

Presdales School



‘Achievement for All’

Title	CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
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1. Introduction

At Presdales School we strive to create a culture where safeguarding permeates through all aspects of school life. Safeguarding is defined as;

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment (whether that is within or outside the home, including online),
- preventing harm to a child's mental and physical health and/or development,
- ensuring that children grow up in the provision of safe and effective care,
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes,
- Promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children,
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

Safeguarding Policies

This Child Protection Policy forms part of a suite of documents and policies which relate to the safeguarding responsibilities of the school (including the use of the school premises). In particular this policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour for Learning Policy, Attendance Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy, Drugs and Substance Abuse Policy, Policy for Children Looked After, Health and Safety Policy, Preventing Radicalisation Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Safer Recruitment Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Online Safety Policy and Data Protection Policy.

Statutory Framework

The school follows the procedures established by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. The HSCP are three organisations responsible for keeping children safe in Hertfordshire and include Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Constabulary and the Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board. The HSCP encourages constructive challenge as part of a culture of learning and partnership working and since May 2025, the HSCP has followed revised procedures for resolving professional differences and escalations.

The school acts in accordance with the statutory legislation and guidance to protect children from abuse and neglect outlined in:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Education Act 2002, Education Regulations 2005
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025) Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2023)
- Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners DfE 2024
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, Prevent Duty Guidance 2023

- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (Section 74, Serious Crime Act 2015)
- Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Serious Violence Strategy 2018
- Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998 & the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges DfE 2021
- Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009
- The Governance Handbook
- School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

The school contributes to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Safeguarding Principles

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff including supply staff, volunteers and contract workers have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn and develop. Children includes everyone under the age of 18. Staff receive appropriate safeguarding children training (which is updated every three years) and receive regular safeguarding updates, so that they are knowledgeable and aware of their role in the early recognition of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation and know the appropriate procedures to follow. Staff members working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and 'it could be happening to this child' where safeguarding is concerned and should consider at all times what is in the best interests of the child concerned. All staff are expected to safeguard children by always exercising their professional curiosity according to safeguarding principles.

Presdales School is committed to the five outcomes which are key to children's wellbeing:

- being healthy
- staying safe
- enjoying and achieving
- making a positive contribution
- achieving economic wellbeing

The school therefore strives to establish and maintain an ethos and culture where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened and responded to when they have a worry or concern. Children (particularly those with protected characteristics) know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried and staff endeavour to build trusted relationships with children which facilitates communication. Children know who members of the Safeguarding Team and the Mental Health Leads are through assemblies and posters around the school and are made aware of how to contact them. Pastoral staff also regularly inform year groups about who they can talk to about any issues of concern. Staff are encouraged to talk about concerns to do with the wellbeing of children and are listened and responded to. The school plays a key role in preventative education and children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, through teaching and

learning opportunities as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum (and in line with the compulsory teaching of Relationships Sex Education and Health Education from September 2020, with 2025 updates due to be in place in 2026). This aims to ensure a whole-school approach to preparing students for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and sexual violence/harassment.

The school endeavours to ensure the provision of appropriate support using Hertfordshire's Family First programme of early help services to help prevent the escalation of safeguarding needs. The school uses the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership threshold document known as 'The Continuum of Need' to help identify a 'Level of Need' and the service response that can be expected which is accessed through the Hertfordshire 'Gateway' service which acts as the front door to Hertfordshire social care and includes the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) who make decisions and recommendations at the earliest opportunity about services and resources for children and their families.

The school seeks to work in partnership and cooperation with children and their families, as promoted in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, communicating with and supporting parents/carers to help with improving a family's resilience, improve outcomes, engage with professionals and reduce the chances of problems getting worse. We hope that parents and carers will support us to undertake our statutory duties to offer early help support and share information with other agencies where necessary. We want to work in collaboration with parents and carers to promote the health and welfare of all our pupils. We know that when children feel safe they are free to learn and develop. The school endorses the principles of Family Help as set out in the government's programme 'Keeping children safe, helping families thrive' and 'The Families First Partnership Programme 2024' which aims to help every child achieve and thrive, breaking the link between young people's background and their future success. Supporting families through a multi-disciplinary practice approach aims to enable families to make positive improvements and decisions for themselves and their children.

