



# Somerford Primary School

## Child Protection Policy

Adopted by the Full Governing Body: November 2024  
Next Review due: November 2025

Our Nominated Governor for Safeguarding is  
Paul O'Connor

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is  
Helen Frampton

Our Deputy Safeguarding Leads are  
Jeremy Wallace  
Luke Thorne  
Lucy Macmillan

An electronic copy of this policy can be found on the school website at

The child protection policy for Somerford Primary School is based on a template provided by the Dorset Safeguarding and Standards Team, guidance from BCP Safeguarding team and The Key for School Leaders; it reflects the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2024.

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## Introduction

Throughout this document, 'child' refers to a young person under the age of 18.

Somerford Primary School recognises that the welfare of the child is **everyone's** responsibility.

We take seriously our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people in our care and this responsibility permeates everything we do.

The Governors recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm or exploitation and that pupils cannot learn effectively unless they feel secure. The Governors will therefore provide a school environment which promotes self-confidence, a feeling of worth and the knowledge that pupil's concerns will be listened to and acted upon.

Governors, staff and volunteers in this school understand the importance of working in partnership with children, their parents/carers and other agencies in order to promote children's welfare.

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2023, HM Government statutory guidance, defines safeguarding as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

The Governing Body will act in accordance with Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and the supporting statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2024 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in this school.

The school staffing (England) Regulations 2009 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.

The Governing Body is accountable for ensuring that the school meets its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding and that all policies, procedures and training are in place and effective.

The Governors will also ensure that the school carries out its statutory duties to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Local Authority Children's Services (usually via the Children's Services First Response Hub) and to assist them in taking appropriate action on behalf of children in need or enquiring into allegations of child abuse or neglect. Somerford Primary School recognises the contribution they can make to

protect and support pupils in their care and contribute to a coordinated offer of early help.

The school is committed to ensuring that best practice is adopted when working with all children, offering them support and protection and accepts that it has a legal and moral responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a duty of care for children, to safeguard their wellbeing and to protect them from abuse.

It is a Safeguarding Standard (recommended by the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership) that governors receive an annual report from the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Nominated Governor to help monitor compliance with statutory responsibilities.

The Standards also include that each school and college completes and submits to the Local Authority an annual audit of its safeguarding and child protection arrangements, including an action plan. Somerford Primary School's most recent audit was completed in November 2024 and will next be completed in November 2025.

All children have the right to be safeguarded from harm or exploitation whatever their

- age
- health or disability
- gender or sexual orientation
- race, religion, belief or first language
- political or immigration status

Governors, staff and regular volunteers in this school understand the importance of taking appropriate action and working in partnership with children, their parents/carers and other agencies to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- afford protection for all pupils
- enable staff and volunteers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- promote a culture which makes this school a safe place to learn and in which children feel safe

This policy applies to Governors, the Headteacher, all staff, including supply and peripatetic staff, volunteers or anyone working on behalf of the school. They must all acknowledge that:

- The child's welfare is of paramount importance and all children have the right to be protected from abuse and neglect.
- It is essential that member of staff's own practice and behaviour puts children's welfare first and cannot be misconstrued in any way and does not contravene accepted good practice.
- All employees and volunteers will receive safeguarding training appropriate to their designation. This is to ensure all staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, how to identify children who may benefit from early help, and raise awareness of the wide range of safeguarding issues and how to help to respond and support the children in their care.
- Children who are being abused, neglected or at risk of harm will only tell people they trust and with whom they feel safe and that any member of staff needs to be able to respond appropriately to a child who discloses evidence of abuse or raises other concerns about their welfare.

- All staff and volunteers must be made aware that they should report any concerns about safeguarding practice or any concerns about staff to the Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors if concern is regarding the Head Teacher) or to the Local Authority LADO or Ofsted.
- The school will take opportunities to teach safeguarding, including online safety as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- always acting in their best interests
- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- involving them in decisions which affect them
- never tolerating bullying, homophobic behaviour, racism, sexism or any other forms of discrimination, including through use of technology
- ensuring the curriculum affords a range of opportunities to learn about keeping themselves safe, particularly when using technology
- Exercising our duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- By ensuring all staff attend 'Prevent' training in respect of radicalisation and extremist behaviour and by assessing the risk of our pupils being drawn into terrorism
- Supporting attendance and taking action if a child is missing school regularly
- Ensuring children feel safe to learn and are protected
- Appointing a senior member of staff from our leadership team as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and ensuring this person has the time, funding, training, resources and support to perform the role effectively
- Appointing at least one Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure there is always someone available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns
- Appointing a Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are Looked-After (in care) and to work closely with the virtual school head to discuss how pupil premium plus additional funding can support the progress of these children and will also have the responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care.
- Ensuring that staff working with Looked-After Children have information appropriate to their role regarding, for example, the child's care arrangements, legal status and contact with birth parents
- Making sure all staff and volunteers are aware of and committed to the safeguarding policy and child protection procedures and also understand their individual responsibility to take action.
- Ensuring that all those named above (i.e. DSLs and Deputy DSLs; Designated Teacher; Headteacher, all staff and volunteers) have training appropriate to their roles as set out in statutory guidance or recommended by the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Working closely with BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership and implementing recommendations from Child Safeguarding Practice reviews to improve the way in which the school works to protect children.
- Identifying any concerns early and providing appropriate help to prevent them from escalating, including working with parents/carers and other agencies as appropriate.
- At Somerford Primary School we employ a play psychotherapist who works a total of 1.5 days a week. We have a trained Thrive Support Assistant supporting children across the school. We have a Pastoral Leader who supports children and families

across the school. We have a full time Inclusion Leader who is non-class based. The school has formed strong relationships with Early Help to ensure children and families receive the support they need at an early stage

- Sharing information about child safeguarding concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving children and their parents/carers appropriately.
- Acknowledging and actively promoting that multi-agency working is the best way to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.
- Taking the right action, in accordance with BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership inter-agency safeguarding procedures, if a child discloses or there are indicators of abuse.
- Ensuring children feel safe to express their views, give feedback and are confident to report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously.
- Keeping clear, accurate and contemporaneous safeguarding and child protection records.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made in accordance with statutory guidance and legal requirements and also making sure that at least one appointment panel member has undertaken safer recruitment training.
- Providing effective management for staff through induction, support, supervision and regular update training appropriate to role.
- Adopting a code of conduct for all staff and volunteers which includes acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications including the use of social media.
- Ensuring our online safety process includes appropriate filters and monitoring systems.
- Ensuring staff and volunteers understand about 'whistle blowing' and
- ensuring staff know how to escalate concerns about pupils or staff if they think the right action has not been taken to safeguard children.
- Promoting a culture in which staff feel able to report to senior leaders with what they consider to be unacceptable behaviour or breaches of the school Code of Conduct by their colleagues, having faith that they will be listened to and appropriate action taken.
- Dealing appropriately with any allegations/concerns about the behaviour of staff or volunteers in accordance with the process set out in statutory guidance.
- Ensuring all staff have safeguarding as part of their induction, are regularly and appropriately trained and that supervision is available for all staff in key significant posts.

This child protection policy forms part of a suite of policies and other documents which relate to the wider safeguarding responsibilities of the school. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the

- [Staff Behaviour Policy \(code of conduct\)](#)
- [Online-safety policies](#) for pupils and staff, which include use of mobile technology
- Safer recruitment Policy and procedures
- Procedures to handle [allegations against members of staff](#) and volunteers, including referring to the Disclosure and Barring Service (when appropriate)
- [Whistle Blowing Policy](#)
- Procedures to respond appropriately when [children are missing education](#) - including Attendance Policy
- [Anti-bullying Procedures](#)
- [Behaviour Policy](#)
- [Complaints Policy](#)

These policies and procedures are on the school website or available from the school office and are shared at induction.

### **Equality statement**

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, both online and offline, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or health conditions
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language (EAL)
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after
- Are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated

### **Aims of Policy**

- To raise awareness of all school staff of the importance of child protection and safeguarding pupils and of their statutory responsibilities for identifying and reporting actual or suspected abuse, neglect or concerns about a child's welfare.
- To ensure pupils and parents are aware that the school takes the safeguarding agenda seriously and will follow the appropriate procedures for identifying and reporting abuse, neglect or concerns about a child's welfare and for dealing with allegations against staff.
- To promote effective liaison with other agencies in order to work together for the protection of all pupils.
- Ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- Ensure staff are properly trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues.
- To support pupils' development in ways which will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To integrate a safeguarding curriculum within the existing curriculum allowing for continuity and progress through all key stages.
- To take account of and inform policy in related areas such as discipline, child on child abuse, bullying, staff and pupil behaviour policies, online-safety and the preventing extremism agenda, attendance and exclusion policy.



These procedures should be read in conjunction with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.

There are 3 main elements to these procedures:

1. **PREVENTION** (positive and safe school environment, careful and vigilant teaching, which includes opportunities to teach safeguarding including online safety, accessible pastoral care, support to pupils, good adult role models).
2. **PROTECTION** (agreed procedures are followed, staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to safeguarding concerns).
3. **SUPPORT** (to pupils, who may have been at risk of significant harm and the way staff respond to their concerns and any work that may be required and to those in need of early help services).

Schools do not operate in isolation. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all adults and especially those working or volunteering with children. The school aims to help protect the children in its care by working consistently and appropriately with all agencies to reduce risk and promote the welfare of children. All practitioners work within the same child protection/safeguarding procedures.

## **1 What is Child Protection?**

**Child protection** is one very important aspect of safeguarding. It refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

**Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children is: protecting children from maltreatment whether that is within or outside the home, including online; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

**Abuse** is a form of maltreatment of a child, and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix 1 explains the different types of abuse.

**Neglect** is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

**Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes** (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery) is where children share nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams. This also includes pseudo-images that are computer-generated images that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video.

The following **3 safeguarding partners** are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will make arrangements to work together to

safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The local authority (LA)
- Integrated care boards (previously known as clinical commissioning groups) for an area within the LA
- The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area

**Victim** is a widely understood and recognised term, but we understand that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim, or would want to be described that way. When managing an incident, we will be prepared to use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with.

**Alleged perpetrator(s) and perpetrator(s)** are widely used and recognised terms. However, we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children) as, in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what's appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

### **What is significant harm?**

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention by statutory agencies in family life in the best interests of children. There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Sometimes it might be a single traumatic event but more often it is a compilation of significant events which damage the child's physical and psychological development. Decisions about significant harm are complex and, in each case, require discussion with the statutory agencies: Children's Social Care and Police.

### **Purpose of these procedures**

These procedures explain what action should be taken if there are concerns that a child is or might be suffering harm.

### **Responsibilities and roles**

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors in the school and is consistent with the procedures of the 3 safeguarding partners. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities.

The school plays a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of a whole-school approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and sexual violence/harassment. This will be underpinned by our:

- Behaviour policy
- Pastoral support system
- Planned programme of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), which is inclusive and delivered regularly

### **All staff**

All adults in the school have an individual responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by taking appropriate action. This includes taking action where there are child protection concerns. All staff will read Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part 1 and Annex B and updating this annually. They will make a declaration

on My Concern at the start of each academic year to say they have reviewed the guidance.

### **Governing Body**

The Governing Body will facilitate a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of, and underpin, all relevant aspects of process and policy development. The board will be aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and our school's local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Governing bodies are accountable for ensuring their school has an effective child protection policy which should be reviewed annually and available publicly, such as on the school website. The Governing body will evaluate and approve the policy at each review, ensure it complies with law & hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

The Governing Body will ensure all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, and that such training is regularly updated and is in line with advice from the safeguarding partners

The statutory safeguarding guidance for schools: 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' states that all schools and colleges should have 'a senior board level (or equivalent) lead to take leadership responsibility' for safeguarding.

The person who takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding on the governing body of this school is: **Paul O'Connor**. This lead will work closely with the DSL, HT and Chair of Governors.

