**Worth Valley Primary School**



**Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent Policy**

(Model policy published September 2013)

Adopted by the Governing Body: September 2020 (Ratification pending)

Chair of Governing Body: Sam Quigley

Headteacher: Miss C Lodge

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## Introduction

* This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Education Act 2002, and in line with government publications: ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ 2018, Revised Safeguarding Statutory Guidance 2 ‘Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families’ 2000, ‘What to do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused’ 2015. The guidance reflects, ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ September 2020. This policy is also based on the following legislation: [The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2009/2680/contents/made), which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least one person conducting an interview to be trained in safer recruitment techniques. Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the [Serious Crime Act 2015](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/9/part/5/crossheading/female-genital-mutilation), which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18, [Statutory guidance on FGM](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation), which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM , [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/53), which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children, Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/schedule/4), which defines what ‘regulated activity’ is in relation to children, [Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance), which explains schools’ duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.
* The Governing Body takes seriously its responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our school to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm.
* We recognise that all adults, including temporary staff[[1]](#footnote-1), volunteers and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm, and that the child’s welfare is our paramount concern.
* All staff believe that our school should provide a caring, positive safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.
* The aims of this policy are:
* To support the child’s development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
* To provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident, and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties, believing they will be effectively listened to.
* To raise the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse (Reference Appendices 1 and 2)
* To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure we, the school, contribute to assessments of need and support packages for those children.
* To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
* To develop a structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
* To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the Police and Social Care.
* To ensure that all staff working within our school who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability, including verification of their identity, qualifications, and a satisfactory CRB check (according to guidance)[[2]](#footnote-2), and a central record is kept for audit.

## 2. Safe School, Safe Staff

We will ensure that:

* All members of the governing body understand and fulfil their responsibilities, namely to ensure that:
* there is a Child Protection policy together with a staff behaviour (code of conduct) section in the Staff Handbook.
* the school operates safer recruitment procedures by ensuring that there is at least one person on every recruitment panel that has completed Safer Recruitment training
* the school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers and to make a referral to the DBS if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have had they not resigned.
* a senior leader has Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) responsibility; in this case it is the Headteacher
* on appointment, the DSLs undertake interagency training and also undertake DSL‘new to role’ and an ‘update’ course every 2 years
* all other staff have Safeguarding training updated as appropriate
* any weaknesses in Child Protection are remedied immediately
* a member of the Governing Body, usually the Chair, is nominated to liaise with the LA on Child Protection issues and in the event of an allegation of abuse made against the Headteacher
* Child Protection policies and procedures are reviewed annually and that the Child Protection policy is available on the school website or by other means
* the Governing Body considers how children may be taught about safeguarding. This may be part of a broad and balanced curriculum covering relevant issues through personal social health and economic education (PSHE) and/or for maintained schools through sex and relationship education (SRE).
* The Lead DSL, Ceinwen Lodge, is a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) are Rachael Page, Lisa Boothroyd and Caroline Oram. These Officers have undertaken the relevant training, and, upon appointment will undertake CP ‘new to role’ training followed by biannual updates.
* The Safeguarding Leads who are involved in recruitment and at least one member of the LGB will also complete safer recruitment training (currently on-line on the DfE website) to be renewed every 5 years.
* All members of staff and volunteers are provided with child protection awareness information at induction, including in their arrival pack, the school safeguarding statement so that they know who to discuss a concern with.
* All members of staff are trained in and receive regular updates in e-safety and reporting concerns
* All other staff and LGB members, have child protection awareness training, updated by the DSL as appropriate, to maintain their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse.
* All members of staff, volunteers, and LGB members know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse through delivery of Child Protection Training.
* All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to child protection procedures through publication of the school’s Child Protection Policy, and reference to it in our Parents’ Handbook.
* Our lettings policy will seek to ensure the suitability of adults working with children on school sites at any time.
* Community users organising activities for children are aware of the school’s child protection guidelines and procedures.
* We will ensure that child protection type concerns or allegations against adults working in the school are referred to the LADO[[3]](#footnote-3) for advice, and that any member of staff found not suitable to work with children will be notified to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)[[4]](#footnote-4) for consideration for barring, following resignation, dismissal, or when we cease to use their service as a result of a substantiated allegation, in the case of a volunteer.

