for further information on our PSHE curriculum.

#### 4.10. **Sexual harassment is defined as:**

- 'Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school.
- Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child/young person's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.
- Sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names

- Sexual “jokes” or taunting
- Physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes (we consider when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- Online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and videos
- Sharing of unwanted explicit content is an offence
- Upskirting (is a criminal offence)
- Sexualised online bullying is an offence
- Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media;
- Sexual exploitation; coercion and threats

#### 4.11. **Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB):**

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage.

HSB can occur online and/or face to face and can also occur simultaneously between the two. HSB will be considered in a child protection context and Walsall Right Help, Right Time Continuum of Need guidance will be referred to.

When considering HSB, ages and the stages of development of the children and young people are critical factors. Sexual behaviour between children and young people can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature.

#### 4.12. **Online:** Sexual violence and sexual harassment occurring online (either in isolation or in connection to face to face incidents) can introduce a number of complex factors. These include the potential for the incident to take place across a number of social media platforms and services,

and for things to move from platform to platform online. It also includes the potential for the impact of the incident to extend further than a schools local community (e.g. for images or content to be shared around neighbouring schools/colleges) and for a victim (or alleged perpetrator(s)) to become marginalised and excluded by both online and offline communities. There is also the strong potential for repeat victimisation in the future if abusive content continues to exist somewhere online.

- 4.13. **The Legal status:** It is unlawful for our academy to act in a way that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. These rights include:
- Article 3: the right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment (an absolute right)
  - Article 8: the right to respect for private and family life (a qualified right) includes a duty to protect individuals' physical and psychological integrity
  - Article 14: requires that all of the rights and freedoms set out in the Act must be protected and applied without discrimination
  - Protocol 1, Article 2: protects the right to an effective education
- 4.14. **Our academy's procedures for responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment:** Our starting point regarding any report will always be that there is a zero tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and it is never acceptable and it will not be tolerated. It is especially important, not to pass off any sexual violence or sexual harassment as 'banter', 'just having a laugh", part of growing up' or 'boys being boys' as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children and young people.
- 4.15. **Procedures for online abuse** - Our procedures for dealing with the concerns are:-
- We will **never** view, download or share the imagery, or ask a child to share or download – **this is illegal**
  - If we have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g. if a young person has showed it to you before you could ask them not to), we will report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or their deputies)
  - We will **not** delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it
  - When dealing with nude and semi-nude images, we will follow guidance as outlined in [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for](#)

[education settings working with children and young people](#) when it is appropriate for the needs of our pupils.

- We will **not** share information about the incident to other members of staff, the young person(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers unless advised by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or our statutory partners to do so.
  - We will **not** say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.
  - We will recognise the importance of understanding intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents
  - We **will** explain to them that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- 4.16. **Confidentiality:** As a matter of effective safeguarding practice we will do all we reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children or young people involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. Amongst other things, this will mean carefully considering, based on the nature of the report, which staff should know about the report and any support that will be put in place for the children involved. We will also consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities. If required we will provide a physical space for victims to withdraw. [Gillick competence - Fraser guidelines](#)
- 4.17. **Risk assessment:** When there has been a report of sexual violence our designated safeguarding lead will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment will consider:
- the victim, especially their protection and support
  - whether there may have been other victims
  - the alleged perpetrator(s)
  - all the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) in the academy especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harm
- 4.18. Risk assessments will be recorded and be kept under review. At all times we will be actively considering the risks posed to all students and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe.

4.19. Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk assessments by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required also.

4.20. The wishes of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the protection of all children and young people in the academy will be especially important when considering any immediate actions such as teaching timetables, break times and travelling to and from school.

4.21. **Manage internally:**

- In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, we may take the view that the children concerned are not in need of early help or require referrals to be made to statutory services and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising our behaviour and bullying policies and by providing pastoral support.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions will be recorded

4.22. **Families First**

We may decide that the children involved do not require referral to statutory services but may benefit from additional support from Families First, providing support as soon as an issue emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early support is more effective in responding to issues early to help minimise the likelihood of the concerns escalating, thereby promoting the welfare of children and families.