The Governing Body will ensure that the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and review their effectiveness. This includes:

- Making sure staff are aware of the provisions in place and they understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring.
- Reviewing the DfE'S filtering and monitoring standards and discussing with service providers what needs to be done to support the school in meeting these standards.

The Governing Body will make sure:

- The DSL has the appropriate status and authority to carry out their job, including additional time, funding, training, resources and support
- Online safety is a running and interrelated theme within the whole-school approach to safeguarding and related policies
- The DSL has lead authority for safeguarding, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place
- The school has procedures to manage any safeguarding concerns (no matter how small) or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold (low-level concerns) about staff members (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors).
- That this policy reflects that children with SEND, or certain medical or physical health conditions, can face additional barriers to any abuse or neglect being recognised

Where another body is providing services or activities (regardless of whether or not the children who attend these services/activities are children on the school roll):

- Seek assurance that the other body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies/procedures in place, and inspect them if needed
- Make sure there are arrangements for the body to liaise with the school about safeguarding arrangements, where appropriate
- Make sure that safeguarding requirements are a condition of using the school premises, and that any agreement to use the premises would be terminated if the other body fails to comply

The chair of governors will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, where appropriate.

All governors will read Keeping Children Safe in Education in its entirety.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

This school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is part of the Senior Leadership Team. The DSL (and any deputies) is most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture. This is the person who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and online safety in the school and understanding our filtering and monitoring processes on school devices and school networks to keep pupils safe online.

The DSL should have details of the local authority Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support care leavers. Any concerns about children should be discussed with / reported to the DSL who will decide what action to take including referring to Children's Social Care or Police as appropriate. More information about the DSL role can be found in Annex C of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead in this school is: **Helen Frampton, Headteacher**

The school also has three Deputy Safeguarding Leads.

The Deputy Safeguarding Leads are: **Jeremy Wallace, Deputy Headteacher, Lucy Macmillan, Pastoral Lead and Luke Thorne, SENCO.**

A Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will always be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

The DSL will have the appropriate training, authority, time, funding, support and resources to fulfil the duties of the role. The role of the DSL is set out in KCSIE 2024 (Annex C) and this is explicit in the DSL's job description. This includes:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so
- Contribute to the assessment of children
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority children's social care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly
- Have a good understanding of harmful sexual behaviour
- Have a good understanding of the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place at our school
- Make sure that staff have appropriate Prevent training and induction

The DSL will also:

- Liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate
- Discuss the local response to sexual violence and sexual harassment with police and local authority children's social care colleagues to prepare the school's policies
- Be confident that they know what local specialist support is available to support all children involved (including victims and alleged perpetrators) in sexual violence and sexual harassment, and be confident as to how to access this support
- Be aware that children must have an 'appropriate adult' to support and help them in the case of a police investigation or search

Adequate and appropriate cover will be arranged for out of hours / out of term activities. The DSL can always be contacted by email [hframpton@somerford.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:hframpton@somerford.dorset.sch.uk).

In the absence of the DSL, all staff will be aware of which Deputy is available via the weekly diary sheet.

The DSL and Deputy DSL will liaise with the three safeguarding partners of the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership and with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children.

The NSPCC – 'When to call the Police' will help the DSL to understand when they should consider calling the police and what they should expect.

All DSLs and DDSs have monthly supervision from Talking Heads Oak Practice.

### **The Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers:

- Are informed of our systems that support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction
- Understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect
- Communicating this policy to parents/carers when their child joins the school and via the school website
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate
- Making decisions regarding all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL on this
- Ensuring the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable
- Making sure each child in the Early Years Foundation Stage is assigned a key person
- Overseeing the safe use of technology, mobile phones and cameras in the setting

### **Virtual school heads**

Virtual school heads have a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment and progress of pupils with a social worker. They should also identify and engage with key professionals, e.g. DSLs, special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs), social workers, mental health leads and others.

In addition, Children's Social Care can provide advice and guidance on safeguarding and child protection matters.

See Appendix 1 for contact details.

All action is taken in line with the following guidance:

- DfE guidance (2024) – Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) – published by HM Government
- BCP Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures & Guidance, accessed through the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership website.
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – Government Guidance (2015)

### **Designated Teacher for children in care**

The school has a Designated Teacher who is: *Helen Frampton*

The Designated Teacher on commencement of sections 4 to 6 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, has the responsibility to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after (as above) and those children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from the state care outside England and Wales.

A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have skills knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children it is important that all agencies work together, and prompt action is taken on concerns to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.

The Designated Teacher must have appropriate training and the relevant qualifications and experience. In other schools and colleges an appropriately trained teacher should take the lead.

Helen Frampton takes this role at Somerford Primary School and attends regular training led by BCP virtual school.

Statutory guidance contains further information on; [The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher.](#)

### **Confidentiality and sharing safeguarding information**

Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding. 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 the UK 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.

Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests.

If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment:

- There's no definitive answer, because even if a victim doesn't consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there's another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies
- The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children
- The DSL should consider that:
  - Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)
  - The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care
  - Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. While the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the police remains

Regarding anonymity, all staff will:

- Be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system
- Do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment – for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved
- Consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities

The government's information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the DSL (or deputy)

## **Pupil Participation in Safeguarding**

All pupils in the school are made aware of staff they can talk to. The names of DSLs, the Pastoral Care Leader, Anti-Bullying Champion and Online Safety Champion are in the pupil home school book with photos. Posters also display this information around the school.

Each class has a worry box for children to report any concerns and the NSPCC Childline number is displayed around the school. Younger children are encouraged to just write their name and place it in the worry box to let a teacher know they have something to share. Reception and Y1 children are taught to tell an adult and this is modelled and reinforces through PSHE lessons and circle times.

Keeping themselves safe and healthy relationships, both on and offline are part of the school's PSHE curriculum.

The school also has an active School Council with Class Council Reps. An annual pupil survey is completed.

Opportunities to teach safeguarding also form part of Relationships and Sex Education sessions.

We have Anti-Bullying Ambassadors and Wellbeing Ambassadors. Anti bullying Ambassadors wear a bright sash so they are easily identifiable on the playground, particularly for the younger children. Class teachers take time to explain the role of the ambassadors and offer training for them to tell an adult if someone shares something with them.

### **What is child abuse?**

It is generally accepted that there are four main forms of abuse. The following definitions are from Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

**i. Physical abuse**

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

**ii. Emotional abuse**

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

**iii. 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 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.

#### iv. **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 because of maternal substance use. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

It is accepted that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse, and that some children are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any one time. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.

### **Recognising child abuse – signs and symptoms**

Keeping Children Safe in Education is clear: 'All school and college staff members should be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may need help or protection'.

Recognising child abuse is not always easy, and it is not the responsibility of school staff to decide whether child abuse has taken place or if a child is at significant risk. They do, however, have a clear individual responsibility to act if they have a concern about a child's welfare or safety or if a child talks about (discloses) abuse. They should maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and always act in the best interests of the child.

Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. If staff are unsure, they should **always** speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) Any concerns about a child's welfare, should be acted upon immediately.

All school staff are aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

All staff are aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care 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, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

Appendix 2 details examples of possible indicators of each of the four kinds of abuse.

## **Early Help**

Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. It means providing support as soon as a problem emerges.

Early help support must be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to the Children's Services First Response Hub if the child's situation does not appear to be improving.

In order to do this, the school will work with other local agencies to identify children and families who would benefit from early help.

- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help
- Provide or refer to local early help services e.g. School Nurse, Pastoral Worker, Play Psychotherapist, SENCO, Family Support, Parenting courses, breakfast club, Thrive
- Refer to appropriate services e.g. CAMHS, YADAS, Early Help Family Hub, We are with You (drugs and alcohol), Mental Health in School Team.

The school will ensure that pupils have a choice of staff who will listen to their concerns either about themselves or about one of their peers.

Emotional health, including support for children at key times such as exams and transition, is very important and the school provides:

- Worry boxes in all classes from Y1 to Y6
- Graduated response – Thrive assistant, play psychotherapists
- Antibullying Champion
- Pastoral Lead
- Anxiety Gremlin programme
- Thrive Support Assistant
- Lego Therapy
- Think Bricks
- Sibling Group
- Social Skills Group
- Young Carers Group
- Mindfulness Group
- Services to refer to outside of school
- Additional outside support services for pupils and parents including online support such as Childline
- Links to Mental Health in Schools team
- Online Safety Champion
- Thrive actions plans
- Victim support
- Mind group sessions

This is particularly relevant if the need is not thought to meet the threshold for CAMHS intervention. The SENCO, Pastoral Leader or DSL can discuss individual cases to gain information and advice with a CAMHS link worker. Training, supervision and support is available to staff to assist them with children's emotional issues and specialist roles in the school staff.

The school has a Senior Mental Health Lead, Lucy Macmillan. Contextual safeguarding issues i.e. children vulnerable to abuse or exploitation outside of their families is taken account of, and how the school can help to protect children accordingly.

The parental capacity to support the child will be considered and what further help can be offered.

### **Responding to Disclosures – guidance for staff**

If a child wishes to confide in you, the following guidelines should be adhered to:

- **Be Honest**
  - Do not make promises you cannot keep
  - Explain that you are likely to have to tell other people in order to stop what is happening
  
- **Create a safe environment**
  - Stay calm
  - Reassure the child and stress that he/she is not to blame
  - Tell the child that you know how difficult it must have been to confide in you
  - Listen to the child and tell them you believe them and are taking what is being said seriously
  
- **Record on My Concern exactly what the child has said to you and include:**
  - Child's name
  - Date and time of incident
  - What the child said and what you said
  - Your observations e.g. child's behaviour and emotional state
  - Any action you took as a result of your concerns – specific information about who you spoke to, names, phone numbers and resulting actions
  
- **Be clear about what the child says and what you say**
  - Do not interview the child and keep questions to a minimum
  - Use TED questions – Tell me .... Explain ... Describe ...
  - Encourage the child to use his/her own words and do not try to lead them into giving particular answers
  
- **Maintain Confidentiality**
  - **Fear about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of the children.**
    - Only tell those people that it is necessary to inform
  
- **Do not take sole responsibility**
  - Immediately consult your Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy DSL so that any appropriate action can be taken to protect the pupil if necessary
  - The Designated Safeguarding Lead should decide if a referral to Social Care is needed before the child goes home if still in school. A decision will be made by the Children's Services First Response Hub whether to convene a

strategy meeting; undertake a social care or joint investigation or provide alternative services or advice.

- Although referrals to the Children's Services First Response Hub would normally be made by the DSL or in their absence a deputy DSL or other member of the SLT, in exceptional circumstances any other individual with concerns can take advice from the local children's Social Care (Children's Services First Response Hub) and any action taken should be shared with the DSL (or Deputy) as soon as is practically possible and recorded on My Concern.

Children's Services First Response Hub will advise about if and when to share information with parents if there are concerns that this may be putting the child at more risk.

### **Responding to signs of abuse or neglect**

- Through training, all staff need to be able to identify the signs of abuse or neglect and be able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.
- They should be vigilant, protective and discuss any concerns with the DSL or deputy who will refer to Social Care or other agencies where appropriate.
- The DSL / SLT will use the Continuum of Need when making decisions about appropriate support or referral for a child. This will include reference to the 'Four levels of need' and the 'Three domains'.
- All concerns must be recorded in line with BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance.
- Staff need to have an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.
- When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the best interests of the child.
- **Fear about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of the children.**

### **Following up Referrals**

- The agency to which the referral was made e.g. Social Care, should inform the referrer of their action. Where this does not happen promptly, the referrer should re-contact the agency to which it made the referral to be assured that action is being taken or that alternative support is being recommended.
- If after a referral the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL should consider following local escalation procedures.
- It is essential that the school remains actively involved in support and plans even where another agency is taking the lead whether at early help, child in need or child protection level.
- If, after a referral, a child's situation does not appear to be improving or there is a difference of opinion about how to progress a plan and this cannot be resolved, the Escalation policy should be used.