Our procedures will be regularly reviewed and up-dated.

* The name of the designated members of staff for Child Protection, the DSLs and DDSL, will be clearly advertised in the school, with a statement explaining the school’s role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.
* All new members of staff will be given a copy of our safeguarding statement, and child protection policy, with the Safeguarding Leads’ names clearly displayed, as part of their induction into the school.
* The policy is available publicly either on the school website or by other means. Parents/carers are made aware of this policy and their entitlement to have a copy of it via the school handbook/newsletter/website.

## Responsibilities

The DSLs are responsible for:

* Referring a child if there are concerns about possible abuse, to the *Local Authority*, and acting as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns. Referrals should be made in writing, following a telephone call using the MARF (Multi Agency Referral Form)
* Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.
* Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records, until the child’s 25th birthday, and are forwarded on to the child’s next school or college.
* Ensuring that an indication of the existence of the additional file in 3.1.3 above is marked on the pupil records.
* Liaising with other agencies and professionals.
* Ensuring that either they or the staff member attend case conferences, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings, contribute to assessments, and provide a report which has been shared with the parents.
* Ensuring that any pupil currently with a child protection plan who is absent in the educational setting without explanation for two days is referred to their key worker’s Social Care Team.
* Organising child protection induction, and update training every year, for all school staff.
* Providing, with the Headteacher, an annual report for the LGB, detailing any changes to the policy and procedures; training undertaken by the DSL and DDSLs, and by all staff and governors; number and type of incidents/cases, and number of children on the child protection register (anonymised)[[5]](#footnote-5)

## Supporting Children

* We recognise that a child who is abused or witnesses violence may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth.
* We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.
* We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.
* Our school will support all children by:
* Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness, through the curriculum as well as our relationships, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying.
* Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school.
* Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
* Notifying Social Care as soon as there is a significant concern.
* Providing continuing support to a child about whom there have been concerns who leaves the school by ensuring that appropriate information is copied under confidential cover to the child’s new setting and ensuring the school medical records are forwarded as a matter of priority.

## Confidentiality

* We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.
* The Headteacher (DSL) or DDSLs will disclose any information about a child to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.
* All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
* All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child’s safety or wellbeing.
* We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Social Care with their parents /carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult Children’s Safeguarding and Reviewing Unit.
* Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children
* The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe
* If staff need to share ‘special category personal data’, the DPA 2018 contains ‘safeguarding of children and individuals at risk’ as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk

## Supporting Staff

* We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting.
* We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSL and DDSLs and to seek further support as appropriate.

## Allegations against staff

* All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.
* All Staff should be aware of the school’s own Behaviour Management policy.
* Guidance about conduct and safe practice, including safe use of mobile phones by staff and volunteers will be given at induction[[6]](#footnote-6)
* We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff.
* If such an allegation is made, or information is received which suggests that a person may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the allegation or aware of the information, will immediately inform the Headteacher[[7]](#footnote-7).
* The Headteacher on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
* If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Governors who will consult as in 7.6 above, without notifying the Headteacher first.
* The school will follow Bradford’s procedures for managing allegations against staff. Under no circumstances will we send a child home, pending such an investigation, unless this advice is given exceptionally, as a result of a consultation with the LADO.
* Suspension of the member of staff, excluding the Headteacher, against whom an allegation has been made, needs careful consideration, and the Headteacher will seek the advice of the LADO and Personnel Consultant in making this decision.
* In the event of an allegation against the Headteacher, the decision to suspend will be made by the Chair of Governors with advice.

## Whistle-blowing

* If you have concerns about a member of staff (including a supply teacher or volunteer), or an allegation is made about a member of staff (including a supply teacher or volunteer) posing a risk of harm to children, speak to the headteacher.
* We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.
* All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. If it becomes necessary to consult outside the school, they should speak in the first instance, to the Area Education Officer/LADO following the Whistleblowing Policy.
* Whistle-blowing re the Headteacher should be made to the Chair of the Governing Body whose contact details are readily available to staff.