Families First can be particularly useful to address non-violent HSB and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

Families First and the ability to manage an issue internally do not need to be mutually exclusive: school may manage internally and seek support from Families First for both the victim and perpetrator(s).

All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions will be recorded.

4.23. **Referrals to Children's Services:**

- Where a child or young person has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger we will make a referral to Children's Services
- At the point of referral to Children's Services we will generally inform parents or carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing a parent or carer is going to put the child at additional risk). Any such decision will be made with the support of Children's Services.

- If a referral is made Children's Services will then make enquiries to determine whether any of the children or young people involved are in need of protection or other services.
  - Where statutory assessments are appropriate we will work alongside, and cooperate with, the relevant lead social worker. Collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator(s) and any other children that require support.
  - We will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a Children's Services investigation before protecting the victim and other children and young people in our academy. It is important for our academy to work closely with Children's Services (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions we take do not jeopardise a statutory investigation.
  - In some cases, Children's Services will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. We will be prepared to refer again if we believe the student remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm, referring to FaST: Finding a Solution Together if still not in agreement with the decision.  
<https://walsallsp.co.uk/children/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/02/WSP-FaST-Final-Policy-v01-KPSN.docx>
- 4.24. If a statutory assessment is not appropriate, we will consider other support mechanisms such as early help, specialist support and pastoral support.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions, and reasons for decisions will be recorded
- 4.25. **Referrals to Police:** Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting principle is that we will refer on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice approach in these cases.
- 4.26. Referrals to the police will often be a natural progression of making a referral to Children's Services. Our designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) will liaise closely with the local police presence.
- 4.27. The police will consider what action to take to manage the assessed risk of harm. This could involve the use of police bail with conditions, prior to a suspect appearing in court, or court bail with or without conditions after the first appearance.
- 4.28. Alternatively, the person suspected of an offence could be 'released under investigation' (RUI). People released under RUI can have no

conditions attached to their release from custody and it is possible for a person on bail also to have no conditions.

- 4.29. Whatever arrangements are in place we will consider what additional measures may be necessary to manage any assessed risk of harm that may arise.
- 4.30. Particular regard will be given to the additional stress and trauma that might be caused to a victim and the potential for the suspected person to intimidate the victim or a witness. We will ensure that any risk management measures strike a balance between management of risk and the rights of an unconvicted person (e.g. rights to privacy, family life, etc).
- 4.31. If a child or young person is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence we will update the risk assessment, ensure relevant protections are in place for all students in the academy and, (if we have not already done so) consider any suitable action in line with our behaviour policy. This process will include a review of the necessary actions to keep all parties safe and meet their needs. If the perpetrator(s) remain(s) in the academy and the victim is still a registered student, we will be very clear as to our expectations regarding the perpetrator(s) now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions we think are reasonable and proportionate with regard to the perpetrator(s)' timetable.
- 4.32. Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other students in our academy. We will ensure both the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) remain protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).
- 4.33. If the case is classed as "no further action" (NFA'd) by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, we will continue to offer support to the victim and the alleged perpetrator(s) for as long as is necessary. A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with their case will likely be traumatic for the victim. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated or was withdrawn does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. We will discuss any decisions with the victim in this light and continue to offer support. We understand the alleged perpetrator(s) is also likely to require ongoing support for what will have likely been a difficult experience.
- 4.34. We may make a referral to Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) which is a law enforcement agency which aims to keep children and young people safe from sexual exploitation and abuse. Online sexual abuse can be reported on their website and a report to one of their Child Protection Advisors will occur.

- 4.35. **Working with all partners:** We acknowledge that we should be part of discussions with statutory safeguarding partners to agree the levels for the different types of assessment and services to be commissioned and delivered, as part of our local arrangements.
- 4.36. Walsall Safeguarding Partnership publishes its local threshold document which includes the process for the local early help assessment and the type and level of early help services to be provided, our DSLs (and their deputies) are familiar with this document.
- 4.37. **Victims:** We know it is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- 4.38. Abuse that occurs online or outside of academy will not be downplayed and will be treated equally seriously. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor will a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. We ensure the we explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this will be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

