



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy – Local School Version

September 2025

CEO: Lorraine Heath

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1.0	05 Oct 2021	B Manning	First Published Version
2.0	06 September 2022	B Manning	<p>Updated to reflect changes to KCSiE (2022) including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peer on peer abuse becomes child on child abuse additions to information regarding sexual violence and harassment specifically in relation to law enforcement, intra familial concern and engaging with statutory partners.• Advice concerning children's readiness to disclose• Adding domestic abuse as a safeguarding issue• Adding the need for training for Governors. Including references to human rights and equality legislation and references to support for LGBTQ+ pupils.• Online safety should include regular reviews of the effectiveness of filters and

			<p>monitoring systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low level concerns process must include lessons learned.
3.0	July 2023	B Manning	Updated to reflect changes made to KCSIE 2023 online safety, filtering and monitoring, children absent from education, organisations using school premises to run activities.
4.0	July 2024	J Norris	Updated to reflect all changes made to KCSIE 2024 and updates to Ofsted School Inspection Handbook 2024
5.0	July 2025	J Norris	Updated to reflect all changes made to KCSIE 2025 and Early Years Foundation Framework 2025.

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1. Introduction

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action.

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

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

(Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (DfE, 2023)

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy forms part of a suite of documents and policies which relate to the safeguarding responsibilities of the whole school staff and volunteers. All staff should be aware of systems within their school which support safeguarding, and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This should include the:

- Behaviour policy (which should include measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- Online safety policy (KCSIE 2025 paragraph 137)
- Code of conduct for staff
- Whistleblowing policy
- Attendance Policy
- Safeguarding response to children who go missing from education and/or are absent from education particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods; and
- Role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).
- Copies of the parts of KCSIE relevant to role and specified in Appendix 2 should be read and a self-declaration should be made/ to say they have been read and understood.
- Annex A, condensed version of Part one of KCSIE (DfE 2025). Trustees have agreed that it can be provided (instead of Part one) to those staff who do not directly work with children.

Purpose of a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy	To inform staff, parents, volunteers and governors about the school's responsibilities for safeguarding children. To enable everyone to have a clear understanding of how these responsibilities should be carried out.
Devon Children and Families Partnership/Somerset	The school follows the procedures established by the Devon Children and Families Partnership (DCFP);

Safeguarding Children's Partnership Procedures

<https://www.dcfp.org.uk/> or Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership **SSCP – Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (safeguardingsomerset.org.uk)**

School Staff and Volunteers

All school and nursery staff, including supply staff, volunteers and contract workers have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

School staff and volunteers are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour and failure to develop because they have daily contact with children.

All school staff will receive appropriate safeguarding children training, including online safety (which is updated regularly) and Paediatric First Aid for all staff counted in nursery ratios, so that they are knowledgeable and aware of their role in the early recognition of the indicators of abuse or neglect and of the appropriate procedures to follow. In addition, all staff members should receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

Supply staff, contractors and volunteers will be made aware of the safeguarding policies and procedures by the DSL, including The Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct for Staff.

Mission Statement

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.

Establish and maintain an ethos and culture of vigilance where school staff and volunteers feel safe, are encouraged to talk, and are listened and responded to, when they have concerns about the safety and well-being of a child.

Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.

Ensure that children, who have additional/unmet needs are supported appropriately. This could include referrals to Early Help Services or Child Protection Contacts to specialist services if they are a child in need or have been / are at risk of being abused, neglected or exploited

Promote equality, diversity and inclusion at all times and understand that the welfare of all children is paramount and that they have a right to be protected regardless of background, circumstance or protected characteristic.

Consider how children may be taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. Refer to KCSIE (DfE 2025), paras 134 – 151.

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. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the best interests of the child.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

The policy will be reviewed at least annually by the governing committee. It will be implemented through the Trust and school's induction and training programme, and as part of day-to-day practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored by the Trust, school DSL and through key performance measures.

2. Statutory Framework

In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, the school will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Education Act 2002 (Section 175/157)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2023)
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Section 26, The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (PREVENT duty) (updated in 2021)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (Section 74, Serious Crime Act 2015)
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry. Includes taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether the forced marriage takes place).
- Serious Violence Strategy 2018
- Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2025
- The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2025
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024

3. The Trust Safeguarding Lead

The Trust Safeguarding Lead is: **Jen Norris**

Purpose of the role:

The safeguarding lead provides specialist advice to the Blackdown Education Partnership and leads the development, implementation and monitoring of strategies, policies and procedures to ensure a

high culture of vigilance across the Trust so that children and young people are safe and protected from harm.