## Allegations of abuse made against other pupils

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”.

We also recognise the gendered nature of peer-on-peer abuse. However, all peer-on-peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our school’s behaviour policy, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

* Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
* Could put pupils in the school at risk
* Is violent
* Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
* Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including sexting)

If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil:

* You must record the allegation and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it
* The DSL will contact the local authority children’s social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
* The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed
* The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate

We will minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse by:

* Challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour, including requesting or sending sexual images
* Being vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
* Ensuring our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
* Ensuring pupils know they can talk to staff confidentially
* Ensuring staff are trained to understand that a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy

## Sexting

**Your responsibilities when responding to an incident**

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

You must **not**:

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

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

**Initial review meeting**

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

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

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

* The incident involves an adult
* There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs)
* What the DSL knows about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person’s developmental stage, or are violent
* The imagery involves sexual acts and any pupil in the imagery is under 13
* The DSL has reason to believe a pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming)

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

**Further review by the DSL**

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

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

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

**Informing parents**

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

**Referring to the police**

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through dialling 101.

**Recording incidents**

All sexting incidents and the decisions made in responding to them will be recorded.

**Curriculum coverage**

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

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

Pupils also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:

* Specific requests or pressure to provide (or forward) such images
* The receipt of such images

## If you discover that FGM has taken place or a pupil is at risk of FGM

The Department for Education’s Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises “all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs”.

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as ‘female genital cutting’, ‘circumcision’ or ‘initiation’.

Possible indicators that a pupil has already been subjected to FGM, and factors that suggest a pupil may be at risk, are set out in appendix 2.

**Any teacher** who discovers (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **pupil under 18** must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it.

Unless they have been specifically told not to disclose, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve children’s social care as appropriate.

**Any other member of staff** who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **pupil under 18** must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine pupils.

**Any member of staff** who suspects a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out or discovers that a pupil **aged 18 or over** appears to have been a victim of FGM must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

## If you have a mental health concern

Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, 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.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children’s experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action by reporting these concerns to a DSL.

If you have a mental health concern that is **not** also a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL to agree a course of action.

## Physical Intervention

We acknowledge that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, when a child is endangering him/herself or others, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.

Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness.

Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention will be appropriately trained in the *Team Teaching* technique.

We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

We recognise that touch is appropriate in the context or working with children, and all staff have been given ‘Safe Practice’ guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundary.

## Anti-Bullying

Our school policy on anti-bullying is set out in a separate document and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. This includes all forms e.g. cyber, racist, homophobic and gender related bullying. We keep a record of known bullying incidents. All staff are aware that children with SEND and / or differences/perceived differences are more susceptible to being bullied / victims of child abuse. We keep a record of all bullying incidents.

## Racist Incidents

Our policy on racist incidents is set out separately, and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. We keep a record of all racist incidents.

## Prevention

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our children by providing children with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

The school community will therefore:

* Work to establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to.
* Include regular consultation with children e.g. through safety questionnaires, participation in anti-bullying week, asking children to report whether they have had happy/sad lunchtimes/playtimes
* Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
* Include safeguarding across the curriculum, including PSHE, opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help. In particular this will include anti-bullying work, e-safety, road safety, pedestrian and cycle training. Also focused work in Year 6 to prepare for transition to Secondary school and more personal safety/independent travel.
* Ensure all staff are aware of school guidance for their use of mobile technology and have discussed safeguarding issues around the use of mobile technologies and their associated risks.

## Notifying parents

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with the child’s parents. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure.

Other staff will only talk to parents about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL.

If we believe that notifying the parents would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the local authority children’s social care team before doing so.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents of all the children involved.

## Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities

We recognise that pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group, including:

* Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child’s disability without further exploration
* Pupils being more prone to peer group isolation than other pupils
* The potential for pupils with SEN and disabilities being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
* Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

We offer extra pastoral support for pupils with SEN and disabilities.