Staff are alert to the potential need for early help for students who are more susceptible to harm who include:

- children with disabilities or specific additional needs
- children with special educational needs or health conditions (physical and mental health needs)
- young carers
- children who have unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, home or care
- children who have had multiple suspensions and/or at risk of permanent exclusion from school or alternative provision providers
- children misusing drugs/alcohol
- children at risk of trafficking or exploitation
- children at risk of being radicalised
- children at risk of honour-based abuse or FGM
- children who are privately fostered
- children who are looked after or previously looked after
- children engaging in antisocial or criminal behaviour including gang involvement

- children whose family circumstances present challenges including drug/alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues, domestic abuse, temporary accommodation or has a parent/carer in custody children who could experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification, sexuality or other protected characteristic
- children who have English as an additional language and/or are asylum seekers
- children showing early signs of abuse and neglect.

If staff think that access to early help services or a child protection contact to specialist services may be required, they should discuss this with the DSP. They should be aware of the process of making referrals to children's social care along with the role they may be expected to take in child protection assessments, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm).

A directory of early help services is available to help families and practitioners find information and support in order to prevent the escalation of needs and crisis, this can be found at <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/families-first/families-first.aspx>

The most common reason for a child to become looked after in the care of the local authority is as a result of abuse and neglect and therefore appropriate arrangements are put in place to support these children and keep them safe from further harm. The designated teacher who oversees these arrangements is Ms S Jennings (Assistant Head).

2. The DSP

A Designated Senior Person, from the school's leadership team and appointed by the Trust Board, takes lead responsibility for child protection. They co-ordinate action within the school, liaise with other agencies and set up inter-agency assessments as appropriate. A Deputy DSP is always available in school hours in the absence of the lead DSP and emergency contact arrangements are put in place for out of hours activities (with a member of SLT being allocated as a link on a designated school mobile phone, if this person is not on the Safeguarding Team they will contact them). Members of the Safeguarding Team can be contacted on DSP@presdales.herts.sch.uk For out of hours/term emergency contacts see the links to other agencies at the end of the policy.

The DSP is Ms K Chandler Assistant Head, Pastoral Manager Key Stage

The Deputy DSPs are: Mrs S Miller, Deputy Head Pastoral (Mental Health Lead)

Miss O Turner , Assistant Head, Pastoral Manager Key Stage 4 (Deputy Mental Health Lead)

Mrs D Schillaci-Rowland , Head of Sixth Form.

Mrs V Yeoman, School Family Support Worker

Mr M Warren Headteacher is also a trained DSP.

Together these staff make up the school's Safeguarding Team.

These staff receive appropriate updated DSP training every two years and they regularly refresh and share their knowledge and skills of the latest safeguarding developments, undertaking multi-agency training on a range of safeguarding themes from relevant partners. The DSP is also a Prevent trainer and the Deputy DSPs have all received Prevent training.

The Safeguarding Team:

- Refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care and engage with early help assessment processes
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding, in particular supporting staff who raise concerns and make a child protection contact to Children's Services
- They understand the importance of information sharing with safeguarding partners and the assessment processes for providing early help and statutory intervention
- They liaise with the local authority case managers for child protection concerns as appropriate and know how to access local specialist support for children involved in sexual violence and harassment
- They have a good understanding of harmful behaviours that may require safety and support planning or risk management planning
- They have a working knowledge of how Hertfordshire conduct a child protection conference
- They are aware that children must have an 'appropriate adult' to support them in a police investigation or search
- They are aware that when the school has placed a child under an alternative provision provider, the school is still responsible for the safeguarding of that child and checks the placement meets their needs
- They work alongside parents/carers in engaging with school and other professionals when issues emerge or become a concern
- They understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have on children and support them appropriately
- They understand the unique risks associated with online safety and support children to stay safe online, including those who are particularly vulnerable including those with SEND.

The DSP ensures that:

1. Record keeping

Accurate detailed records, concerns and referrals with contacts are securely kept and when children join the school their child protection records are requested. When children leave the school, the DSP sends the child protection file separately and securely to the relevant DSP at any new school or college once the child is in attendance, obtaining proof that these have been received and then destroying any information held on the child (unless the case is currently open) in line with the data protection guidelines. The DSP will also, if appropriate, share information with the new school/college in advance of the child leaving to ensure continued support for victims of abuse or children under a child protection plan in their new setting. Where possible the transfer of records will be within 5 days of a child joining a new school. Confidential records will only be made available to those with a right to access them and safeguarding records will be retained until a student reaches their 25th birthday or

31st birthday, if there is an EHCP in place. Records about child sexual abuse will be kept for 75 years with appropriate review periods.