[https://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/p\\_escalation.html](https://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/p_escalation.html)

### **Social Care Referrals**

- First Response and Multiagency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)  
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Children's Services  
Monday to Thursday – 8.30am to 5.15pm  
Friday 8.30am to 4.45pm  
01202 123334  
childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

- The Dorset Police MASH  
Call 101  
mash@dorset.pnn.police.uk

### **Working in Partnership with Parents, Carers and the Community**

The school shares a purpose with parents to educate, keep children safe from harm and have their children's welfare promoted.

We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information until we have permission or it is necessary to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

### **The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR DO NOT prevent the sharing of information for the purpose of keeping children safe.**

Somerford Primary School will share with parents any concerns we may have about their child unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm.

We encourage parents to disclose any concerns they may have with Somerford Primary School. We make parents aware of our Child Protection Policy and parents are aware that these are on the school website.

The school has links with its local community which will promote the welfare and safeguarding of the pupils e.g. with respect to religious, cultural or other local issues.

The school will provide and/or access early help services and can refer or sign post parents to services with their consent.

Information about safeguarding is readily available and visible in the school e.g. posters, names of DSLs and other relevant staff e.g. Anti-Bullying Champion, Online Safety Champion, Pastoral Care Leader, KCSIE BCP leaflet in the entrance area, school website safeguarding page which is up-dated twice a term and has information on a wide range of safeguarding themes.

If there is any reason to make a complaint about the school, the procedures will be found on the school website ([www.somerford.dorset.sch.uk](http://www.somerford.dorset.sch.uk))

### **Child on child abuse eg: sexual violence and sexual harassment, bullying, physical abuse, initiation rituals**

#### ***Somerford Primary School has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment.***

All staff should be aware of that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child on child abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Up skirting, which is a criminal offence.
- Bullying (including cyber bullying).

- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) – see separate policy.
- Initiation/hazing type violent rituals - especially boys.
- Children, especially girls, being touched or assaulted.

**All** staff should be clear on the school's policy and procedures with regards to child on child abuse.

Staff will not dismiss abusive behaviour as banter or as 'normal' between young people or as part of growing up, and should not develop high thresholds before acting.

All staff recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. All staff should be clear about the school policy and procedure about peer on peer abuse. We recognise that even if there are no reported cases of abuse, such abuse may still be taking place.

Sexual violence and harassment can occur between two children of any age or sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children can report abuse to any member of school staff. Key staff are included in the home school book. Each class also has a worry box where children can report concerns anonymously.

The school's initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that **all** victims are reassured and that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. Any allegations will be recorded, investigated and dealt with, with support available for victims, perpetrators and other children affected.

Ultimately, any decisions are for the school to make on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL or deputy taking a lead role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as children social care and the police as required.

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. Pre-planning and effective policies will provide the school with the foundation for a calm, considered and appropriate response to any reports.

Following a report of sexual violence, the DSL (or deputy) should make an immediate risk and needs assessment, considering;

- The victim
- The alleged perpetrator
- All the other children (if appropriate adult students and staff)

School needs to consider the following options for managing a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment;

- Manage internally
- Early Help
- Safeguarding children – referral to children social care
- Reporting to the Police – in parallel to children's social care

If children require safeguarding and a referral to Children's Social Care is made the process for managing sexually harmful behaviour can be found in the inter-agency safeguarding procedures on the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership website. In brief, a multi-agency meeting should be convened by Children's Social Care following a referral and an action plan agreed.

A school Risk Assessment Management Plan (RAMP) will be put in place, preferably by way of a meeting, which will consider;

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed
- The nature of the alleged incident
- The ages of the children involved
- The developmental stages of the children involved
- Any power imbalance between the children
- Is the incident a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse?
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, school or college staff?
- Contextual safeguarding
- The level of support needed and school action needed to protect other pupils in the school.

**All staff should act in the best interests of the child.**

There may be delays to a criminal process, but the school should not wait for the outcome before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator and other children in the school.

The School needs to manage the balance between supporting the victim and ensuring the alleged perpetrator has an education and safeguarding support themselves. Appropriate support should be given on an ongoing basis to the victim.

Sexting involves images or videos which are indecent or of a sexual nature, generated by children under the age of 18 or of children under the age of 18, shared via a mobile phone, handheld device or website. At Somerford Primary School sexting is defined as 'Youth produced sexual imagery' and staff are clear that making, possessing and distributing indecent imagery of someone under 18 is illegal. This includes imagery of yourself if you are under 18. Staff are also aware that the speed and ease of sharing imagery can expose children to risks including embarrassment, bullying and increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation. Staff will respond swiftly and confidently to ensure that children are safeguarded, supported and educated. If a case of youth produced sexual imagery is reported or disclosed the DSL will take the lead in following the school's 'Youth Produced Sexual Imagery Procedures' which are derived from the *guidance from UKCCIS and DfE: 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'*.

At Somerford Primary School we work hard to minimise the risk of child on child abuse. We have a comprehensive PSHE curriculum across the school that develops children's personal and social skills. It deals with issues of bullying and peer pressure in an age appropriate way and develops children's conflict resolution skills.

The school has a robust Anti Bullying Policy which details the proactive steps we take to prevent bullying but also the action we take when bullying occurs. Other policies such as the Positive Behaviour Policy and Internet Acceptable Use Policy, also help to reduce

the risk of this abuse. The school has an Anti-Bullying Champion and pupil Anti Bullying Ambassadors.

The school recognises that serious bullying, causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger is a form of emotional abuse. This could include bullying from siblings. The DSL will consider a referral to Social Care when bullying is at this level.

The school has achieved the Silver All Together Against Bullying Award.

Children who may be vulnerable to child on child abuse are identified by staff early and referred to the school based Thrive Assistant, Pastoral Lead or therapists according to the level of need. This work endeavours to raise the child's self-esteem and resilience. It also provides them with a trusted adult to whom they can report any concerns.

If an allegation of child on child abuse is made, this will be referred to the DSL using the normal reporting procedures. The DSL will then consider the action that needs to be taken to keep the child safe from harm. This would include but not be limited to:

- Informing parents of both the alleged perpetrator and alleged victim (unless it was felt this would put the children at greater risk of harm).
- Invoking the Anti-Bullying Policy and putting the children on 'Red Alert'.
- Giving the children named adults to report any further issues to.
- Informing children's social care and, if the threshold for child protection has been met, making a referral under the interagency procedures.
- Writing a risk assessment, in conjunction with other agencies if appropriate, to ensure children are safe in school.
- Applying consequences in line with school policies.

Violent behaviour between 16- and 18-year olds in a relationship or from a child towards a parent or carer is a form of domestic abuse and will require consideration of specialist help including referral to the Children's Services First Response Hub. Advice or referral may also be made to the Children's Services First Response Hub for younger pupils where there is violent behaviour.

The school has a policy on the use of mobile technology.

### **Pupils engaging in under-age sexual activity**

Sexual activity where one of the partners is under the age of 16 is illegal, although prosecution of young people who are *consenting partners of a similar age* is not usual. Designated Safeguarding Leads will exercise professional judgement when deciding whether to refer or take advice from social workers, **considering** such things as any imbalance of power, wide difference in ages or developmental stages etc.

Where a child is under the age of 13 penetrative sex is classified as rape under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 so must be reported to social workers in every case.

The inter-agency safeguarding procedures, on the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership website, have more information about under-age sexual activity.

### **Trafficking and Modern-Day Slavery**



Information is provided on the school website and is part of regular safeguarding training. Any concerns will be reported to the DSL and referrals will be made to the Police or Children's Services First Response Hub where they are safeguarding concerns for children.

### **Children at risk of Sexual Exploitation (CSE) / Children at risk of Criminal Exploitation (CCE) / Serious Violence / County Lines**

Child Sexual Exploitation involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money, mobile phones) as a result of their performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual acts. It can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; e.g. being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

Recognition of child sexual exploitation is part of staff training. We note that any child or young person may be at risk of this form of abuse, regardless of family background or other circumstances, and can experience significant harm to physical and mental health. Helen Frampton (DSL) has received Level 3 training on CSE and is available to other staff for consultation.

Due to the grooming methods used by abusers, it is common for young people not to recognise they are being abused and may feel they are 'in a relationship' and acting voluntarily.

The school works together with other agencies when needed to identify and reduce the risks of Child Exploitation. We refer to the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance and use the child exploitation toolkit if we have concerns about a child being exploited.

"County Lines" is becoming widely recognised and used to describe criminal exploitation of young people using the internal trafficking of young people for the purpose of criminal exploitation. Young people are groomed using the same techniques as above, with them completing a task on behalf of another individual or group of individuals which is of a criminal nature.

Children are "trafficked" as part of the exploitation. They have their transport arranged for them for the purpose of selling drugs, firearms or sex.

Young people will go missing for extended periods of time, missing education and moving away from their friendship groups. Jeremy Wallace (Deputy DSL) has received additional training on County Lines.

Staff are made aware, through training, of the indicators that may signal children are at risk from or are involved in serious violent crime. The school will work closely with the police on these matters.

Any concerns about child sexual exploitation/criminal exploitation will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will take appropriate action which might

include completing a risk assessment form and the Child Exploitation Toolkit. The form and more detailed local procedures are in the inter-agency safeguarding procedures on the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

Children receive education about healthy and unhealthy relationships and are taught how to keep themselves safe. Information for parents is available on our school website.

### **Forms of abuse linked to culture, faith or belief**

All staff in this school will promote mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Some forms of abuse are linked to these and staff should strive to suspend professional disbelief (i.e. that they 'could not happen here') and to report promptly any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will seek further advice from statutory agencies, prior to contacting parents/carers. Regular training is given to staff on these areas.

**Female Genital Mutilation** is illegal and involves intentionally altering or injuring female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It can have serious and long-lasting implications for physical health and emotional well-being. Possible indicators include taking a girl out of school / country for a prolonged period or talk of a 'special procedure' or celebration. In addition to reporting any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, teachers (along with regulated health and social care professionals) have a statutory duty to report personally to the Police if they discover that female genital mutilation has or appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions.

**Forced Marriage** is also illegal and occurs where one or both people do not or, in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is not the same as arranged marriage. Young people at risk of forced marriage might have their freedom unreasonably restricted or being 'monitored' by siblings. There might be a request for extended absence from school or might not return from a holiday abroad. We recognise that school staff can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

**So called 'honour-based' abuse** is a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community. It can exist in all communities and cultures and occurs when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code. Females are predominantly, but not exclusively, the victims and the violence is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family or community members. All forms of so-called honour-based violence are abuse, regardless of the motivation, and should be referred accordingly. However, there are some significant differences in the immediate response required as involving families in cases is dangerous:

- It may increase the risk of serious harm to the victim. Experience shows that the family may punish them for seeking help;
- Relatives, friends, community leaders and neighbours should not be used as interpreters – despite any reassurances from this known person.

### **Breast Ironing**

Staff receive appropriate training and are aware of the signs of breast ironing and will report any concerns to the DSL immediately.

### **Radicalisation and extremism**

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Extremism is defined by HM Government as 'Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs; and/or calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas'.

In this school we recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation and extremism is no different from safeguarding against any other vulnerability.

Our curriculum promotes respect, tolerance and diversity. Children are encouraged to share their views and to understand that they are entitled to have their own different beliefs which should not be used to influence others.

We recognise that children with low aspirations are more vulnerable to radicalisation and therefore we strive to equip our pupils with confidence, self-belief, respect and tolerance as well as setting high standards and expectations for themselves.

Children are taught about how to stay safe when using the Internet and are encouraged to recognise that people are not always who they say they are online. They are taught to seek adult help if they are upset or concerned about anything they read or see on the Internet.

Any concerns about pupils becoming radicalised or being drawn into extremism will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will *not* speak to parents/carers or other family members at this stage but will take prompt advice from the Police.