Main responsibilities:

- Play a lead role in creating an organisational culture of vigilance where safeguarding is prioritised, discussed in teams, with stakeholders and partners, allegations are taken seriously, and staff, children and young people and other stakeholders feel safe to report.
- Lead on the development and implementation of BEP's overarching safeguarding strategic priority strands.
- Develop and oversee the implementation of robust safeguarding and educational welfare policies (including, for example attendance / children missing in education and/or are absent from education particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods), protocols, procedures, and risk assessments; ensuring they comply with statutory legislation.
- Maintain a Trust and school overview of all reported safeguarding concerns.
- Develop robust systems to quality assure the use of CPOMS or equivalent systems used in the schools, across the Trust, including quality of reporting and timeliness of response.
- Collate, analyse and report on management information relating to safeguarding.
- Provide specialist advice and guidance to DSLs in child protection matters that require a referral to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues in each school to ensure compliance with best practice and lead on the development of a safeguarding culture and practices across the Trust.
- Provide consistent and effective support and professional challenge for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), including leading the network meetings for DSLs and DDSLs.
- Communicate and disseminate key safeguarding information and updates across the Trust so that all staff, regardless of role, are both well informed and knowledgeable of safeguarding and child protection developments and procedures.
- In partnership with Designated Safeguarding Leads, develop a Trust wide training programme for all staff, including Trustees and Local Governing Committee members. This will include designing new training material or outsourcing this where necessary and determining who should take what training and when.
- Provide advice, guidance, support and challenge to headteachers and DSLs so that schools within the Trust are 'Ofsted ready'.
- Direct and support the work of school Designated Teachers for Children Looked After.
- Act as an advocate and champion for LGBTQ+ children and young people within the Trust; providing advice and guidance to schools as appropriate.
- Develop and maintain a programme of assurance to ensure that safeguarding remains effective across the Trust.
- Provide written reports to Trustees and the Trust Board Group.
- Attend Trustee, local governing committee and the Trust Board Group meetings as required.

- Maintain a high profile within the Trust and be a key point of contact for DSLs.
- Represent the Trust externally as required.
- Lead on the Trust's response to both preventing and responding to reports of sexual violence and harassment between children and young people.
- Lead on the Trusts' response to the need to ensure that the filtering and monitoring element of the digital and technology standards in schools and colleges is met.
- Liaise, as required, with external agencies on behalf of the Trust, for example, Early Help, Devon and Somerset Inclusion Services, Devon and Somerset Children and Families and Safeguarding Children's Partnerships, The Virtual Schools, the educational welfare service etc.

4. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Local Governing Committee (and proprietors) should ensure an appropriate **senior member** of staff, from the school or nursery **leadership team**, is appointed to the role of DSL.

During term time the DSL and or a Deputy will always be available (during school hours) for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns and individual arrangement for out of hours/out of term activities will be: (individual school needs to outline these below):

The broad areas of responsibility for the DSL are:

- Managing Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and/or Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP) referrals and cases and to participate in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- Contacting the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and/or Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP) when advice is needed regarding child protection concerns which possibly meet the threshold for statutory intervention and share relevant safeguarding information with other agencies.
- Fulfil statutory safeguarding responsibilities in accordance with the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2025, including cooperation with the Child Not in School Register and ensuring LA consent is obtained for Elective Home Education in cases where safeguarding concerns are present.
- Completing or overseeing completion of MASH and Safeguarding Children's Partnership referrals/enquiries for all cases of suspected abuse or neglect where there is a risk of significant harm to the child/young person, Police where a crime may have been committed and to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern.
- Liaising with the Headteacher to inform them of issues, especially ongoing enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- Acting as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a Multi- Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP) referral by liaising with relevant agencies.

- Supporting staff who make Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP) referrals and other service referrals.
- Sharing information with appropriate staff in relation to a child's looked after (LAC) legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an Interim Care Order or Care Order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
- Ensuring they have details of the LAC's social worker and the name of the virtual school Head Teacher in the authority that looks after the child or those currently working with a social worker and those in Kinship Care. When liaising with the Virtual School Head Teacher, DSLs should be aware that the Virtual School now has non-statutory responsibilities for children in kinship care (from September 2025).
- The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) should take lead responsibility for digital filtering and online monitoring and for any safeguarding and child protection matters that are picked up through this digital/online filtering and monitoring.
- Supporting the Trust's safeguarding lead to ensure that Trust safeguarding development and/or action plans are implemented to ensure that the highest possible standards of excellent practice are embedded.
- Supporting the collective responsibility of all schools within the Trust to safeguard children by participating in Safeguarding reviews and attending and contributing to DSL networks.