2. Children with specific needs

Particular attention is given to the specific needs of children in need, children with a social worker, those with special educational needs and young carers. Children who need a social worker, due to safeguarding and welfare needs, can be susceptible to further harm and therefore the DSP uses information from the local authority to make decisions on the provision of pastoral and academic support (Including attendance issues) in the best interests of the child's wellbeing. Through liaison with the Ms S Jennings Assistant Head responsible for CLA, information about any Child Looked After is appropriately shared. The contact details of the CLA's social worker and Virtual Schools Head, as well as the legal status and contact arrangements with birth parents/those with parental responsibility, are known and shared as appropriate. The Virtual School's Head has a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment and progress of children with a social worker, any CLA and previously CLA children, and also those in kinship care (where a child cannot be looked after by their birth parents and is in the care of a relative/friend, through either Family and Friends Care Giving or Private Fostering), children who are Elective Home Education (EHE) and Children Missing from Education (CME)

3. Referrals, cases and conferences

Cases of suspected abuse or neglect are referred to Children's Services, the Police (where a crime may have been committed) and the Channel programme (where there is a radicalisation concern). Contact is made with the Child Protection Consultation Hub when advice is needed regarding concerns and contact made with relevant agencies when deciding whether a referral should be made. The Head Teacher is informed of ongoing enquiries. The DSP ensures the school manages child protection contacts, attending and contributing to any child protection case and review conferences.

4. Staff Training

Safeguarding induction is delivered to all staff new to the school. Supply staff, contractors and volunteers are also made aware of safeguarding policies and procedures. The DSP checks that all staff in the school have Level 1 Child Protection training (which is renewed every three years), Prevent training and online safety training (which is updated every two years).

An annual update in safeguarding is delivered to all staff to refresh their Child Protection training at the start of each academic year and regular updates on the latest safeguarding issues are shared with staff termly. The DSP updates all teaching staff in the Prevent Duty every three years and provides advice and support in protecting children from radicalisation.

The DSP ensures that all staff (teaching and non-teaching) are familiar with the Child Protection Policy, the Online Safety policy, the Staff Code of Conduct (which establishes a safe environment for children within the school), the latest version of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* Part 1 with Annex B Further Information and other school mandatory policies at the start of each academic year, or when new staff join the school during the course of the year. Staff are required to electronically sign confirmation of reading these policies.

Links with HSCP are maintained to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest policies on safeguarding. Links with the Hertford and Ware PCSO and social care colleagues are also maintained, in order to enable the school to respond to local needs and then to train staff and establish procedures reflecting these.

5. The Child Protection Policy

An annual review of the Child Protection Policy takes place ensuring it is understood by staff. It is then made publicly available on the school's website, thereby making parents aware of the school's statutory role regarding the safeguarding of children, that advice regarding child protection concerns could be sought from the Child Protection Consultation Hub and that contact referrals about suspected abuse and neglect may be made.

6. Safeguarding and Online Safety Teaching

Online safety is a key component of the school's safeguarding framework. The DSP is the school's Online Safety Lead and ensures there are robust filtering and monitoring systems in place and that staff receive online safety training. Children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety through curriculum provision in PSHE lessons, SMSC activities, assemblies and Computing lessons. Awareness of online safety is also promoted with parents/carers. For full details of the school's online safety procedures see the Online Safety Policy which is annually reviewed.

7. Monitoring Safeguarding Procedures

There is a regular review of safeguarding procedures and compliance of this policy in conjunction with the nominated school trustee with whom the DSP meets termly. At the end of each academic year the DSP, along with the Head Teacher and nominated school trustee for child protection audits the school's safeguarding provision.

3. The Trust Board

The Trust Board ensures there is a whole school approach to safeguarding ensuring that all systems, processes and policies operate with the best interests of the child at their heart. The Trust Board prioritises the safety and welfare of students, creating a culture where staff are confident to challenge senior leaders over any safeguarding issue. They comply with the Academy Trust Governance guidance, KCSiE and the nominated trustee for child protection is Mrs Jackie Harvey, who is also the Chair of Trustees. All trustees receive appropriate safeguarding induction and ongoing child protection children training, to equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in the school are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Safeguarding updates are reported in each Trust Board Meeting including Operation Encompass notifications.