### **Prevent**

Prevent is about safeguarding people and communities from the threat of terrorism and violent extremism. Prevent is part of CONTEST, the Government's counter-terrorism strategy. It aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

The Prevent strategy: Responds to the ideological challenge we face from terrorism and aspects of extremism, and the threat we face from those who promote these views;

- Provides practical help to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. It ensures they are given appropriate advice and support
- Works with a wide range of sectors (including education, criminal justice, faith, charities, online and health) where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to deal with.
- Prevent covers all forms of terrorism and extremism and some aspects of non-violent extremism.

The Home Office works with local authorities, a wide range of government departments, and community organisations to deliver the Prevent strategy. The police play a significant role in Prevent, in much the same way as they do when taking a preventative approach to other crimes.

- The main aim of Prevent is to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism.
- At the heart of Prevent is safeguarding children and adults. Providing early intervention to protect and divert people away from being drawn into terrorist activity is crucial.
- Prevent addresses all forms of extremism but continues to ensure resources and effort are allocated on the basis of threats to our national security.

Any individuals who are identified as being vulnerable to radicalisation are referred to a multi-agency Channel Panel. This ensures the appropriate interventions are put in place to protect the individual. Like child protection, Channel is a multi-agency safeguarding programme run in every local authority in England and Wales. It works to support vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism. It provides a range of support such as mentoring, counselling, assistance with employment etc. Where pupils at this school are being discussed, the DSL or Headteacher will attend the Panel meetings.

Channel is about early intervention to protect vulnerable people from being drawn into committing terrorist-related activity and addresses all types of extremism. Staff and governors in this school have either attended a WRAP (workshop to raise awareness of Prevent) session or have completed online Prevent training. To refer, email [MASH@dorset.pnn.police.uk](mailto:MASH@dorset.pnn.police.uk). The DFE also has a dedicated helpline 020 7340 7264 which school staff can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a pupil or email [counter.extremism@education.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gov.uk)

The school has some key responsibilities in relation to the Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015. These include:

**Actions :**

- The Prevent lead is the DSL.
- Assess risk of pupils being radicalised and drawn into terrorism.
- Know what to do to support those assessed as being at risk.
- Refer any Prevent concerns to police using the Home Office Prevent Referral Form <https://archived.dorset.police.uk/support-and-guidance/major-terror-incidents/prevent/>
- **or**  
contact the Prevent Team on 01202 229337 **or**  
[preventreferrals@dorset.pnn.police.uk](mailto:preventreferrals@dorset.pnn.police.uk) **or**  
call the Anti-Terror hotline on 0800 789 321
- A Channel programme (for older children) might be appropriate.
- Where the school has any concerns about pupils travelling to a conflict zone, advice may be sought from the Home Office and a referral to the First Response Hub if still concerned.
- Working in partnership with other agencies.
- Effective engagement with parents/the family should be considered as they are in a key position to spot signs of radicalisation. Assist and advise families who raise concerns and sign post to support. Discuss any concerns the school has with parents unless this is thought to put the child at risk.
- Staff training to raise awareness and keeping them up to date with local risks.
- IT policies and suitable filtering to ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet at school.

- British values should be promoted in the curriculum and on the website and other teaching and actions to help minimise engagement in extremist activity.
- Publicise the Educate against hate website to staff and parents (via the school website) <http://educateagainsthate.com>.

The school embeds the British Values in the curriculum and the PSHE leader has overall responsibility for this. Assemblies, displays and topics focus on key values.

See Prevent Policy and risk assessment for further details.

### **Domestic Abuse**

Our school is part of Operation Encompass. This is a police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people who experience Domestic Abuse. Operation Encompass means that the police will share information about Domestic Abuse incidents with our school soon after they have been called to a domestic incident.

All Key Adults (DSL/DDSL) have attended an Operation Encompass local briefing as well as national online training. Our parents are fully aware that we are an Operation Encompass school. The Operation Encompass information is stored in line with all other confidential safeguarding and child protection information.

The Key Adult has also led briefings for all school staff and Governors about Operation Encompass, the prevalence of Domestic Abuse and the impact of this abuse on children. We have also discussed how we can support our children following the Operation Encompass notification.

The Safeguarding Governor will report on Operation Encompass in the termly report to Governors. All information is anonymised for these reports.

The Key Adult has used the Operation Encompass Toolkit to ensure that all appropriate actions have been taken by the school.

Where a Multiagency risk assessment conference (MARAC) occurs the school may be asked for information and appropriate school related information may be shared with the school after the meeting.

The school website will provide contacts to local domestic abuse services e.g. National DV Helpline 08082000247, Poole Domestic Abuse Project 01202 710777, Bournemouth DA Services/You First

### **Pupils with Child Protection or Child in Need Plans**

Pupils who are the subject of a Child Protection Conference will have either an agreed multi-disciplinary action plan or child protection plan. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will attend and provide reports for strategy discussions, CP conferences, core group meetings, Child in Need meetings and contribute to assessments and plans.

The school recognises that pupils who are the subjects of abuse, neglect or who live in situations of domestic abuse may exhibit distressed or challenging behaviour and may not be reaching their full academic potential. The school will ensure that appropriate support mechanisms are in place in school.

### **Children with special educational needs and who are disabled**

Research shows that children with special educational needs and who are disabled are especially vulnerable to abuse and adults who work with them need to be vigilant and take extra care when interpreting apparent signs of abuse or neglect.

Indications of abuse will be reported as for other pupils. They may be increasingly vulnerable to being bullied, at higher risk of criminal (including sexual) exploitation, online grooming and radicalisation.

Additional barriers can exist for adults who work with such children, in respect of recognising abuse and neglect. These can include

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- Being more prone to peer group isolation than other children
- Children with SEN and who are disabled can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying – without outwardly showing any signs; and
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

These child protection procedures will be followed if a child with special educational needs or who is disabled discloses abuse or there are indicators of abuse or neglect. There are no different or separate procedures for such children. To address these additional challenges the school will consider extra pastoral support for children with SEN and disabilities.

Staff responsible for intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner always and in accordance with the school's intimate care policy.

Somerford Primary School includes children with communication difficulties in their whole school child protection training to staff. Teaching Assistants working 1:1 with children with additional needs are regularly reminded of the need to be attuned to changes in the child's presentation and wellbeing.

The DSL will work with the SENCO to identify children with particular communication needs so that all pupils are given the chance to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate communication skills.

### **Children with Mental Health / Emotional Health Needs**

Pupils identified with mental health/emotional issues or those with parents/ siblings identified with mental health issues will be offered additional support. Pupils will have a choice of staff who will listen to their concerns about themselves or other pupils and appropriate early help services are available within school.

The lead member of staff with oversight for mental health is Luke Thorne, SENCo and he works closely with the Senior Mental Health Lead, Lucy Macmillan. Referrals will be made to the Mental Health in Schools Team, CAMHS or other appropriate services in conjunction with parents. The DSL or other appropriate member of staff may seek advice from the CAMHS Link Worker or the consultation service.

The school is part of the Mental Health in Schools Project.

There will be a strategy for providing ongoing education for children subject to S26 Mental Health (Children & Families) Act 2014.

The school is working in line with Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools Guidance 2018.

The school will support pupils with strategies to develop their own emotional well being i.e. emotional literacy and resilience. Additional support will be available at times of need and children can self-refer at any time.

Somerford Primary School is a Thrive School and the licensed practitioner is Luke Thorne.

### **Children who are looked after, those previously looked after and care leavers**

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 Helen Frampton, who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children and previously looked-after children in line with statutory guidance.

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 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.

### **Substance Abuse**

As a school we provide drug education as part of our PSHE curriculum. If needed, the school works with the appropriate agencies and services will be accessed. We work in partnership with the child and parents/carers. We raise awareness with parents/carers about the risks from drugs and alcohol via information on our website. Staff receive awareness training as part of regular safeguarding training. Further details can be found in the Drug Policy.

### **Children and the Court system**

The Pastoral team are aware of tools and support which can be accessed and will offer additional support at school to children involved in any form of Court process. The school works with CAFCASS where needed.

### **Homelessness**

The school should be aware of any housing issues which may be posing a risk to a child's welfare. The Pastoral Lead will work with appropriate services, including housing, and where a child is thought to be at risk of harm, a referral will be made to the Children's Services First Response Hub.

## **Children with family members in prison**

The school will offer additional pastoral support for children to help mitigate negative consequences for children with a family member in prison. The Pastoral Lead may also signpost to support from other agencies such as NICCO.

## **Online Safety including filtering and monitoring**

We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

To address this our school aims to:

- Have robust processes, including filtering and monitoring systems in place to ensure the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers and governors.
- Protect and educate the whole school community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology.
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole school community which are detailed in our Mobile Technology Policy.
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate.

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following categories of risk:

- Content – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content.
- Contact – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users
- Conduct- personal online behaviour that increase the likelihood of, or causes, harm.
- Commerce- risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams.

To meet our aims and address the risks above we will

- Educate pupils about online safety as part of our curriculum.  
For example:
  - The safe use of social media, the internet and technology
  - Keeping personal information private
  - How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
  - How to report any incidents of cyber bullying including when a witness
- Train staff, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying, the risks of online radicalisation, and the expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring. All staff members will receive refresher training as required and at least once each academic year
- Educate parents/carers about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and during parents' evenings. We will also share clear procedures with them so they know how to raise concerns about online safety
- Make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their mobile phone and cameras, for example that:



- 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 will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras
- All staff, governors and volunteers will sign the acceptable use agreement for school IT systems
- Put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems to limit children's exposure to the 4 key categories of risk from the school's IT systems. Details of our systems can be found in our Online Safety Policy.
- Carry out an annual 360 review of our online safety.

## **Artificial Intelligence**

### **Artificial intelligence (AI)**

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

Somerford Primary School recognises that AI has many uses, including enhancing teaching and learning, and in helping to protect and safeguard pupils. However, AI may also have the potential to facilitate abuse (e.g. bullying and grooming) and/or expose pupils to harmful content. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

Somerford Primary School will treat any use of AI to access harmful content or bully pupils in line with this policy and our anti-bullying policy.

Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools whilst they are still being developed and should carry out risk assessments for any new AI tool being used by the school.

## **Children missing from education, exclusion and attendance**

### **Emergency contacts**

Where reasonably possible, the school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. This goes beyond the legal minimum and is good practice to give the school additional options to contact a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

- The school will keep its admission register accurate and up to date.
- The school Attendance Policy is regularly updated and understood by all staff.
- Attendance and patterns of attendance will be regularly reviewed.
- Any children missing education will be reported as required by the statutory guidance 'Children Missing Education'
- 'Attendance' and 'Missing from Education' will be coordinated with all safeguarding interventions.
- All staff who work on attendance will liaise closely with the DSL.
- Attendance monitoring will be on an individual basis to ensure the safety of each child/young person at our school.

- We will demonstrate that we have taken reasonable enquiries to ascertain the whereabouts of any child/young person that would be considered 'missing'.
- We will work closely with the Local Authority CME Team, School Admissions Service and the Elective Home Education Team.

A child missing education, in any way, such as high absenteeism is at significant risk of underachievement, being a victim of harm, abuse or neglect including criminal or sexual exploitation, at risk from or are involved with serious violent crime or risk of radicalisation. After reasonable attempts have been made by the school to contact the family, the school will follow the Statutory Guidance and local procedures and refer to the Local Authority education welfare / attendance service. All schools must inform their Local Authority if a child is referred to be educated outside of the school system, e.g. Elective Home Education, ceased to attend, unfit to attend on health grounds, in custody for 4 months or permanently excluded.

If the school excludes a pupil from site or educates them off site, we will endeavour to ensure their safety. The Statutory Guidance on 'Suspension & permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies & pupil referral units in England'

We recognise that a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including the specific types of abuse detailed above including child criminal exploitation /or travelling to conflict zones.

Therefore all staff will follow the school's procedure for dealing with unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify vulnerable pupils and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Actions could include involving other professionals and, if any of the criteria are met, informing the local authority where a pupil's name has been removed from the school roll.