## **5. Part Five – Safer Recruitment Practice and Managing Allegations against Staff**

### **OUR SAFER RECRUITMENT PROCESSES**

- 5.1. As part of our culture of a commitment to safeguarding our governing body and senior leaders adopt robust recruitment procedures that deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for or securing employment, or volunteering opportunities in our academy.
- 5.2. We follow our Trust Safer Recruitment Policy, which is available upon request.
- 5.3. Key staff involved in recruitment processes will undertake Safer Recruitment Training online through the National College Education platform

### **Ongoing vigilance in our academy**

- 5.4. Senior leaders, DSLs and our local governing body ensure we have processes in place for continuous vigilance, maintaining an environment that deters and prevents abuse and challenges

inappropriate behaviour. This includes regular safeguarding training/briefings, audits of our safeguarding recording systems, promotion and challenge of staffs' understanding of our safeguarding ethos supported by safeguarding policies.

- 5.5. Our senior leaders have created the right culture and environment so that staff feel comfortable to discuss matters both within, and where it is appropriate, outside of the workplace, which may have implications for the safeguarding of children and young people. This can assist us to support staff, where there is a need, and help them manage children's safety and welfare, potentially providing them with information that will help them consider whether there are further measures or changes to procedures that need to be put in place to safeguard children in their care.
- 5.6. We follow our Trust Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations Made Against Staff Policy which is available upon request. Key principles from this policy that are important for staff to know include:
  - 5.7. Concerns about staff/volunteers/adults in the school are to be reported to the headteacher.
  - 5.8. Concerns about the Headteacher are to be reported to the CEO.
  - 5.9. Concerns about the CEO are to be reported to the Chair of Trustees.
  - 5.10. Where staff do not feel able to report their concerns safely, or feel that they have not been taken seriously, they may follow the Trust Whistleblowing Policy (see below section on Whistleblowing).
  - 5.11. Concerns may relate to serious allegations, where an adult has:
    - behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
    - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
    - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
    - behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children
  - 5.12. Such concerns will be dealt with in line with the Trust policy and advice sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). In Walsall, the Local Authority Designated Officer can be contacted by phone 01922 652322 or email [lado@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:lado@walsall.gov.uk).
  - 5.13. Concerns may also relate to 'low-level concerns'. These are concerns, no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of

unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

5.14. Examples of low-level concerns could 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
- humiliating children.

### **WHISTLEBLOWING**

5.15. All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in our academy's safeguarding regime; concerns will be taken seriously by the headteacher.

5.16. If there are concerns about the way that safeguarding is carried out in our academy staff will refer to our Trust Whistleblowing Policy, which is available [here](#).