The Trust Board ensures that

- All school policies and procedures comply with the law and local criteria for action and local protocols for assessment
- They are aware of their obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 to ensure that the school does not unlawfully discriminate

against any person because of their protected characteristics and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- They are prepared to supply information as requested by local safeguarding partners
- School safeguarding policies and procedures are followed by staff (including with regard to child on child abuse), in particular responding to children who go missing from education, ensuring child protection files are maintained and transferred appropriately, referring cases of suspected abuse or neglect to Children's Services and ensuring children's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action is taken
- A senior member of staff is appointed as DSP, checks that the DSP receives appropriate training and carries out their duties as outlined above, this is done through the nominated trustee for child protection who meets with the DSP termly
- The school contributes to multi-agency working to promote the welfare of children
- Arrangements are in place for appropriately sharing information within the school and with other organisations as required
- Staff receive child protection training at induction and regularly updated child protection training including online safety training
- The Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually and checks the policy reflects the needs of those children who face additional barriers to any abuse or neglect being recognised
- All trustees read Keeping Children Safe in Education in its entirety and review compliance of this task annually signing a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to say that they have reviewed the guidance
- Online safety is a running and interrelated theme within the whole school approach to safeguarding and students are taught about safeguarding including online safety
- Appropriate online filters/monitoring are in place to safeguard children from potentially harmful and inappropriate material and review their effectiveness discussing with IT service providers what is required
- Staff have due regard to data protection principles which allow them to share and withhold personal information as applicable; including how 'special category personal data' can be shared for safeguarding purposes and without consent where there is good reason to do so and not providing personal data where the serious harm test under legislation is met
- They prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by adhering to the Safer Recruitment Policy and ensuring volunteers are appropriately supervised
- Procedures are in place to manage any safeguarding concern and allegation against staff including volunteers, contractors and supply staff including those that do not meet the harm threshold and are considered 'low-level' concerns
- That when the school premises are used by other bodies providing services and activities they have appropriate safeguarding procedures in place, that they have liaised with the school about these and that this is a condition of them using the school site.
- Procedures are in place to make referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service if required.

Additional information to support this guidance for the Trust Board is found in Part 2 of KCSiE (DfE 2025)

4. The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy including:

- Ensuring staff and volunteers are informed about safeguarding procedures at induction, that they follow and understand the procedures outlined
- Communicating this policy to parents/carers when a child joins the school and via the website
- Ensuring the DSP has appropriate time, funding, training and resources and that there is adequate cover if the DSP is absent
- Acting as the 'Case Manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against a member of staff or volunteer and receives appropriate training on this
- Making decisions on low level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSP on this
- Ensures at interview panels for new staff, one person conducting the interview has received safer recruitment training, and that short listed candidates are informed about online pre-recruitment checks before they are completed

5. Categories of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of school, inside and outside of home and online. They are aware that extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse, neglect and exploitation so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

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

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse 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.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children 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 cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Neglect

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

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate 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.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

It is an offence for an adult to involve a child in sexual activity when they are in a 'position of trust' in relation to that child and new sections of the Sexual Offences Act of 2003 extend the remit of the 'position of trust' to include activities that take place in sport or religion.

Exploitation

Exploitation in relation to children refers to the use of children for someone else's advantage, gratification, or profit often resulting in unjust, cruel, and harmful treatment of the child. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It covers situations of manipulation, misuse, abuse, victimisation, oppression or ill-treatment.

Staff are aware that there are several types of child exploitation, including, but not limited to:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): this is a type of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power, or status. It can involve contact and non-contact activities and can occur without the child's immediate recognition; this is due to their grooming by the abuser.
- Child Labor Exploitation: this involves the use of children in work that is harmful to their physical and mental development. It deprives them of their childhood, potential, and dignity.
- Child Trafficking: children are recruited, moved, or transported and then exploited, forced to work, or sold. They are often used for forced labour, sexual exploitation, or illegal activities.
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE): this is where children are involved in activities of a criminal nature, often in gangs. They may be forced or manipulated into committing crimes, such as selling drugs or stealing.