School procedures for unauthorised absence of children missing education are detailed in the Attendance Policy. This policy is in line with the Department of Education's updated statutory guidance on children missing education.

In line with the guidance in KCSIE and the DfE guidance on Elective Home Education, schools should work together with the Local Authority where a child comes off roll and moves to EHE as per the guidance, especially if the child has SEND, is vulnerable or has a social worker.

There is more information about specific safeguarding issues including links to websites in Part one and Annex B of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2024.

### **Elective Home Education**

The school will work together with the Local Authority where a parent decides to remove their child from roll for Elective Home Education, especially if that child has SEND, is vulnerable or has a social worker.

**Any** safeguarding concerns about children who become EHE will be communicated to the Children's Services First Response Hub, to the Local Authority and to all other agencies and services linked to the child.

## **Lockdown Policy**

The school has a Lockdown Policy in case of a threat to children and staff. It can be found on our website or is available on request.

## **Taking action in response to a disclosure**

If in exceptional circumstances, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken.

Where physical injuries have been observed, these will be carefully noted but not photographed without consent of the child or unless the school is instructed to do so by social care or the Police. The staff member will not ask to see injuries that are said to be on an intimate part of the child's body.

Any disclosure or indicators of abuse will be reported verbally to the DSL or Deputy straightaway or, where they are not available, and concerns are immediate, ensure a referral is made without delay to Children's Social Care.

Where the child already has an allocated social worker, that person or a manager or duty worker in the same team must be contacted promptly.

A written record will then be made (at Somerford Primary School this completed via the online recording system 'My Concern') of what was said, including the child's own words, as soon as possible.

If the child can understand the significance and consequences of making a referral to social workers, they will be asked for their views. It will be explained that whilst their views will be considered, the school has a responsibility to take whatever action is required to ensure the child's safety and that of other children.

The DSL will decide whether to contact parents at this stage, judging whether to do so, it is necessary to consider if contacting the parents/carers is likely to place the child at risk of harm from their parent's/carer's actions or reactions - for example in circumstances where there are concerns that a serious crime such as sexual abuse, domestic violence or induced illness has taken place. If in any doubt, the DSL or staff member will call Children's social care first and agree when parents/carers should be contacted and by whom. The reason for the decision not to contact parents first will be recorded in the child's school child protection file on My Concern.

A child protection referral from a professional cannot be treated as anonymous.

Where there is no disclosure by a child, but concerns are accumulating, such as in relation to neglect or emotional abuse, the DSL will ensure that all information is brought together and that s/he makes a professional judgement about whether to refer to outside agencies.

The BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership Continuum of Need Document will be used to help clarify the pathway required for a child: whether concerns will be managed within the school; or with the help of other agencies as part of early help; or whether they require specialised support such as a social work assessment or referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

A member of staff who reports concerns to the DSL should expect some feedback, although confidentiality might mean in some cases that this is not detailed. If the member of staff is not happy with the outcome s/he can press for reconsideration and if following this, s/he still believes the correct action has not been taken, will refer the concerns directly to children social care. Actions taken can be seen on My Concern.

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

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’.

Any teacher who either:

- Is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- Observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl’s physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth

must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a mandatory 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 local authority 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 [if relevant, insert: or discovers that a pupil aged 18 or over appears to have been a victim of FGM] should speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures

### **Responding to concerns reported by parents or others in the community**

Occasionally parents or other people in the local community tell school staff about an incident in or accumulation of concerns they have about the family life of a child who is also a pupil at the school.

If the incident or concern relates to *child protection*, the information cannot be ignored, even if there are suspicions about the motives of the person making the report. Members of staff will therefore pass the information to the DSL in the usual way.

It is preferable if the parent / community member who witnessed or knows about the concerns or incident makes a call to Children’s Social Care themselves as they will be

better able to answer any questions. They can ask for their name not to be divulged if a visit is made to the family.

If the parent / community member refuses to make the referral, the DSL will clarify that s/he (the DSL) has a responsibility to do so and will also need to pass on to social workers how s/he is aware of the information.

This process also applies to parents / community members who are also school staff. As professionals who work with children they cannot be anonymous when making the referral but can ask for the situation to be managed sensitively and, if necessary, for their identity to be withheld from the family if it will cause difficulties in their private life.

## **Remember**

Any suspicion or concern that a child or young person may be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, MUST be acted on. Doing nothing is not an option. Any suspicion or concerns will be reported without delay to the DSL or a Deputy. During term time the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or a Deputy will always be available (during school hours) for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. However, if for whatever reason they are not available, the staff member will discuss their concerns as soon as possible with either

- another senior member of staff or
- First Response Hub

Anyone can make a referral, not just the DSLs.

It is important that everyone in the school is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for making a judgement about whether abuse has occurred and should not conduct an 'investigation' to establish whether the child is telling the truth. That is a task for social workers and the Police following a referral to them of concern about a child. The role of school staff is to act promptly on the information received.

This applies regardless of the alleged 'perpetrator': whether the child raises concerns about a family member or someone outside school, a member of staff or another child/pupil.

A careful record will be made on My Concern of what has been seen/heard that has led to the concerns and the date, time, location and people who were present. As far as possible, staff should record verbatim what was said and by whom. The record will be passed to the DSL.

The DSL will keep a record of the conversation with the duty worker and other social workers, noting what actions will be taken and by whom, giving the date and time of the referral. The referral will be confirmed in writing on the inter-agency referral form (available on the BCP Safeguarding Children's Partnership website) as soon as possible and at least within 48 hours. Any pre-existing assessments such as through the Common Assessment Framework should be attached.

A school child protection file will be started in the child's name, where the child is not already known to social workers. If a file already exists, the new information will be added to the chronology.

See Appendix 3 for detailed record keeping guidance.

## **Response from Children's Social Care to a school referral**

### **Referral**

Once a referral is received by the team, a manager will decide on the next course of action within one working day. When there is concern that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, this will be decided more quickly, and a strategy discussion held with the Police and Health professionals and other agencies as appropriate (section 47 Children Act 1989).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be told within three working days of the outcome of the referral. If this does not happen s/he will contact the duty worker again.

### **Assessment**

All assessments should be planned and co-ordinated by qualified social worker. They should be holistic, involving other professionals, parents/carers and the children themselves as far as practicable. Assessments should show analysis, be focused on outcomes and usually take no longer than 45 working days from the point of referral. School staff have a responsibility to contribute fully to the assessment.

### **S47 Enquiries (regarding significant harm)**

The process of the investigation is determined by the needs of the case, but the child/young person will always be part of that process and sometimes without parents' knowledge or permission. On occasions, this will mean the child/young person is jointly interviewed by the Police and social workers, sometimes at a special suite where a video-recording of the interview is made.

### **The Child Protection Conference**

If, following the s47 enquiries, the concerns are substantiated and the child is judged to be at risk of significant harm, a Child Protection Conference (CPC) will normally be convened. The CPC must be held within 15 days of the first strategy discussion and school staff will be invited to attend - normally the DSL or Headteacher. This person will produce a written report in the correct format (a pro forma is available on the BCP Safeguarding Children's Partnership website). This will be shared with the child/young person and his/her family before the conference is held. A copy will also be sent to the person chairing the initial CPC at least 24 hours in advance.

More information is in the inter-agency safeguarding procedures ('Child Protection Conferences') on the BCP Safeguarding Children's Partnership website.

If the DSL disagrees with the decisions made by social workers regarding the outcome of the referral, the conclusions of the assessment or any actions taken, the matter should be discussed and if necessary escalated to more senior managers (under the escalation policy available on the BCP Children's Safeguarding Partnership website), *particularly* if the child's situation does not appear to be improving.

## **Responding to allegations or concerns about staff or volunteers**

Rigorous recruitment and selection procedures and adhering to the school's code of conduct and safer practice guidance will hopefully mean that there are relatively few

allegations against or concerns about staff or volunteers. However, if a member of staff, or any other person, has any reason to believe that another adult has acted inappropriately or abused a child or young person, they will act by reporting to the Headteacher (not the DSL if this is a different person). Even though it may seem difficult to believe that a colleague may be unsuitable to work with children, the risk is far too serious for any member of staff to dismiss such a suspicion without acting.

If the allegation/concern is about the Headteacher the person with concerns will contact the Chair of Governors or the Local Authority Designated Officer (also known as the LADO) in the Local Authority Safeguarding and Standards Team. See Appendix 1 below for contact details.

In all cases of allegations against staff or volunteers, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay and follow the correct procedures as set out in the separate school policy. This includes low level concerns. This must comply with Part Four of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

The Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (Part 4), process and procedures will be followed for any allegations, both the investigation and support for any individual who has or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (Teachers, supply staff, other staff, volunteers and contractors etc). All local policy and procedures will also be followed.

### **If you have any concerns about a colleague**

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

All staff are made aware of the NSPCC whistle blowing helpline <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/report/>

### **Allegations against Supply Teachers**

Supply teachers, whilst not employed by the school are under the supervision, direction and control of the Governing body when working on the site. As such, any allegation will be dealt with properly and in discussion with the LADO.

### **Welcoming other Practitioners**

Visitors with a practitioner role, such as the school nurse, social worker, educational psychologist or members of the Police will have been vetted to work with children through their own organisation.

Visits by these practitioners should be arranged and booked in advance, as much as possible. Practitioners will be required to bring their identity badges on all visits and to wear and to show them on entry to the site, for ID confirmation. They will complete signing in/out forms and wear a school I.D. badge.

For agency, third-party staff and contractors, safer recruitment procedures and the guidance in KCSIE must be followed. The school obtains written notification from any

agency or third-party organisation that they use, to seek assurance that the appropriate level of checks have been carried out as required by their role and that these checks are the same as the school's.

### **Safer Recruitment**

Safer recruitment applies to all staff, including supply, peripatetic staff and volunteers.

- At least one person conducting any interview for a post at the school will have undertaken safer recruitment training. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.
- Safer recruitment training has been undertaken by the Headteacher and Deputy Head.
- Volunteers and Governors all have a DBS check, references are taken and a discussion about safeguarding guidelines, induction and training takes place before they work in the school.
- Safer recruitment starts at the advert stage and permeates the whole recruitment process. A single central register is kept showing all the checks made on the people working in school.

### **Safer Working Practice**

All adults who come into contact with children at this school will behave at all times in a professional manner which secures the best outcomes for children and also prevents allegations being made. Detailed advice on safer working practice can be found in the school's Code of Conduct. This includes guidance for safer working practice. Regular training ensures all staff are aware of the expectations of this guidance and are working within this. Relevant training is given and advice, guidance or sanctions applied where the guidance is not followed.

Safe working practice ensures that pupils are safe and that all staff, volunteers and Governors:

- Are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Work in an open and transparent way
- Work with other colleagues where possible in situations open to question
- Discuss and/or take advice from school management over any incident which may give rise to concern
- Record any incidents with the actions and decisions made
- Apply the same practitioner standards regardless of gender, race, disability or sexuality
- Be aware of confidentiality policy
- Are aware that breaches of the law and other practitioner guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them

We promote a culture whereby members of the school community should feel able to raise with the Headteacher, or any member of the leadership team, any concerns about staff conduct. If the reporter feels that the issue has not been addressed they should contact someone outside of the school, such as the Chair of Governors or the LADO. (See Appendix 1 below for contact details.)