## Pupils with a social worker

Pupils may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. We recognise that a child’s experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

The DSL and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

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

* Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks
* The provision of pastoral and/or academic support

## Looked-after and previously looked-after children

We will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked-after children and previously looked-after children safe. In particular, we will ensure that:

* Appropriate staff have relevant information about children’s looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements
* The DSL has details of children’s social workers and relevant virtual school heads

We have appointed a designated teacher who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children and previously looked-after children in line with [statutory guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children).

The designated teacher is appropriately trained and has the relevant qualifications and experience to perform the role.

As part of their role, the designated teacher will:

* Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
* Work with virtual school heads to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including discussing how pupil premium plus funding can be best used to support looked-after children and meet the needs identified in their personal education plans

## Mobile phones and cameras

Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use, but will limit such use to non-contact time when pupils are not present. Staff members’ personal phones will remain in their bags or cupboards during contact time with pupils.

Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras.

We will follow the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 when taking and storing photos and recordings for use in the school.

## Record-keeping

We will hold records in line with our records retention schedule.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Non-confidential records will be easily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

Safeguarding records relating to individual children will be retained for a reasonable period of time after they have left the school.

If a child for whom the school has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that their child protection file is forwarded promptly and securely, and separately from the main pupil file. In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child.

## Health & Safety

* Our Health & Safety policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both physically within the school environment, and for example in relation to internet use, and when away from the school and when undertaking school trips and visits.

## Checking the identity and suitability of visitors

* All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff.
* If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.
* Visitors are expected to sign in on Inventry and wear a visitor’s badge.
* Visitors to the school who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists and school improvement officers, will be asked to show photo ID and:
* Will be asked to show their DBS certificate, which will be checked alongside their photo ID; or
* The organisation sending the professional, such as the LA or educational psychology service, will provide prior written confirmation that an enhanced DBS check with barred list information has been carried out. These visitors will wear a green lanyard.
* All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times and will wear a red lanyard.
* We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise pupils or staff.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Our Child Protection Policy and Procedures will be monitored and evaluated by:

* Governing Body visits to the school
* SLT ‘drop ins’ and discussions with children and staff
* Pupil surveys and questionnaires
* Scrutiny of Attendance data
* Scrutiny of range of risk assessments
* Scrutiny of GB minutes
* Logs of bullying/racist/behaviour incidents for SLT and GB to monitor
* Review of parental concerns and parent questionnaires

**This policy also links to our policies on:**

*Behaviour,*

*Staff Behaviour / Code of Conduct*

*Whistleblowing,*

*Anti-bullying,*

*Health & Safety*

*Allegations against staff,*

*Parental concerns,*

*Attendance,*

*Curriculum*

*PSHE*

*Teaching and Learning*

*Administration of medicines*

*Drug Education*

*Sex and Relationships Education*

*Physical intervention*

*ESafety, including staff use of mobile phones*

*Risk Assessment*

*Recruitment and Selection*

*Intimate Care*

# **Appendix one**

## Recognising signs of child abuse

**Categories of Abuse:**

* Physical Abuse
* Emotional Abuse (including Domestic Abuse)
* Sexual Abuse
* Neglect

## Signs of Abuse in Children:

The following non-specific signs may indicate something is wrong:

* + Significant change in behaviour
  + Extreme anger or sadness
  + Aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour
  + Suspicious bruises with unsatisfactory explanations
  + Lack of self-esteem
  + Self-injury
  + Depression
  + Age inappropriate sexual behaviour
  + Child Sexual Exploitation.

## Risk Indicators

The factors described in this section are frequently found in cases of child abuse. Their presence is not proof that abuse has occurred, but:

* Must be regarded as indicators of the possibility of significant harm
* Justifies the need for careful assessment and discussion with designated / named / lead person, manager, (or in the absence of all those individuals, an experienced colleague)
* May require consultation with and / or referral to Children’s Services

The absence of such indicators does not mean that abuse or neglect has not occurred.

In an abusive relationship the child may:

* Appear frightened of the parent/s
* Act in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development (though full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups)

The parent or carer may:

* Persistently avoid child health promotion services and treatment of the child’s episodic illnesses
* Have unrealistic expectations of the child
* Frequently complain about/to the child and may fail to provide attention or praise (high criticism/low warmth environment)
* Be absent or misusing substances
* Persistently refuse to allow access on home visits
* Be involved in domestic abuse

Staff should be aware of the potential risk to children when individuals, previously known or suspected to have abused children, move into the household.