6. Specific Safeguarding Issues

As well as staff being aware of the main categories of maltreatment as outlined above, staff are also to be aware of the specific safeguarding issues outlined below so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

For further information on specific safeguarding issues see Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025).

Radicalisation and Extremism

The government defines extremism as the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance that aims to:

- negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others, or
- undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights, or
- intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in the previous points.

Some children are at risk of being radicalised: adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. Islamic extremism is the most widely publicised form and schools

should also remain alert to the risk of radicalisation into other extremist ideologies such as white supremacy extremism.

Protecting children from radicalisation and extreme ideologies is part of the school's safeguarding responsibility under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism." The DSP is the school's Prevent Lead.

The Prevent Duty is concerned with all forms of terrorism and extremism including some forms of non-violent extremism. Teaching staff receive Prevent training to help to identify signs of extremism and factors that indicate a child is susceptible to radicalisation or is in the process of being radicalised. Staff must be alert to changes in children's behaviour which indicate that they may be in need of Prevent support and should use the Notice, Check, Share approach, referring concerns to the DSP to make a Prevent referral if needed. The DSP will then consider the risk and if needed seek advice from the Herts County Council Prevent Programme Manager, making a referral to Children's Services or Channel if appropriate. All staff can raise concerns about extremism to the dedicated DfE telephone helpline on 02073407264. Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable pupils to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the school follows the DfE advice promoting fundamental British Values as part of SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools (2014).

Serious Crime, Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation and County Lines

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious crime. Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation are both forms of abuse and occur when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into sexual exploitation through the offer of friendship and care, gifts, drugs and alcohol, and sometimes accommodation. Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking.

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas (within the UK). Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move and store drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and

weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations to move drugs and money between locations. One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs.

The school includes the risks of criminal and sexual exploitation in the PSHE curriculum. Staff are aware of the characteristics of young people being vulnerable to CSE and child criminal exploitation and are aware that the experience of girls being criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. Staff are vigilant to indicators of CSE and CCE such as changes in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, increased absence from school, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or significant changes in wellbeing, signs of assault or unexplained injuries or unexplained gifts/new possessions, with these all being reported immediately to the DSP.

Honour-Based Abuse

‘Honour-based’ abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. All forms of HBA are abuse.

The practice of FGM is a criminal offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 and school staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female pupils about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period.

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse. In England and Wales the practice is a criminal offence under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 and the Marriage and Civil Partnership Act of 2022 establishes the minimum age of marriage as 18.

School staff receive training and should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a pupil about being taken abroad and not be allowed to return to England.

Child on Child Abuse

Children and young people may pose a risk to each other inside and outside of school and online. All staff are clear on the school’s approach with regard to child on child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it. Child on child abuse should never be passed off as "banter," "having a laugh" or "part of growing up." Staff are aware that child on child abuse will never be tolerated, that all child on child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. Staff appreciate that even if there are no reports of child on child abuse, it does not mean it is not happening and that if they have any concerns about child on child abuse they should report it to the DSP.

Child on child abuse can manifest itself in many ways. It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, in order to ensure there is not a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to

report it. Staff recognise that child on child abuse can occur between two children of any age or sex and that it can occur through a group of children assaulting or harassing a single child or a group of children and it can occur both online and face to face. It is also acknowledged that children who are (or who are perceived to be) LGBTQ+ are more likely to be targeted by other children. Severe harm may be caused by the abusive and bullying behaviour of other children to victims of child on child abuse; which may be physical, sexual and emotional.

Child on child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying and prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate relationships between children ('teenage relationship abuse')
- physical abuse (such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm)
- sexual violence, (such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault)
- sexual harassment (such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse)
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- upskirting (which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm)
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images/videos
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Many of these forms of abuse can also include an online element which facilitates and threatens or encourages such abuse.

The school recognises that it is the law to protect children rather than criminalise them and all victims of child on child sexual violence and harassment will be reassured that they are being taken seriously. The school appreciates that an initial disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported, that trauma can impact memory in recalling details and that some children face additional barriers in making such disclosures.

When harm is caused by one child or young person to another, the school will carefully assess whether it should be dealt with as abuse according to if there is a difference in power between those concerned, whether there are concerns about the intentions of the alleged perpetrator and whether the perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children.