The code of conduct gives details about how staff will behave in and out of school as well as online it includes:

- Treating all children with respect
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- Involving children in decision-making which affects them
- Encouraging positive and safe behaviour among children
- Being a good listener
- Being alert to changes in a child's behaviour
- Recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- Reading and understanding all of the school's safeguarding and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, physical contact, online-safety and information sharing
- Asking the child's permission before doing anything for them which is of a physical nature, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during PE, music or administering first aid
- Maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between children and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language
- Maintaining practitioner standards and boundaries at all times on and off the school site
- Being aware that the personal and family circumstance and lifestyles of some children lead to an increased risk of neglect and or abuse
- Staff, supply staff, volunteers, governors/trustees not being involved in any activity which is illegal and may pose a risk to children e.g. access to child pornography, extremist or radicalisation activities
- Staff and volunteers are reminded to declare any offences or involvement with the police relevant to their employment, any transferable risks will be responded to appropriately as per KCSIE 2024
- Reading and adhering to the staff Acceptable Use Policy.
- Where safeguarding or criminal issues occur in an employee's private life the impact of this on their suitability to work with children will be assessed with the support of the LADO/HR as appropriate.

## **Training**

The school follows the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance in relation to safeguarding training.

Safeguarding will be part of induction for all governors, staff and volunteers new to the school. They will be given a copy of this policy, the Code of Conduct, details about the role of the DSL and part one of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education: information for all school and college staff' plus Annex A if they work directly with children. For teachers, induction will also include reference to expectations within the Teaching Standards.

This will be followed up by basic child protection training that equips individuals to recognise and respond appropriately to concerns about pupils.

A proportional risk-based approach will be taken regarding the level of information provided to all temporary staff and volunteers. As a minimum they will be provided with, and will be expected to follow, the child protection summary sheet which forms part of this policy.

Staff who do not have designated responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including the Headteacher, will undertake suitable formal refresher training at appropriate intervals, by a suitably qualified person. The BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership recommends this is at least every three years.

All staff will have training in preventing radicalisation and extremism ('Prevent') – either by attending a Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) or completing an on-line course, followed by a discussion with the DSL. The DSL is the Prevent Lead and will attend WRAP.

In addition, all staff members will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates from the DSL as required, but at least annually. This will include learning from local and national serious cases when the learning becomes available. Notification of any necessary changes and reminders will be shared as required. The school will ensure that all staff are regularly trained and updated on safeguarding and child protection matters, including mental health concerns, Child Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation, child on child abuse, safeguarding related to remote learning and online safety so they can identify and report on the impact on a child.

When DSLs and Deputies take up the role they will attend enhanced (Level 3) training provided through the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership Working Together multi-agency course. They must be updated at 2 yearly intervals after that. The DSL will attend local authority safeguarding forums.

In addition, their knowledge and skills will be updated regularly - at least annually. These individuals are expected to take responsibility for their own learning about safeguarding and child protection by, for example: taking time to read and digest newsletters and relevant research articles; attending training offered by BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership on matters such as domestic abuse, attachment and child sexual and criminal exploitation; completing on-line training on FGM; attending local DSL forums etc.

Designated Teachers for Looked-After Children will undertake appropriate training. In BCP this is provided by the Virtual School for Children in Care.

See Appendix 1 for contact details.

Headteachers and at least one governor will complete safer recruitment training either through a multi-agency taught session or by completing the NSPCC on-line course.

It is recommended by the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership that all governors attend training, briefings or other input which equips them to understand fully and comply with their legal safeguarding duties *as governors*, set out in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2024. Attendance includes those who also work with children and have attended child protection training in that role.

All DSLs and deputy DSLs and the Thrive Support Assistant receive monthly supervision sessions from an external supervisor.

### **Raising concerns about safeguarding practice in our school**

In this school we promote a culture where any staff or volunteers feel able to raise with the Headteacher any concerns about safeguarding or child protection practice.

Any issues which they have not been able to resolve with the Headteacher should be reported to the governors in the first instance. If they are still not satisfied they should approach the Director for Children's Services or, if the issue relates to the conduct of or allegation against a member of staff, should contact the Local Authority designated officer (also known as the LADO).

Staff should refer to the school's whistle-blowing policy for more information or can use the NSPCC whistle blowing helpline: 0800 0280285.

### **Information for parents and carers**

At this school we are committed to keeping our pupils safe. Our first priority is a child's welfare and we will usually discuss with parents any concerns we have about a child. There might be rare occasions, however, when we must provide information to or consult other agencies such as Children's Social Care before we contact parents. This will include situations where we judge that to tell parents first will or might put a child at risk of significant harm.

Our responsibilities are set out in this policy. It reflects statutory guidance and the Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures, which can be found on the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

If parents have any questions about this they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead: Helen Frampton

### **Contextual Safeguarding**

#### **What is contextual safeguarding?**

Safeguarding incidents and or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of school or college and /or can occur between children outside of school or college. All staff especially the DSL or deputy should consider the context within which such incidents and or behaviour occur. This is contextual safeguarding and means assessments should consider such factors, so it is important that schools and colleges provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the context of the abuse.

### **Off Site Visits**

Off site visits are the subject of a risk assessment. The school obtains written notification from any agency or third-party organisation used, to seek assurance that the appropriate level of checks have been carried out as required by their role. Safeguarding concerns or allegations will be responded to following the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures (as above). The member of staff in charge of the visit will report any safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher, who will pass to the First Response Safeguarding Hub if appropriate. In emergency the staff member in charge will contact the police and/or the First Response Safeguarding Hub.

The child protection/safeguarding policy and procedures of an off-site provider e.g. water sport activity, will be checked and the DSL satisfied that they are up to date, DfE compliant and appropriate, before using the facility.

## **Use of Alternative Provision**

If alternative provision is made for any pupils it is the school's continued responsibility for safeguarding and we ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place in any provision used.

## **Photography and Images**

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place. To protect children, we will:

- Seek parental consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- Use only the child's first name with an image
- Ensure that children are appropriately dressed
- Encourage children to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them
- Make sure that images of children are removed once they leave the school.
- Update records regularly about any child whose image cannot be displayed, e.g. risk of domestic abuse.

At school events, where parents/ carers are taking photographs of children, everyone is reminded that these are to be for personal use only and are not to be shared on social media.

Parents are reminded to inform the school as soon as possible when there is a change in circumstance which may make the sharing of images a potential area of risk for their child.

## **Other Relevant Policies**

There are other relevant school policies and guidance which relate to safeguarding. These are reviewed together with the safeguarding policy so that the policies remain consistent and up to date e.g.

- Attendance policy.
- SEND / Inclusion.
- Record keeping, data protection, Information sharing.
- Safer recruitment, Induction, training, supervision and support.
- Health and Safety including first aid, first aid training for children, intimate care, site security, Lock Down, physical intervention, managing medical conditions.
- Behaviour policy including use of reasonable force, Exclusion, staff/ volunteer behaviour policy/code of conduct, anti-bullying policy, equalities duties.
- Photographic and sharing images.
- Online safety policy and acceptable user policies for pupils, staff and parents.
- Whistle blowing.
- Managing Allegations, including transferable risk and low-level concerns.
- Complaints procedure.
- Schools letting policy.
- Role description of the DSL & Deputy DSLs.

## School Safeguarding Responsibility Summary

### The school will:

- Abide by the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance
  - Safeguard and promote that the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.
  - **Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play.
  - School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help and advice for children, and prevent concerns from escalating.
  - Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This system is described in statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*.
  - Schools and colleges should work with social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.
  - Give all staff and volunteers a copy of Part 1 of KCSIE and ensure that it is read and understood with knowledge of and access to all of KCSIE - especially Part 4: Allegations of abuse made against teachers and other staff and Part 5 Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment.
  - All staff who work directly with children should also read Annex B and this must be made available to them.
  - School Governors, senior leaders, DSLs and deputy DSLs should have read and follow all of KCSIE.
  
- Have a Child Protection Policy with procedures which are in accordance with government guidance and refer to locally agreed inter-agency procedures put in place by the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Appoint a lead Governor responsible for safeguarding practice within the school
- Have safeguarding as a standing agenda item at staff meetings and governing body meetings and minutes recorded.
- Appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead who is a member of the Leadership Team and appoint other Deputy DSLs to provide adequate cover.
- Ensure that the DSL leads on the Prevent agenda.
- Appoint a named member of staff to support children who are Looked After Children (Designated teacher) and those previously looked after who will work closely with the Local Authority including Social Workers and the Virtual Head and DSL where this post is held separately.
- Require teachers, staff and volunteers to work within the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures, school policy and good practice guidelines
- Ensure that teachers, staff, peripatetic staff, contractors and volunteers have completed Disclosure and Barring Service checks as per the safer recruitment guidance, and that contacts within extended services require safer recruitment and safeguarding compliance
- Undertake relevant safer recruitment and allegations management training
- Ensure any external contractors using, or are on, school premises i.e. after school clubs, sports clubs have up to date safeguarding policies and are signed up to Safeguarding Procedures. Also ensure that they follow guidelines on the use of restraint and comply with the safeguarding requirements.

- Ensure all staff and volunteers comply with Safer Working practice for adults who work with children in Education Settings and the agreed school code of conduct/ mental, emotional health and positive behaviour policy
- Sign up to the local information sharing protocol and share information relating to MARAC and Operation Encompass domestic abuse information and co-operate with the police in how to join this scheme, attend appropriate training and inform the school community.
- Ensure that the relevant staff have undertaken appropriate training to contribute to multi-agency assessments of children
- Ensure management of allegations procedures are implemented
- Recognise that children with special educational needs may be especially vulnerable to abuse and expect staff to take extra care to ensure their needs are protected.
- Ensure the SENCO liaises with the DSL at regular intervals to promote educational outcomes, to share information and to share and/or review any concerns.
- Have and use an 'Anti Bullying Policy' responding to any complaint of bullying or prejudice within the school. Have a member of staff as an Anti-Bullying Champion.
- Have an online-safety policy in line with KCSIE 2024. Have a member of staff as an Online/E-Safety Champion. This includes any issues relevant to remote learning.
- Have a whistle blowing policy where it is safe to discuss concerns.
- Be aware of the needs of vulnerable groups, identify and action for all identified.
- Ensure that all staff maintain a culture of high aspirations for all children, especially those who are vulnerable.
- Ensure that the DSL and deputy DSLs can support staff in identifying and supporting the challenges that all children face, especially those who are considered vulnerable.
- Make policies available to parents and pupils via the school website or other means.
- Provide education to children about safeguarding issues.
- Ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account in respect to individual matters as well as safeguarding generally.
- Undertake an annual audit of safeguarding, using the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership Self Evaluation audit tool which will be shared with the Governing Body leading to appropriate actions to ensure that the school is meeting all the requirements in line with national guidance, legislation and local guidance.
- Report on safeguarding to the Governing Body at least annually.
- Review and update the safeguarding policy annually and when any significant changes occur.

The school has a responsibility to work with other agencies on all safeguarding issues which may include:

- Allegations against staff – work with the LADO
- Child exploitation including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), serious violence, County Lines
- Bullying including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying
- Children missing from education, EHE, exclusions and attendance
- Children and the court system

- Children with family members in prison
- Domestic abuse
- Drugs and alcohol misuse
- Early Help
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- Gangs and youth violence
- Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Health and Safety
- Homelessness
- Honour – based violence (HBV)
- Illegal child employment
- Mental health
- Physical Intervention, reasonable force, isolation and deprivation of liberty
- Private fostering/any regulated activity such as host families
- Peer on peer abuse
- The Police - up skirting
- Radicalisation/extremism
- Sexting/grooming and other online safety issues
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children
- Teenage relationship abuse
- Trafficking and modern slavery
- Work related learning and child employment

For more information, see the links to Government guidance in KCSIE.