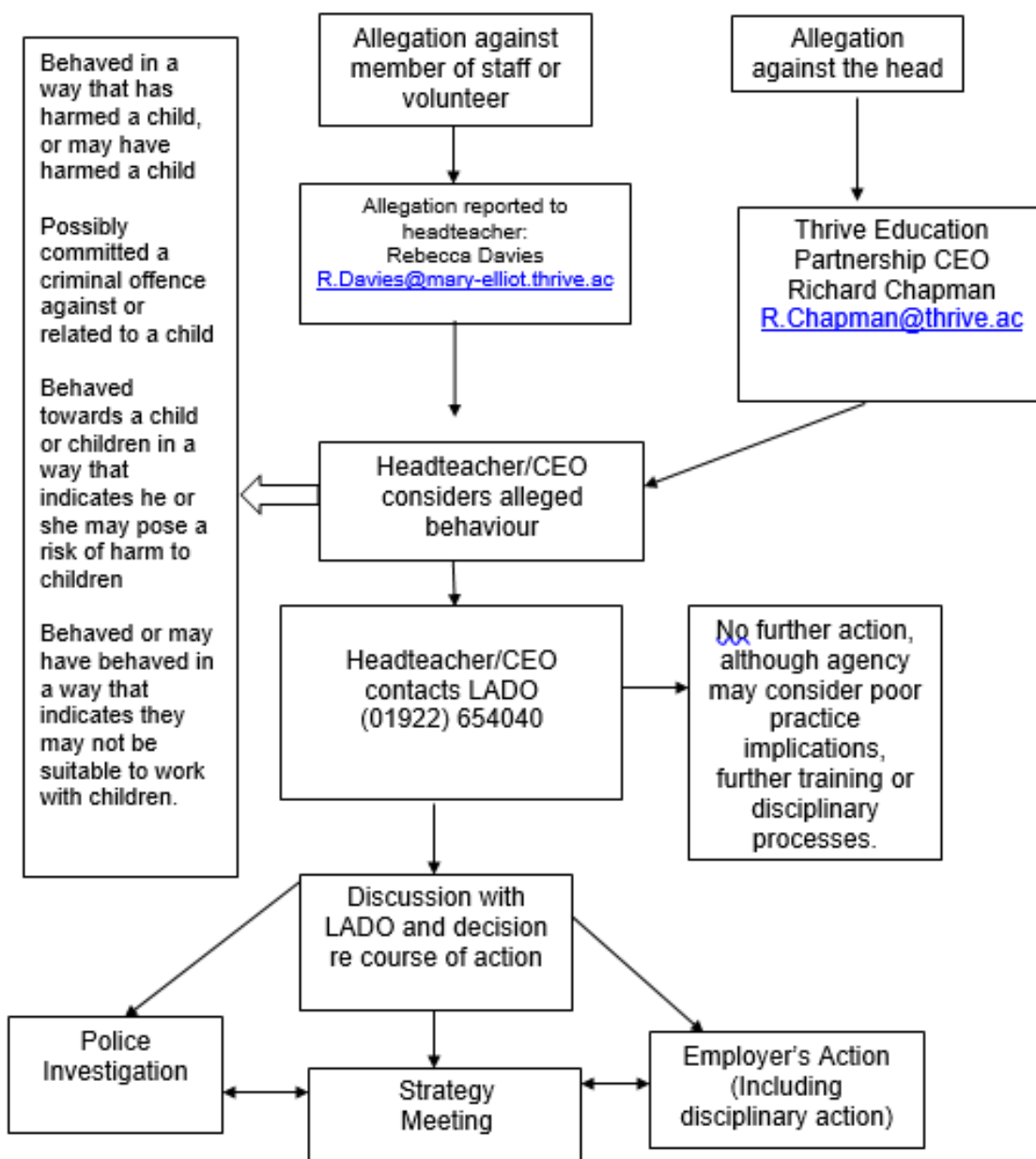
5.17. Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:

- criminal activity, (for example, fraud, corruption or theft has been or is likely to be committed)
- miscarriages of justice;
- danger to health and safety to staff and/or pupils;
- damage to the environment;
- failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements;
- bribery;
- financial fraud or mismanagement;
- negligence; breach of our internal policies and procedures;
- conduct likely to damage our reputation;

- unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;
- where a child is or you suspect a child is at risk of harm, or may have been harmed;
  - deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

5.18. The Trust Whistleblowing Policy outlines the processes to follow should staff feel that this course of action is necessary, including external whistleblowing routes.

5.19. Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers



Assessment by Children's Services e.g. s47 Child Protection Enquiry

LADO tracks progress, monitors outcomes and reports to Walsall Safeguarding Partnership and DfE

## 6. Appendix 1 - The seven golden rules to sharing information

- Remember that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.
- Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
- Seek advice from other practitioners, or your information governance lead, if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
- Where possible, share information with consent, and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. Under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 you may share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be clear of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you do not have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.
- Consider safety and well-being: base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.
- Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles).
- Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

## 7. Appendix 2 – Additional advice and support

Abuse or Safeguarding issue	Link to Guidance/Advice	Source
Abuse	What to do if you're worried a child is being abused	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2</a>
	Domestic abuse: Various Information/Guidance	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help</a>
	Faith based abuse: National Action Plan	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-action-plan-to-tackle-child-abuse-linked-to-faith-or-belief">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-action-plan-to-tackle-child-abuse-linked-to-faith-or-belief</a>
	Relationship abuse: disrespect nobody	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disrespect-nobody-campaign">https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disrespect-nobody-campaign</a>
	CSA Centre, supporting practice in tackling child sexual abuse.	<a href="https://www.csacentre.org.uk/research-resources/practice-resources/film-series/">https://www.csacentre.org.uk/research-resources/practice-resources/film-series/</a>  <a href="#">Resources for education settings   CSA Centre</a>
	NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework	<a href="https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2019/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework">https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2019/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework</a>
	The Lucy Faithfull Foundation also run shorespace.org.uk which provides a safe and anonymous place for young people to get help and support to prevent harmful sexual behaviours.	<a href="https://shorespace.org.uk/">https://shorespace.org.uk/</a>