The school minimises the risk of child on child abuse by developing student's understanding of acceptable behaviours and keeping themselves safe through the PSHE Learn4Living Programme (in every year of study, students develop their understanding of respectful healthy relationships). The school's Anti-Bullying Policy is referred to for details on procedures of how to minimise the risk of child on child abuse and this is done through having pastoral systems in place for students to raise concerns and using risk assessments where appropriate.

If allegations raised are against other children, the school follows Herts Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual – Children Who Abuse Others and Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 'Sexual Violence and Harassment'. When responding to sexualised behaviour

the school will use the Brook Advisory Service Traffic Light Tool and when responding to sexting incidents reference is made to 'Sexting in Schools and Colleges' (UKCCIS). Support for victims, perpetrators and any other child affected by peer on peer abuse will then be put in place. Each case will be dealt with on an individual basis with consideration of the wishes of the victim, the nature of the incident (including whether a crime has been committed), ongoing risks and any other related issues and wider context considerations (including access to education). Risk management strategies may be put in place if investigations are ongoing to ensure all children and staff are supported and protected using Risk Assessment Management Plan (RAMP) frameworks.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse. All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members or in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). This can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development and ability to learn. Violence against women and girls (VAWG), and child to parent abuse (CPA) or adolescent to parent abuse (APA) are also abusive behaviours to be aware of.

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 prior to the start of the next school day when they have been called to a domestic incident so that our key adults (DSPs) can support children immediately. 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. Our school staff are trained to be aware of Operation Encompass and the prevalence of domestic abuse and the impact of this abuse on children. Trustees are also trained and updated each term on Operation Encompass notifications to the school.

Children Absent and Missing from Education

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time efficient education. Children missing education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable other education. Children with unexplained and/or persistent absences from education, are at significant risk of a range of safeguarding concerns including being victims of harm, child sexual exploitation, serious crime, honour based abuse or radicalisation, as well as underachieving and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

The school works in conjunction with the local authority arrangements to identify children thought to be absent or missing from education and also follows the guidance about the legitimate removal of

students from the school's roll. Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored by the school to assist in early interventions. The DSP and Deputy DSPs will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions.

Mental Health

All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriate trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Staff should follow the school's pastoral procedures to support the mental wellbeing of students where needed. Safeguarding procedures are to be used in cases of self-harm, suicidal thoughts, eating disorders and anxiety and depression are to be found in the school's Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by following the procedures in this policy and speaking to Mrs S Miller (Mental Health Lead) or Miss O Turner (Deputy Mental Health Lead) or a DSP. The SPA Mental Health phone line is also available 24/7 on 08006444101 for crisis or urgent concerns.

Other Safeguarding Issues

On other specific safeguarding issues (e.g. cyber bullying, drugs and alcohol, the consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and videos) the school refers to advice and support from expert professional organisations. There is liaison between the DSPs, the Pastoral Team and the PSHE Coordinator on specific relevant issues.

7. School Procedures

Knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect and in recognising signs of specific safeguarding issues. Staff are made aware of signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation in their safeguarding training so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. Reminders of signs to look out for are also prominently displayed in the staffroom. For further details please consult:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What to do if you re worried a child is being abused.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf)

Additional barriers can exist when recognising signs of concern in children with special educational needs and disabilities. These can include assumptions that they can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying, assuming indicators of possible abuse relate to the child's impairment without further exploration, communication barriers/difficulties, a reluctance to challenge carers, a disabled child's understanding of abuse, a lack of choice/participation and isolation.

If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare they should act on them immediately. They should speak to the relevant key stage DSP/Deputy DSP since they are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the response. Staff should not

assume a colleague or another professional will take action and should share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. Response options may then include managing support for the child through the school's pastoral system, completing an early help Families First assessment or a Child Protection referral. Any member of staff should be able to make a child protection referral to Children's Services if necessary and particularly in the case of statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989 for children in need (section 17) and children suffering, or who are likely to suffer, from significant harm (section 47).

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside the school. All staff should consider the context in which such incidents/behaviours occur. This is known as *contextual safeguarding*, which means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors in a child's life are a threat to their safety/welfare (posing extra-familial harm).