### **Links to relevant law and guidance**

- Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023  
<http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/chapters/contents.html>
- The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2009/2680/contents/made>
- Keeping children safe in education 2024  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf)
- Section 175 Education Act 2002 (local authorities) and Section 157 and the Education (Independent Schools Standards (England) Regulations 2003 for Independent schools (including academies and city technology colleges)  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/section/175>
- Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings 2023  
[Inspecting Safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings](#)
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with children and young people  
[Guidance Safer Working Practice-May-2019-final \(bournemouth.gov.uk\)](#)

- Governor/Trustee's Handbook – March 2019  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/925104/Governance\\_Handbook\\_FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/925104/Governance_Handbook_FINAL.pdf)
- BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership - <https://pdscp.co.uk/>
- Data Protection Toolkit for Schools  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-protection-toolkit-for-schools>
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – March 2015  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2>
- Information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>
- Department for Education – e-safety guidelines  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/251455/advice\\_on\\_child\\_internet\\_safety.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/251455/advice_on_child_internet_safety.pdf)
- Safeguarding: Disclosure and Barring  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>
- The Information Commissioner's Office – Data Protection Act in Schools and Education  
<https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/schools/pupils-info/>
- The South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL)  
<https://swgfl.org.uk/>
- BCP Family Information Directory [BCP Family Information Directory](#)
- 'Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England' (Sept 2023)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>
- Children Missing Education (September 2016)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>
- Pan Dorset Continuum of Need 2019  
<https://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/contents.html>
- CE Toolkit  
<https://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/contents.html>
- Teaching Online Safety in Schools June 2019



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-online-safety-in-schools>

- [The Children Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)) which provides a framework for the care and protection of children.
- Section 5B (11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the [Serious Crime Act 2015](#), 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](#), which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM.
- [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#), which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- [Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty](#), 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 Human Rights Act 1998](#), which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under [the European Convention on Human Rights](#) (ECHR)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#), which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race). This means our governors and headteacher should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils with regard to these characteristics. The Act allows our school to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there's evidence that they're being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment
- [The Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence; homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying; or racial discrimination
- The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (referred to in

this policy as the "2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations") and Childcare Act 2006, which set out who is disqualified from working with children

## Useful Contacts

### **For all referrals (concerns about children, which require a social work assessment)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Call BCP's MASH – First Response Hub:                   | <b>01202 123334</b>  |
| 2. Out of Hours Service                                    | <b>01202 738256</b>  |
| 3. BCP's Safeguarding and Standards Team                   | <b>01202 817839</b>  |
| 4. BCP's Virtual School for Children in Care               | <b>01202 456109</b>  |
| 5. LADO  | <b>01202 817600</b>  |
| 6. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Helen Frampton      | <b>01202 485436</b>  |
| 7. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads:               |  |
| • Jeremy Wallace   | <b>01202 485436</b>  |
| • Luke Thorne  |  |
| • Lucy Macmillan   |  |
| 8. The Lead Safeguarding Governor is<br>Rev. Paul O'Connor | <a href="mailto:poconnor@somerford.dorset.sch.uk">poconnor@somerford.dorset.sch.uk</a> |

Date Safeguarding policy adopted by Governing Body .....

Signed:

Head teacher .....

Chair of Governors .....

Date to be reviewed .....

The Head Teacher and Governing Body with the Designated Safeguarding Lead will monitor the safeguarding practice of the school to ensure that this policy is understood and being operated effectively in practice.

## **Possible Indicators of Abuse**

The following information is not designed to turn school staff into experts but it will help them to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse. The examples below are not meant to form an exhaustive list; Designated Safeguarding Leads and other staff will find it helpful to refer to Government advice 'What to do if you are worried about a child being abused' (2015) and the inter-agency safeguarding procedures on the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

### **i) Physical Abuse**

Most children will collect cuts and bruises in their daily lives. These are likely to be in places where there are bony parts of the body, like elbows, knees and shins. Some children, however, will have bruising which is less likely to have been caused accidentally. An important indicator of physical abuse is where bruises or injuries are unexplained or the explanation does not fit the injury or there are differing explanations. A delay in seeking medical treatment for a child when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern. Bruising may not be noticeable on children with different skin tones or from different ethnic groups and specialist advice may need to be taken.

Patterns of bruising that are suggestive of physical child abuse can include:

- bruising in children who are not independently mobile
- bruises that are seen away from bony prominences
- bruises to the face, back, stomach, arms, buttocks, ears and hands
- multiple bruises in clusters
- multiple bruises of uniform shape
- bruises that carry the imprint of an implement used, hand marks, fingertips or a belt buckle

Although bruising is the commonest injury in physical abuse, fatal non-accidental head injury and non-accidental fractures can occur without bruising. Any child who has unexplained signs of pain or illness must be seen promptly by a doctor.

Other physical signs of abuse can include:

- cigarette burns
- adult bite marks
- broken bones
- scalds

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

- fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- flinching when approached or touched
- reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- missing school
- running away from home

## ii) Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, and often children who appear otherwise well cared for may be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. *Children who live in households where there is domestic violence often suffer emotional abuse.* Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix/play with other children.

The physical signs of emotional abuse can include:

- a failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in other circumstances, e.g. in hospital or away from parents' care
- sudden speech disorders
- developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- neurotic behaviour, e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking
- being unable to play
- fear of making mistakes
- self-harm
- fear of parents being approached

## iii) Sexual Abuse

Adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers. It is important to remember that children can also be sexually abused by other children (i.e. those under 18)

Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour which may cause concern, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children who talk about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to, taken seriously and appropriate action taken promptly.

The physical signs of sexual abuse can include:

- pain or itching in the genital/anal areas
- bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas
- sexually transmitted disease
- vaginal discharge or infection
- stomach pains
- discomfort when walking or sitting down
- pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse can include:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- having nightmares
- missing school
- running away from home
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
- sexual drawings or language
- bedwetting
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about

- alcohol / substance / drug use
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- not being allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults or other children

#### **iv) Neglect**

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise, yet have some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children and young people.

The physical signs of neglect can include:

- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- being constantly dirty or smelly
- loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- inappropriate dress for the conditions

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect can include:

- complaining of being tired all the time
- not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- having few friends
- mentioning being left alone or unsupervised

It is important that adults in school recognise that providing compensatory care might address the immediate and presenting issue but could cover up or inhibit the recognition of neglect in all aspects of a child's life. Compensatory care is defined as 'providing a child or young person, on a regular basis, help or assistance with basic needs with the aim of redressing deficits in parental care'. This might involve, for example, providing each day a substitute set of clothing because those from home are dirty, or showering a child whose personal hygiene or presentation is such that it is affecting his/her interaction with peers. It does not include isolated or irregular support such as giving lunch money or washing a child who has had an 'accident'. If any adult in school finds s/he is regularly attending to one or more aspects of a child's basic needs then this will prompt a discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The general rule is: the younger the child, the higher the risk in terms of their immediate health. However, serious neglect of older children and adolescents is often overlooked, on the assumption that they can care for themselves and have made a 'choice' to neglect themselves. Lack of engagement with services should be a potential indicator of neglect.

School staff should be mindful of the above and discuss any concerns with the DSL who will take the appropriate action in accordance with the inter-agency neglect guidance on the BCP Safeguarding Children's Partnership website.

## **Guidance for schools on records made when there are safeguarding or child protection concerns**

### **These guidelines cover**

- General principles of keeping safeguarding and child protection records
- What records should be kept
- How records should be made and kept
- How long schools should retain safeguarding/child protection records
- Access to safeguarding and child protection records / information sharing
- Transfer of safeguarding and child protection records

The guidelines reflect and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Information Sharing: Practitioners' Guide 2018  
[Information sharing: advice for practitioners \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- PD-CSP Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures  
<https://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/>
- [at The Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\)](#), which includes ICO UK GDPR FAQs and guidance from the department
- [in Data protection: toolkit for schools](#) - Guidance to support schools with data protection activity, including compliance with the UK GDPR.
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005
- Data protection (Subject Access Modification) (Education) order 2000 9SI 2000/414)
- **DPA 2018, Schedule 3, Exemptions - Health, Social Work, Education and Child Abuse Data. Specifically, Parts 4 & 5 of the schedule.**

### **1. When should a safeguarding/child protection record be created or added to?**

- If a member of staff raises a safeguarding or child protection concern relating to a specific child
- If safeguarding/child protection information is forwarded to the school by a previous education setting. This will include the transition of safeguarding files from early years settings when a child first starts school.
- If the school is alerted by another agency e.g., health, Social Care, police of safeguarding/child protection concerns about a pupil, this would include a domestic abuse notification via Operation Encompass or the alert system.
- If a parent/carer/another person raises a safeguarding concern about a child
- If a child discloses a safeguarding/child protection allegation against a parent/carer, member of staff, another adult or child
- If the Designated Safeguarding Lead/other staff member provides Early Help services relating to a safeguarding/child protection issue and/or makes a referral to another agency.

## **2. How should safeguarding/child protection records be kept?**

- The DSL is responsible for ensuring that child protection (safeguarding) files are kept up to date.
- The school can have either an electronic system, paper filing system or both. Somerford Primary School uses My Concern to record all new files and concerns. There are still some historic paper files.
- This must permit records to be kept securely and separately from a child's main school file. The child's main file should indicate that there is a separate safeguarding/child protection file
- All records of child protection and safeguarding concerns including domestic abuse notifications and MARAC information, disclosures or allegations are to be treated as sensitive information and must be kept together in this file.
- It is the responsibility of the DSL to ensure that records are stored safely. This is in a locked cabinet in the Headteacher's office where there are paper files and is within the secure password protected electronic system, My Concern.
- There must be a clear system known by all staff as to how they record each concern. This is in an electronic reporting system, My Concern.
- If there are concerns about more than one child in a family, there will be a separate file for each child with cross reference to linked records
- There should be a 'front sheet' with key information including contact details of parents/carers, social worker, any other relevant professionals. If a child has a Child Protection or Child in Need plan this should be made clear on the front sheet. The front sheet must be kept up to date by the DSL. This is on each child's profile on My Concern.
- Where a child is Looked After by a Local Authority, information such as parental responsibility, arrangements for contact with birth parents, levels of authority delegated to the carers, name of the virtual school head, the local authority responsible for the child and the name of the social worker, should be included in the 'front sheet.' If it is known that a child was previously looked after, this should also be recorded
- If the child is subject to any order e.g. Special Guardianship Order, this should be clear with similar details logged as for a Looked After Child.

## **3. What is recorded?**

- Factual information.
- There must be a chronology which is kept up to date, of significant incidents or events, subsequent actions, and outcomes, with accurate dates.
- Cross reference to the [Pan Dorset Continuum of need](#) where this has been used to support decision making.
- The system must be clear as to who input the information, and their role.
- Record the child's own words where there has been a disclosure, or they have been spoken with about a concern.
- In the case of disclosure, the record should also include:
  - as full an account as possible of what the child said;
  - an account of any (Tell me, Explain, Describe) questions put to the child;
  - time and place of disclosure;
  - who was present at the time of disclosure, name, job title;
  - the demeanour of the child;
  - what happened to the child at the end of disclosure
  - who was advised of the disclosure and any further actions or decisions
- Where professional opinions are given this must be made clear that it is a professional opinion and you should be able to qualify this with evidence from



observation or your professional expertise. You should only offer opinions you are qualified to give e.g. a teacher is not qualified to make any psychiatric or psychological diagnosis.

- Observations such as any indicators of possible neglect.
- Conversations with parents/carers about safeguarding/child protection concerns.
- Referrals made and conversations held with other agencies or professionals within the school.
- Reasons for actions e.g. if not referred to MASH.
- Internal actions, plans and referrals.
- Descriptions of any injury with completion of a body map.
- Be careful of descriptive language and never use prejudicial language.
- Any discussion or supervision advice given with any change in plans noted.
- Always record as soon as possible and on the same day if it relates to an incident or what a child/parent/other adult has told you.

#### 4. What else is kept on the safeguarding/child protection record?

- A copy of referral forms to other agencies.
- Minutes from relevant meetings such as Child Protection Conferences, Child in Need meetings and Team Around the Child meetings.
- Actions plans e.g. CP plans, CIN plans, TAC plans.
- Copies of any completed risk tools used e.g. CE, neglect.
- Early Help Assessments.
- Other safeguarding/child protection information from other agencies.
- Records of conversations and communications with parents and professionals.
- Emails or other correspondence to and from parents and professionals.
- Domestic abuse notifications and information to and from MARAC.
- Any other relevant safeguarding/child protection documents.