## Recognising Physical Abuse

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

* An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury
* Several different explanations provided for an injury
* Unexplained delay in seeking treatment
* The parents/carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury
* Parents are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment
* Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a “cry for help” and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury)
* Family use of different doctors and A&E departments
* Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries

### **Bruising**

Children can have accidental bruising, but the following must be considered as non accidental unless there is evidence or an adequate explanation provided:

* Any bruising to a pre-crawling or pre-walking baby
* Bruising in or around the mouth, particularly in small babies which may indicate force feeding
* Two simultaneous bruised eyes, without bruising to the forehead, (rarely accidental, though a single bruised eye can be accidental or abusive)
* Repeated or multiple bruising on the head or on sites unlikely to be injured accidentally
* Variation in colour possibly indicating injuries caused at different times
* The outline of an object used e.g. belt marks, hand prints or a hair brush
* Bruising or tears around, or behind, the earlobe/s indicating injury by pulling or twisting
* Bruising around the face
* Grasp marks on small children
* Bruising on the arms, buttocks and thighs may be an indicator of sexual abuse

### **Bite Marks**

Bite marks can leave clear impressions of the teeth. Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped. Those over 3 cm in diameter are more likely to have been caused by an adult or older child.

A medical opinion should be sought where there is any doubt over the origin of the bite.

### **Burns and Scalds**

It can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns and scalds, and will always require experienced medical opinion. Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious e.g.:

* Circular burns from cigarettes (but may be friction burns if along the bony protuberance of the spine)
* Linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements
* Burns of uniform depth over a large area
* Scalds that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid (a child getting into hot water is his/her own accord will struggle to get out and cause splash marks)
* Old scars indicating previous burns/scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation

Scalds to the buttocks of a small child, particularly in the absence of burns to the feet, are indicative of dipping into a hot liquid or bath.

### **Fractures**

Fractures may cause pain, swelling and discolouration over a bone or joint.

Non-mobile children rarely sustain fractures.

There are grounds for concern if:

* The history provided is vague, non-existent or inconsistent with the fracture type
* There are associated old fractures
* Medical attention is sought after a period of delay when the fracture has caused symptoms such as swelling, pain or loss of movement
* There is an unexplained fracture in the first year of life

### **Scars**

A large number of scars or scars of different sizes or ages, or on different parts of the body, may suggest abuse.

## Recognising Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. The manifestations of emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse.

The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

* Developmental delay
* Abnormal attachment between a child and parent/carer e.g. anxious, indiscriminate or not attachment
* Indiscriminate attachment or failure to attach
* Aggressive behaviour towards others
* Scape-goated within the family
* Frozen watchfulness, particularly in pre-school children
* Low self-esteem and lack of confidence
* Withdrawn or seen as a “loner” – difficulty relating to others

## Recognising Signs of Sexual Abuse

Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and/or fear. This is particularly difficult for a child to talk about and full account should be taken of the cultural sensitivities of any individual child/family.

Recognition can be difficult, unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional/behavioural.

Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

* Inappropriate sexualised conduct
* Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child’s age
* Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation
* Self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts
* Involvement in prostitution or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners
* An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes e.g. for sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties)

Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

* Pain or itching of genital area
* Blood on underclothes
* Pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed
* Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted disease, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing

### **Sexual Abuse by Young People**

The boundary between what is abusive and what is part of normal childhood or youthful experimentation can be blurred. The determination of whether behaviour is developmental, inappropriate or abusive will hinge around the related concepts of true consent, power imbalance and exploitation. This may include children and young people who exhibit a range of sexually problematic behaviour such as indecent exposure, obscene telephone calls, fetishism, bestiality and sexual abuse against adults, peers or children.

Developmental Sexual Activity encompasses those actions that are to be expected from children and young people as they move from infancy through to an adult understanding of their physical, emotional and behavioural relationships with each other. Such sexual activity is essentially information gathering and experience testing. It is characterised by mutuality and of the seeking of consent.

Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour can be inappropriate socially, in appropriate to development, or both. In considering whether behaviour fits into this category, it is important to consider what negative effects it has on any of the parties involved and what concerns it raises about a child or young person. It should be recognised that some actions may be motivated by information seeking, but still cause significant upset, confusion, worry, physical damage, etc. it may also be that the behaviour is “acting out” which may derive from other sexual situations to which the child or young person has been exposed.

If an act appears to have been inappropriate, there may still be a need for some form of behaviour management or intervention. For some children, educative inputs may be enough to address the behaviour.

Abusive sexual activity included any behaviour involving coercion, threats, aggression together with secrecy, or where one participant relies on an unequal power base.

## **Assessment**

In order to more fully determine the nature of the incident the following factors should be given consideration. The presence of exploitation in terms of:

* **Equality** – consider differentials of physical, cognitive and emotional development, power and control and authority, passive and assertive tendencies
* **Consent** – agreement including all the following:
  + Understanding that is proposed based on age, maturity, development level, functioning and experience
  + Knowledge of society’s standards for what is being proposed
  + Awareness of potential consequences and alternatives
  + Assumption that agreements or disagreements will be respected equally
  + Voluntary decision
  + Mental competence
* **Coercion –** the young perpetrator who abuses may use techniques like bribing, manipulation and emotional threats of secondary gains and losses that is loss of love, friendship, etc. Some may use physical force, brutality or the threat of these regardless of victim resistance.

In evaluating sexual behaviour of children and young people, the above information should be used only as a guide.

## Recognising Neglect

Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting. Indicators include:

* Failure by parents or carers to meet the basic essential needs e.g. adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene and medical care
* A child seen to be listless, apathetic and irresponsive with no apparent medical cause
* Failure of child to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss
* Child thrives away from home environment
* Child frequently absent from school
* Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent
* Child abandoned or left alone for excessive periods

## Child Sexual Exploitation

The following list of indicators is not exhaustive or definitive but it does highlight common signs which can assist professionals in identifying children or young people who may be victims of sexual exploitation.

Signs include:

* underage sexual activity
* inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour
* sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex
* repeat sexually transmitted infections
* in girls, repeat pregnancy, abortions, miscarriage
* receiving unexplained gifts or gifts from unknown sources
* having multiple mobile phones and worrying about losing contact via mobile
* having unaffordable new things (clothes, mobile) or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs)
* changes in the way they dress
* going to hotels or other unusual locations to meet friends
* seen at known places of concern
* moving around the country, appearing in new towns or cities, not knowing where they are
* getting in/out of different cars driven by unknown adults
* having older boyfriends or girlfriends
* contact with known perpetrators
* involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations
* hanging out with groups of older people, or anti-social groups, or with other vulnerable peers
* associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
* recruiting other young people to exploitative situations
* truancy, exclusion, disengagement with school, opting out of education altogether
* unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual)
* mood swings, volatile behaviour, emotional distress
* self-harming, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, overdosing, eating disorders
* drug or alcohol misuse
* getting involved in crime
* police involvement, police records
* involved in gangs, gang fights, gang membership
* injuries from physical assault, physical restraint, sexual assault.

# **Appendix two**

**THE ‘PREVENT’ DUTY**

Statement of intent

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of the school’s wider safeguarding duties. We will actively assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism. Staff will be alert to changes in children’s behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff will use their professional judgement to identify children who may be at risk of radicalisation and act appropriately – which may include making a referral to the Channel programme. The school will work with the Local Children’s Safeguarding Board as appropriate.

**Radicalisation:** a process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals and aspirations that reject or undermine the status quo or reject and/or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice.

**Extremism:** holding extreme political or religious views; fanaticism.

1. Training

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will undertake Prevent awareness training in order to be able to provide advice and support to other staff on how to protect children against the risk of radicalisation. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will hold formal training sessions with all members of staff to ensure they are aware of the risk indicators and their duties regarding preventing radicalisation.