Staff are aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 does not prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purpose of keeping children safe and that timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding. A processing condition of the DPA allows practitioners to share special category data without consent if it is not possible to gain consent, or it cannot be reasonably expected to gain consent, or gaining consent would place a child at risk.

If a child discloses that they have been abused in some way and/or is at risk of suffering from harm, the member of staff should:

- Listen carefully to what is being said to you, do not interrupt.
- Reassure the pupil that it is not their fault. Stress that it was the right thing to tell. Be calm, patient, attentive and non-judgemental. Do not promise to keep what is said a secret since this may not ultimately be in the best interests of the child. Try not to panic or show shock or disgust. Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator and ask non-leading questions (**TED**) to clarify if necessary:

Tell me more...

Explain that to me...

Describe what happened

Explain then what has to be done next and who has to be told. A victim must never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment.

- The member of staff must prioritise recording their account of any verbal disclosures and observations being precise and factual, not including any of their own judgement, using the school CPOMs system and ensuring a DSP is made aware immediately when there is a risk of harm. If relevant, the Body Map should be used to indicate the position of any injuries. Staff should remember that the child's voice can include verbal and non-verbal communication and that children may not have the speech or language to convey any difficulties, particularly if English is not their first language or they have any speech or language SEND needs. Some children may also not recognise that they have been abused or had a harmful experience and they may also feel embarrassed or threatened when discussing what has happened. All dated documentation (including original records) should be passed to the DSP and should be treated as 'special category

personal data' under the Data Protection Act 2018. The DSP will then acknowledge the concern and feedback as appropriate.

The DSP will then consult with Hertfordshire threshold guidance and decide whether an online child protection referral to Children's Services should be made. If a child is at immediate risk of significant harm they will call Children's Services and/or 999 and complete a request for support form. If a child needs medical attention this will be prioritised. If there is no immediate risk but the child is considered to be suffering significant harm they will complete a request for support form. If a referral is made it will be discussed with the parents, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm, risk the loss of evidential material, lead to an unreasonable delay or place any other person at risk. Where reasonably possible, the school holds more than one emergency contact number for each student to support this. Records of events, outcomes and reasons for decisions will then be recorded in writing by the DSP who will include the rationale for whether or not a referral to any agency was appropriate. If a child resides in a neighbouring local authority, referrals should be made to the relevant local authority. A Safety and Support Plan (SSP) may then also be put in place to safeguard and protect the child.

If at any point if a child is in immediate danger or there is an urgent risk of immediate serious harm to a child, any person can make a child protection referral to Herts Children's Services on 0300 123 4043 and/or the police (see NPCC Guidance When to call the Police Guidance for Schools). The DSP should be informed as soon as possible.

If a teacher discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 the teacher must report this to the police and Children's Services immediately. If staff are concerned a student may be at risk of FGM they should speak to the DSP.

We strive to be open, transparent and clear when discussing a concern about a child's wellbeing. Where appropriate, we will always discuss concerns about a child with their parent/carers since they are likely to know their child best and through working together issues can be resolved. There may however be times when their consent would not be appropriate, if the child was placed at increased risk of harm, or there would be an impact on a criminal investigation, in such instances the school would liaise with the relevant authorities.

If any staff member has safeguarding concerns about a child and their situation does not appear to be improving or there is an escalation of concerns, the staff member with concerns should press for reconsideration and contact Herts Children's Services directly if needed on the above number.

Safeguarding issues should only be shared by staff in appropriate professional contexts and relevant information about the protection of children must be passed on, particularly to investigative agencies. If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about sexual violence or harassment, staff may still lawfully share if there is a legal basis under the DPA and the DSP will normally inform parents/carers (unless the victim is then placed at greater risk), make a referral to children's services and the police of any crime disclosed. Staff are also aware of anonymity, witness support and criminal processes whereby they do everything reasonable to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or harassment. The government's 'Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding' is referred to when needed.

It is everyone's responsibility to report concerns related to children and make referrals to Children's Services. When safeguarding concerns are shared with the school by a parent or member of the public, it is important to note that there is equal responsibility by the complainant to report the matter directly rather than assuming it is the school's responsibility to do so. The DSP and Head can advise in such situations.

If a member of staff has dealt with a disclosure from a child, they themselves should seek support and discuss this with the DSP since safeguarding issues can be stressful.