#### 5. Lawful basis to process and share information

- **The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. (Para 110 KCSIE).**
- Passing on Safeguarding records does not constitute a breach of GDPR. Safeguarding comes under GDPR Article 6 (e) 'public task' and Article 9 (h) for the legal basis of sharing information. The Children Act 1989 along with Working together to Safeguard Children 2023 requires that information which may indicate that a child is being harmed or at risk of serious harm is shared with Social Care or the Police. DSLs are expected to look at previous records to highlight patterns or repeat concerns when new information is received. On this basis, Keeping Children Safe in Education expects the CP file to be transferred to the receiving school or setting.
- Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that staff who need to share 'special category personal data' are aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information. This includes allowing 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 (para 109).

If the Headteacher/DSL believes that there is an ongoing risk to the child and that information should be shared, despite the absence of explicit consent from the parents/carers or against parental wishes, the Headteacher/DSL should use their professional judgment and clearly record their rationale for doing so.

## **6. Who can have access to safeguarding/child protection records?**

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies.
- Other senior staff on a 'need to know' basis only.
- Governors should not have access to individual child records.
- Information should only be shared with other staff and agencies in order to safeguard a child, on a 'need to know' basis in accordance with guidance in Working Together.
- Information from records can be requested by the police as part of an investigation or by the Safeguarding Partnership as part of a child safeguarding practice review (SPR) for example.
- Parents and pupils can also access files (see section 9).
- EHE leads (refer to Local Authority EHE lead for further advice).

## **7. Adopted children**

- When starting at school, if the school are told by parents that a child has been adopted this should be recorded on the main school file with the parents' permission, in order to be able to give any appropriate support. A separate child protection/safeguarding file is not necessary unless there are additional safeguarding issues as for any other child.
- Some older adopted children will have child protection records as they were initially Looked After Children prior to adoption. During the period when the child is 'placed for adoption' prior to the order being made, any records that contain information that identifies both the birth family and the adoptive family must be classed as highly sensitive and this information should only be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis.
- Once an order has been made, records should relate only to the adoptive family and not the birth family. Further advice should be sought from the social worker, family, and legal adviser if necessary.

## **8. Data Protection**

- Parents must be advised that safeguarding/child protection files are kept by the school and will be transferred to the next school or kept until the age of 25.
- The school should have a statement relating to the above and the fact that Domestic Abuse notifications and MARAC information is routinely received and kept by the school.
- Any electronic transfer of confidential information should be made via a secure system e.g., when sending an E mail with personal details to another agency. The DSL must ensure that such processes are in place and always used. (See the [Operation Encompass protocol](#))

## **The principles of the Data Protection Act**

The principles have changed under the GDPR and the new 2018 Data Protection Act. There are 6 principals which are that Personal Data must be:

1. Processed fairly, lawfully, and transparently
2. Used for a specified purpose
3. Accurate and kept up to date
4. Adequate and relevant for the purpose
5. Kept no longer than is needed
6. Protected by technical and organisational measures

## **9. Requests from parents/pupils to view files**

- The child who is the subject of a Safeguarding/child protection record has a right to access their personal record under the Data Protection Act (2018), unless to do so would affect their health or well-being, or that of another person, or would be likely to prejudice an ongoing criminal investigation.
- Parents (i.e. those with parental responsibility in law) can request to see their child's record. The school should take advice about sharing information with parents as there is no blanket right for a parent to access their child/ren's information under the GDPR/DPA 2018. If a parent makes a request to access the records on a child's behalf, this must be done in writing. See <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/children-and-the-gdpr/what-rights-do-children-have/> for more detailed information.
- If a record is to be shared the school should consider any third-party information contained in the record. Any third-party information, such as health assessments or social work reports, is the property of the original agency. Schools should seek permission from these third parties before releasing their information to the child or parent.
- The school has a calendar month to respond. See <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/individual-rights/right-of-access/> for more detailed information.
- Where requests are in any way complex e.g. a child expresses their concern about access by a parent, further legal or data protection advice should be sought by the school/college before proceeding.

## **10. How long should the safeguarding/child protection record be kept?**

- The school should retain the record for as long as the pupil remains at the school.
- If the pupil transfers to another school/college, the school must transfer the child protection file to the next school as set out below.
- If the pupil is removed by a parent to be home educated, the school must ensure that the Local Authority is informed of this and also of any child protection/Safeguarding concerns that they need to be aware of (including attendance issues and exclusions). The school must retain all safeguarding records unless advised differently from the Local Authority Elective Home Education lead. If/when the child goes back on role at another school, the original school will then transfer the safeguarding records to the new school. The EHE lead would ensure that the new school has all necessary records about any concerns which occurred during the EHE period.
- If a pupil is permanently excluded the excluding school should make arrangements for the safeguarding/child protection records to be transferred to the new education provider.
- A record of the date and person to whom the record was sent, must be retained.

- When a child is of school leaving age the last school/college must retain the safeguarding/child protection records until the pupils 25<sup>th</sup> birthday (IRMS Toolkit and KCSIE).
- The independent Inquiry into child Sexual Abuse has instructed relevant organisations, including schools and colleges, that they should not destroy, for the foreseeable future, any of their records that could potentially come within the scope of the inquiry (i.e. any records relating to sexual abuse).

## **11. Transfer of records**

### **Dual registered pupils**

- Where a pupil is on roll at a school and also attending an Alternative Provision, the chronology and other relevant information in the child protection file should be copied and passed to the DSL at the alternative provision. The two DSLs should agree on who will keep the chronology updated and how best to communicate to each other significant events and issues in relation to that pupil. This decision should be in writing and copied to both files. Parents/carers should be informed of this process.

### **Changing or leaving school**

- When a pupil transfers from one school to another, their child protection/safeguarding record (if any) should be forwarded to the new school within five days for an in-year transfer or within the first five days of the start of a new term. Care must be taken to ensure confidentiality is maintained and the transfer process is as secure and as safe as possible. It should be sent separately from their main pupil file.
- The DSL should contact the DSL of the receiving school, to ensure that they are aware of the file(s), inform the school that they are being transferred and to arrange the transfer details.
- The DSL should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving, to enable the new school/college to offer continuing support when the child arrives.
- Although most schools have moved to electronic records, where paper records exist these should be delivered by hand. If this is not practical recorded delivery can be used. The package should be addressed to the receiving DSL and clearly marked as confidential.
- A 'Transfer of Records' form should be included with the files (or securely emailed to the DSL at the receiving school). This is completed by the receiving school and returned to the DSL of the originating school forming a confirmation of receipt. Records should not transfer until it has been confirmed the child has arrived at the new school/college. This form (or email equivalent) should request the following:
  - The name of the school and of the Headteacher / Principal of the receiving school.
  - The date when the child protection records were received and how e.g. by hand, post or electronically
  - The name and position of the person receiving the records
  - The signature (where possible) of the person receiving the records.
 If the transfer required is out of area and/or when the paper records cannot be delivered by hand, a secure copy of the child protection file that is being transferred should be kept. Once you have received confirmation that the records have arrived at the destination then the copy must be securely destroyed.

- The originating school must keep a record, usually referred to as a destruction log, for **6 years** of the receipt confirmation and of the date when the copy of the records was destroyed (Records Management Society Guidance).
- If there are known to be safeguarding/child protection concerns, and the records do not arrive **within five working days**, the DSL should contact the DSL/Headteacher to formally request the records. If they still do not arrive within **a further five working days**, please contact the Education Safeguarding Advisor at the Local Authority.
- If a pupil with a child protection/safeguarding record leaves your school without a forwarding address (for home and new school) and no contact is received from the new school, the DSL must inform the Local Authority Child Missing Education officer, without delay as per local procedures. Enquiries to locate the child will be made as soon as this notification is received. If there is reason to suspect the pupil is suffering harm, then the DSL will refer to the MASH in the usual way. The safeguarding/child protection record would usually remain with the originating school until a request is made from the new school.
- If a child arrives at the school before records arrive and you are aware of a previous safeguarding history from the outset or concerns have been raised since arrival, contact the DSL of the previous school to discuss the case immediately. (A safeguarding file may not have been passed on).
- Electronic files must be transferred to other schools via a secure system. When the receipt has been returned by the new school, to confirm that the file has been received, the electronic record should be deleted by the sending school.

**Are there any circumstances in which you can retain safeguarding records once a child has left your school?**

- Data will usually only be kept on a 'need to know' basis and therefore it would be usual to transfer all data once the child has left the establishment as there is ordinarily no longer a 'need to know.'
- There may be some exceptions to this e.g. if the school are actively involved in court proceedings such as care proceedings at the time of transfer or there is an ongoing complaint or allegation made against a member of staff in relation to child protection, child welfare or safeguarding issues. In these circumstances based on the 'need to know' principle it would be appropriate to keep a copy of relevant documents until these matters are brought to a close. After which time they should be destroyed securely both hard copies and electronic files. Wherever possible this should be with legal advice.

**Are there exceptions to all safeguarding information being transferred?**

- Ordinarily it is usual to transfer all information which has been kept in a child protection/safeguarding file.
- Most of this information should be known to parents with clear statements in school safeguarding policies and brought to the attention of parents/carers at the time when recording is made, that this will happen. This will include a record of domestic abuse alerts or notifications, referrals to Early help services, details of early help services provided within the school etc. as well as recording relating to child protection (Section 47)
- There may be some rare exceptions to this position e.g.:
- if a domestic abuse notification was received in year 1 or some concerns were raised by the class teacher which were monitored for the year but led to no further action or concerns and the child transfers in year 6/7 and there has been no other information/concern received, the data controller (school) DSL/Head teacher will need to take a decision about whether it is still relevant

to the child's welfare. We would recommend that these decisions are documented with reasons why. If challenged by a parent, the school will need to justify their decision to transfer. However, if information is not transferred the reasons for this must be recorded and the DSL/HT satisfied that they could justify this should there later be a challenge.

## **12. Photographs**

Photographs of pupils are considered 'data' and therefore should not be retained by the school once a child leaves unless there is permission from the parent/carer (and child if at a suitable age to consent) to continue to use a specific photograph or there has been anonymisation of the image e.g. on a school web-page.

## **Child Protection Summary for all Visiting Professionals Somerford Primary School**

As an adult working directly with children in this school you have a duty of care towards all pupils. This means you must act at all times in a way that is consistent with their safety and welfare.

It is your responsibility to keep your child protection training up to date; you might be asked for evidence of this.

You must follow the principles of safer working practice, which include use of technology – on no account should you use your mobile phone in school or around children, contact or take images of pupils on personal equipment, including your mobile 'phone.

If the behaviour of another adult in the school gives rise to concern you must report it to the Headteacher.

If you have a concern about a child, particularly if you think s/he may be suffering or at risk of suffering harm, it is your responsibility to share the information promptly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Deputies who are Helen Frampton, Jeremy Wallace, Lucy Macmillan and Luke Thorne.

The following is not an exhaustive list but you might become concerned as a result of:

- Seeing a physical injury which you believe to be non-accidental
- Observing something in the appearance of a pupil which leads you to think his/her needs are being neglected
- A pupil telling you that s/he has been subjected to some form of abuse

In any of these circumstances you must write down what you observed or heard, date and sign the account and give it to the DSL or a Deputy.

If a pupil talks to you about (discloses) sexual or physical abuse you:

- Listen carefully without interruption, particularly if s/he is freely recalling significant events
- Only ask sufficient questions to clarify what you have heard. You might not need to ask anything but, if you do, you must not 'lead' the pupil in any way so should only ask 'open' questions
- Make it clear you are obliged to pass the information on, but only to those who need to know
- Tell the DSL or Deputy without delay
- Write an account of the disclosure as soon as you are able (definitely the same day), date and sign it and give it to the DSL.

Do not ask the pupil to repeat the disclosure to anyone else in school, ask him/her or any other pupil to write a 'statement', or inform parents. You are not expected to make a judgement about whether the child is telling the truth.

Remember – **share any concerns, don't keep them to yourself.**