1. Risk indicators

**Indicators of an identity crisis:**

* Distancing themselves from their cultural/religious heritage
* Uncomfortable with their place in society
* Changing style of dress or personal experience to accord with the group
* Conversation increasingly focused on a particular (potentially extremist) ideology
* Possession of materials or symbols associated with an extremist cause.

**Indicators of a personal crisis:**

* Family tensions
* A sense of isolation
* Low self-esteem
* Disassociation from existing friendship groups
* Loss of interest in activities which they previously engaged with
* Searching for answers to questions about identify, faith and belonging.

**Indicators of vulnerability through personal circumstances:**

* Migration
* Local community tensions
* Events affecting their country or region of origin
* Alienation from UK values
* A sense of grievance triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination.

**Indicators of vulnerability through unmet aspirations:**

* Perceptions of injustice
* Feelings of failure
* Rejection of civic life.

**Other indicators:**

* Using derogatory language about a particular group
* Inappropriate forms of address
* Possession of prejudice related material
* Property damage
* Refusal to cooperate with teachers/adults requests
* Condoning or supporting engagement with extremist ideologies or groups.

1. Making a judgement

When making a judgement, staff will ask themselves the following questions:

* Does the child have access to extremist influences?
* Does the child access the internet for the purposes of extremist activities (e.g. using closed network groups, accessing or distributing extremist material, contacting covertly using Skype, etc.)?
* Is there a reason to believe that the child has been, or is likely to be, involved with extremist organisations?
* Is the child known to possess or actively seek extremist literature/other media likely to incite racial or religious hatred?
* Does the child sympathise with or support illegal/illicit groups?
* Does the child support groups with links to extremist activity?
* Has the child encountered peer, social, family or faith group rejection?
* Is there evidence of extremist ideological, political or religious influence on the child?
* Have international events in areas of conflict and civil unrest had a noticeable impact on the child?
* Has there been a significant shift in the child’s outward appearance that suggests a new social, political or religious influence?
* Has the child come into conflict with family over religious beliefs, lifestyle or dress choices?
* Does the child vocally support terrorist attacks; either verbally or in their written work?
* Has the child witnessed or been the victim of racial or religious hate crime?
* Is there a pattern of regular or extended travel within the UK?
* Has the child travelled for extended periods of time to international locations?
* Does the child have experience of poverty, disadvantage, discrimination or social exclusion?
* Does the child display a lack of affinity or understanding for others?
* Is the child the victim of social isolation?
* Does the child demonstrate a simplistic or flawed understanding of religion or politics?
* Is the child a foreign national, refugee or awaiting a decision on their/their family’s immigration status?
* Does the child have insecure, conflicted or absent family relationships?
* Has the child experienced any trauma in their lives, particularly trauma associated with war or sectarian conflict?
* Is there evidence that a significant adult or other person in the child’s life has extremist views or sympathies?

Critical indicators include where the child is:

* In contact with extremist recruiters
* Articulating support for extremist causes or leaders
* Accessing extremist websites
* Possessing extremist literature
* Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage
* Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues
* Joining extremist organisations
* Making significant changes to their appearance and/or behaviour

1. Referrals

At Worth Valley Primary School, we are committed to protecting our pupils from radicalisation through a process of early intervention.

All staff are encouraged to raise any concerns they might have about a child with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Safeguarding Lead will then assess the situation and decide whether further action is required. If so, they will then discuss any concerns with the Headteacher and decide the best course of action regarding a referral to external agencies Eg. Social Care or the Channel Programme).

Any decisions made will be made on a case-by-case basis and staff must be made aware that if they disagree with a decision not to refer, they are entitled to make a referral themselves where they harbour genuine concerns that a child is at risk.

# **Appendix three**

## Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. It may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. Children or young people who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.

CSE can include both physical contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity. It can also happen online. For example, young people may be persuaded or forced to share sexually explicit images of themselves, have sexual conversations by text, or take part in sexual activities using a webcam. CSE may also occur without the victim’s immediate knowledge, for example through others copying videos or images.