8. Allegations Concerning School Staff

All staff and volunteers hold positions of trust and are expected to uphold safe working practices outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct. A 'position of trust' refers to any role where an adult holds power or influence over a child due to the nature of their work. It is a criminal offence for anyone in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a child in their care. A breach of trust occurs when an adult working or volunteering with children crosses established boundaries in their professional relationship with the child.

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practices in the school's safeguarding arrangements and relay concerns to the school's Senior Leadership Team.

Allegations that behaviour does/may meet the harm threshold will be referred to the Headteacher that is about current members of staff, supply staff, volunteers and contractors that:

- indicate they have harmed or pose a risk of harm to any child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they would pose a risk of harm to children or may not be suitable to work with children.

This includes individuals or organisations who use the school premises for running an activity with children, whether or not those children attend the school. This applies regardless as to whether the school is where the alleged abuse took place and includes allegations made or reported by a child, parent or member of the public. The person to whom the allegation was first reported should take it seriously and keep an open mind. They should not investigate or make assumptions and should immediately pass a written record to the Headteacher. Failure to report the allegation in accordance with procedures is potentially a disciplinary matter. Historical allegations of abuse and allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching should be made to the police. If concerns are with the Headteacher then the Chair of the Trust Board, Mrs J Harvey, is to be contacted on governors@presdales.herts.sch.uk and she would act as the Case Manager in the event of an allegation made against the Headteacher.

In such instances appropriate action will be taken according to the school's Whistleblowing Policy in conjunction with Herts Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual 'Managing Allegations Against Adults who Work with Children and Young People'. If required a child protection strategy meeting or joint evaluation meeting will be set up, or the LADO will advise on how the allegation should be managed. Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue through these channels, or feels that their concern is not being addressed, they should contact Children's Services on 0300

1234043 or alternatively the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available on 0800 028 0285. Staff may also consider discussing any concerns with the DSP and making referrals via them.

The school may also need to take action in response to ‘low-level’ concerns about staff. A low-level concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means a concern about an adult in the school having acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct including inappropriate conduct outside of work. A low-level concern does not meet the harm threshold and is not therefore serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO. Having an open and transparent culture in the school, in which all concerns about adults are dealt with appropriately and promptly enables the school to identify concerning behaviour early, minimise risks and ensures adults act within their appropriate professional boundaries. Low-level concerns are shared responsibly, recorded and dealt with appropriately to protect staff becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings. Where low-level concerns are reported, these can be discussed with the DSP, then Headteacher will be the ultimate decision maker in respect to the school’s response, the concerns will be recorded in writing and reviewed so that potential patterns of behaviour can be identified and records will be kept securely and retained in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018. For more details on these procedures see the school’s Code of Conduct for Employees.

To reduce the risk of allegations, staff are familiar with the Staff Code of Conduct and the school adheres to the requirements set out in *Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children in education settings*.

The school’s Business Manager adheres to procedures about referring to the Disclosure and Barring Service if a person has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns or would have been had they not resigned.

Out of hours Emergency Contact Information

Organisation / Role	Name	Contact details
Hertfordshire County Council Children’s Social Care	Customer Service Centre	Children’s Social Care Report concerns about a child or request support Hertfordshire County Council Children’s Services Out of Hours Service (SOOHS) 0300 123 4043
Family Help and Support	Families First website, information for parents, carers, and professionals. Professionals can access support from Families First Coordinators when supporting a family with an FFA or other targeted and intensive support.	Families First (hertfordshire.gov.uk)
Prevent	Prevent referrals Parent guidance	https://thegrid.org.uk/assets/prevent-national-referral-form-2025.pdf

	Advice line for members of the public Channel helpline	Parents' Booklet (educateagainsthate.com) ACT Early Prevent radicalisation 0800 011 3764 020 7340 7264
NSPCC Helpline	Helpline Email	0808 800 5000 help@NSPCC.org.uk
Police	Telephone	Emergency 999, non-emergency 101

Further Guidance

For any further detailed guidance about child protection procedures, including updated information, please consult

- the HCC Model Child Protection Policy at:

<https://thegrid.org.uk/safeguarding-and-child-protection/child-protection/policies-procedures-and-forms>

Keeping Children Safe in Education: For Schools and Colleges 2025 at:

- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686b94eefe1a249e937cbd2d/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2025.pdf