	Contextual Safeguarding Network – self-assessment toolkit for schools to assess their own response to HSB and levers for addressing HSB in schools.	<a href="https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/toolkits/beyond-referrals/">https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/toolkits/beyond-referrals/</a>
	Advice for schools and colleges on responding to incidents of non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people</a>
Bullying	Preventing bullying including cyberbullying	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying</a>
Children and the courts	Advice for 5-11-year olds witnesses in criminal courts	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/young-witness-booklet-for-5-to-11-year-olds">Young witness booklet for 5 to 11 year olds - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>
	Advice for 12-17 year old witnesses in criminal courts	12 -17 year olds <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/young-witness-booklet-for-12-to-17-year-olds">Young witness booklet for 12 to 17 year olds - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>
Children missing from education, home or care	Children missing education	DfE statutory guidance <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education</a>
	Child missing from home or care	DfE statutory guidance <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-who-run-away-or-go-missing-from-home-or-care">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-who-run-away-or-go-missing-from-home-or-care</a>
	Children and adults missing strategy	Home Office strategy <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-and-adults-missing-strategy">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-and-adults-missing-strategy</a>

		<a href="#">lications/missing-children-and-adults-strategy</a>
Children with family members in prison	National Information Centre on Children of Offenders	Barnardo's in partnership with Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) advice <a href="https://www.nicco.org.uk/">https://www.nicco.org.uk/</a>
Child exploitation	County Lines: criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults	Home Office guidance <a href="https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/information/">https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/information/</a>  professionals/resources/county-lines-toolkit
	Care of unaccompanied migrant children and victims of modern day slavery.	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-of-unaccompanied-and-trafficked-children">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-of-unaccompanied-and-trafficked-children</a>
	Child exploitation disruption toolkit	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-exploitation-disruption-toolkit">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-exploitation-disruption-toolkit</a>
	Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked	DfE and HO guidance <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-who-may-have-been-trafficked-practice-guidance">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-who-may-have-been-trafficked-practice-guidance</a>
	Preventing child sexual exploitation	<a href="#">Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation   The Children's Society</a>
Children with a social worker	Role of Virtual School	DfE guidance
Drugs	Drugs-advice for schools	DfE and ACPO advice

	Drug strategy 2017	Home Office strategy
	Information and advice on drugs	Talk to Frank website
	ADEPIS platform sharing information and resources for schools: covering drug (& alcohol) prevention	Website developed by Mentor UK
"Honour Based Abuse" (so called)	Female genital mutilation: information and resources	Home Office
	Faith based Abuse: National Action Plan	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-action-plan-to-tackle-child-abuse-linked-to-faith-or-belief">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-action-plan-to-tackle-child-abuse-linked-to-faith-or-belief</a>
	Female genital mutilation: multi agency statutory guidance	DfE, DH, and HO statutory guidance
	Forced marriage: information and practice guidelines The Right to Choose	Foreign Commonwealth Office and Home Office <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/forced-marriage-resource-pack">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/forced-marriage-resource-pack</a>
Health and Well-being	Fabricated or induced illness: safeguarding children	DfE, Department for Health and Home Office
	Rise Above: Free PSHE resources on health, wellbeing and resilience	Public Health England resources

	Medical-conditions: supporting students at school	DfE statutory guidance
	Mental health and behaviour	DfE advice
Homelessness	Homelessness: How local authorities should exercise their functions	HCLG
Online	Sexting: responding to incidents and safeguarding children Teaching online safety in school Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes Technical standards for schools for Cybersecurity Filtering and monitoring	UK Council for Child Internet Safety  DfE – statutory guidance DfE advice  DFE advice DFE advice
Private fostering	Private fostering: local authorities	DfE - statutory guidance
Police Powers	PACE	Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) CODE C
Public Health England	Rise Above: secondary school mental health lessons and support	Public Health
Radicalisation	Prevent duty guidance	Home Office guidance