In addition to the CCE indicators above, indicators of CSE can include a child:

* Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
* Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority’s children’s social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Child criminal exploitation

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. It does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be forced to work in cannabis factories, coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Indicators of CCE can include a child:

* Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
* Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
* Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
* Misusing drugs and alcohol
* Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
* Regularly missing school or education
* Not taking part in education

If a member of staff suspects CCE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority’s children’s social care team and the police, if appropriate.

# **Appendix four**

## Forced Marriage (FM)

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. 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.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the ‘one chance’ rule, i.e. we may only have one chance to speak to the potential victim and only one chance to save them.

If a member of staff suspects that a pupil is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the pupil about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

* Speak to the pupil about the concerns in a secure and private place
* Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority’s designated officer
* Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or [fmu@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fmu@fco.gov.uk)
* Refer the pupil to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate

## Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

It is essential that staff are aware of FGM practices and the need to look for signs, symptoms and other indicators of FGM.

What is FGM?

It involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

**4 types of procedure:**

Type 1 Clitoridectomy – partial/total removal of clitoris

Type 2 Excision – partial/total removal of clitoris and labia minora

Type 3 Infibulation entrance to vagina is narrowed by repositioning the inner/outer labia

Type 4 all other procedures that may include: pricking, piercing, incising, cauterising and scraping the genital area.

**Why is it carried out?**

Belief that:

* FGM brings status/respect to the girl – social acceptance for marriage
* Preserves a girl’s virginity
* Part of being a woman / rite of passage
* Upholds family honour
* Cleanses and purifies the girl
* Gives a sense of belonging to the community
* Fulfils a religious requirement
* Perpetuates a custom/tradition
* Helps girls be clean / hygienic
* Is cosmetically desirable
* Mistakenly believed to make childbirth easier

Is FGM legal?

FGM is internationally recognised as a violation of human rights of girls and women. It is **illegal** in most countries including the UK.

Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening

* Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
* Family taking a long trip abroad
* Child’s family being from one of the ‘at risk’ communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leon, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
* Knowledge that the child’s sibling has undergone FGM
* Child talks about going abroad to be ‘cut’ or to prepare for marriage

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:

* Prolonged absence from school and other activities
* Behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued
* Bladder or menstrual problems
* Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
* Complaining about pain between the legs
* Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
* Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
* Reluctance to take part in physical activity
* Repeated urinal tract infection
* Disclosure

**The ‘One Chance’ rule**

As with Forced Marriage there is the ‘One Chance’ rule. It is essential that settings /schools/colleges take action **without delay**.

# **Appendix five**

## Specific safeguarding issues

Children and the court system

Children are sometimes 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 5-11-year olds and 12-17 year olds.

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.

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. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

**Children with family members in prison**

Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. NICCO provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

**County lines**

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”.

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. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children’s homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. 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.

One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism15 should be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

Further information on the signs of a child’s involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office.

Serious violence

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

All staff should be aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to manage these. Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office’s Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance.

Children missing from education

A child going missing from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

* Are at risk of harm or neglect
* Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
* Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
* Come from the families of service personnel
* Go missing or run away from home or care
* Are supervised by the youth justice system
* Cease to attend a school
* Come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the school without a new school being named, and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child’s name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being missing, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority children’s social care team, and the police, if the child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

Domestic abuse

Children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse and/or violence at home where it occurs between family members. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children.

If police are called to an incident of domestic abuse and any children in the household have experienced the incident, the police will inform the key adult in school (usually the designated safeguarding lead) before the child or children arrive at school the following day.

The DSL will provide support according to the child’s needs and update records about their circumstances.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child’s welfare.

The DSL’s will be aware of contact details and referral routes in to the local housing authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity (where appropriate and in accordance with local procedures).

Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will also make a referral to children’s social care.

1. Wherever the word “staff” is used, it covers ALL staff on site, including ancillary supply and self employed staff, contractors, volunteers working with children etc, and governors [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Guidance regarding CRB checks recently updated by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. LADO Local Authority Designated Officer for allegations against staff. AEO Area Education Officer [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Contact the LADO for guidance in any case [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. A model format for the Governors Annual Report is available from Governor Services and at [www.surreycc.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Refer to “Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings” available on the DfE website [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. or Chair of Governors in the event of an allegation against the Headteacher [↑](#footnote-ref-7)