	Prevent duty advice for schools	DfE advice
	Educate Against Hate Website	DfE and Home Office
Violence	Gangs and youth violence: for schools and colleges	Home Office advice
	Tackling violence against women and girls strategy	DfE July 2021
	Violence against women and girls: national statement of expectations for victims	Home Office guidance
	Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges	DfE advice Sept 2021 (now incorporated into KCSIE 2025)
	Serious violence strategy	Home Office Strategy

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66320b06c084007696fca731/info\\_sharing\\_advice\\_content\\_May\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66320b06c084007696fca731/info_sharing_advice_content_May_2024.pdf)

## 8. Key Contacts for Safeguarding and Child Protection

### 8.1. Academy Contacts:

Designated safeguarding lead: Rachael Bowen  
[R.Bowen@mary-elliott.thrive.ac](mailto:R.Bowen@mary-elliott.thrive.ac)

Head Teacher: Rebecca Davies  
[R.Davies@mary-elliott.thrive.ac](mailto:R.Davies@mary-elliott.thrive.ac)

Designated Teacher for Looked After Children/Children In Care: Lara Latham

[L.Latham@mary-elliott.thrive.ac](mailto:L.Latham@mary-elliott.thrive.ac)

Family Liaison and Multi-Agency Coordinator: Jade Downen

[JDownen@mary-elliott.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:JDownen@mary-elliott.walsall.sch.uk)

Trust Safeguarding and Attendance Manager: James Simoniti

Trust CEO: Richard Chapman

## 8.2. **Local Authority Contacts:**

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

[lado@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:lado@walsall.gov.uk)

Tel: 01922 652322

Local Authority Social (MASH)

[MASH@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:MASH@walsall.gov.uk)

Tel: 0300 555 2866/Out of Hours 0300 555 2836

Disabled Children and Young People Team

Tel: 01922 652 860

Adult Social Care: Learning Disability/Transition Teams

Email: [learningdisabilityteam@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:learningdisabilityteam@walsall.gov.uk)

Tel: 0300 555 2922

Virtual School Head: Lorraine Thompson

Email: [Lorraine.Thompson@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:Lorraine.Thompson@walsall.gov.uk)

Tel: 07825 860581

## 8.3. **Helpline Numbers**

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

NCPCC Childline: 0800 1111

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

## 9. **Changes**

Description	Date
KCSIE 2024 updated to 2025	August 2025
Addition of Families First for Children to overview	August 2025
Safeguarding Governor, SENCO, Designated Teacher for LAC and Online Safety Lead Updated	August 2025

Addition of Safeguarding and attendance manager	
Addition of web link – recommendations for Filtering and Monitoring	August 2025
Additional training through the National College platform	August 2025
Updated Document Links – KCSIE 2025, Working together to improve attendance, Walsall Children's Services Procedures Manual	August 2025
Addition of Families First for Children information and removal of Early Help Information	August 2025
Addition of Families First for Children information	August 2025
Updated name of Exploitation Team Manager	August 2025
New information regarding assurances from Alternative Provisions	August 2025
Updated Web link – Young carers	August 2025
Updated information – Early Help Senior Project Officer for Young Carers and web link	August 2025
Addition of web link – Shore Space	August 2025
Addition of Families First for Children information	August 2025
Updated web link for FaST	August 2025
Updated web link for KCSIE 2025	August 2025
Updated Training platform information	August 2025
Removal of section from previous policy – New trust process	August 2025
Updated process and web link – Care Check	August 2025
Removal of section from previous policy - new DBS is always sourced	August 2025
Removal of section from previous policy - a new DBS is always requested	August 2025

Removal of section from previous policy – Duplicated information	August 2025
Removal of previously included information in section 5.31 – We do not take a copy of the DBS certificate	August 2025
Updated information of Walsall Local Authority DBS assurance letter for visitors	August 2025
Updated Process – in line with whistleblowing policy	August 2025
Updated Process Flowchart	August 2025
CSA resources web link	August 2025
Preventing CSE Web link	August 2025
Updated Email for Designated Teacher	August 2025