Training KCSIE (DfE, 2025)

The DSL should undergo formal training every two years. The DSL should also undertake Prevent awareness training annually. In addition to this training, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (for example via the Trust's Safeguarding Training plan provisions, e-bulletins, Trust meetings with other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at least annually.

Training should provide designated safeguarding leads with a good understanding of their own role, how to identify, understand and respond to specific needs that can increase the vulnerability of children, as well as specific harms that can put children at risk, and the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly children's social care, so they:

- 1) Understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and local authority children's social care referral arrangements.
- 2) Have a working knowledge of how Devon County Council/Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership conduct a strategy meeting, a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- 3) Understand the importance of the role the designated safeguarding lead has in providing information and support to children social care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- 4) Understand the lasting impact that adversity (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and trauma can have, including on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes.
- 5) Are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers.
- 6) Understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations, and practitioners
(Full details in Chapter one of **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023**)
- 7) Understand and support the school or college with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and can provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.
- 8) Can understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at school (identifying in particular those who are at potentially greater harm online).
- 9) Can recognise the additional risks that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support children with SEND to stay safe online.
- 10) Can actively be a champion for all children and young people promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. Understand the legal, safeguarding, wellbeing and mental health implications for all children and young people from sexist, homophobic, transphobic, racist and otherwise intolerant and negative attitudes and environments and seek to work collaboratively with the Trust, school personnel, local community and multi-agency partners to challenge all forms of intolerance and proactively support those at risk of victim status or offender status.
- 11) Recognise and relentlessly challenge all forms of child-on-child sexual abuse, sexual violence, and sexual harassment.
- 12) Understand the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring and have knowledge of digital filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place on school devices and networks such that they can evaluate these systems and processes in their setting annually.
- 13) Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses and encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them.

Raising Awareness:

The DSL (DDSL) should:

- Ensure all staff including part time, contractors, volunteers and supply staff are aware of the Trust and school's policies, that these are understood and used appropriately.
- Work with the Trust and the Local Governing Committee (or proprietors) to ensure that the school's safeguarding and child protection policy is reviewed annually, and the procedures

and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly.

- Ensure the safeguarding and child protection policy is available publicly and that parents are aware that advice regarding early help and child protection concerns could be sought from the appropriate Early Help Locality Partnerships and Devon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)/Safeguarding Children's Partnership and that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made. Ensure parents are aware of the school's statutory role regarding safeguarding of children.
- Link with Blackdown Education Partnership through the safeguarding lead and Devon Children and Families Partnership (DCFP) / Safeguarding Children's Partnership to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local/regional policies on safeguarding.
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children who have or have had a social worker are experiencing with teachers and school leadership staff.
- Ensure that when children leave the school, they ensure the file for safeguarding and any child protection information is sent to any new school/college as soon as possible but transferred securely, first class and by recorded delivery, and separately from the main pupil file. The file should not be sent until the child is physically attending the new school.
- Obtain proof that the new school/education setting has received the safeguarding file for any child transferring and then destroy any information held on the child unless the case is currently open and in line with data protection guidelines.
- Consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives.
- Have oversight of the school's Single Central Record and ensure that it complies with KCSIE requirements as set out in Blackdown Education Partnership principles, and templates including centrally kept copies in secure Teams channels.

5. The Management of Safeguarding

Governing committees and Trust (in Part two, unless otherwise stated, includes management committees) must ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation. They must also have regard to this guidance to ensure that the policies, procedures and training in their schools or colleges are always effective and comply with the law. To fulfil this responsibility, governors and trustees should receive appropriate child protection and safeguarding training at induction, and then at regular intervals. This training will ensure that they have the knowledge to ensure and assure that policies and procedures are effective.

The responsibility of governing committee, proprietors and management committees include:

- Compliance with equality legislation as set out in the Equality Act 2020. According to the Equality Act, schools and colleges must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of

their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).

Provisions within the Equality Act allow schools and colleges to take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils or students with a particular protected characteristic in order to meet their specific need, this includes a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people, including those with long term conditions. A school or college, could, for example, consider taking positive action to support girls if there was evidence they were being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or sexual harassment.

- Ensuring that the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is considered in particular in respect of the need to be conscious that pupils with protected characteristics may be at more risk of harm including ensuring that LGBTQ+ children have safe spaces for speaking out and sharing their concerns.
- Ensuring there are appropriate policies and procedures in place for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare e.g.
 - safeguarding and child protection policy
 - code of conduct for staff
 - whistleblowing policy
 - the elements of KCSIE specified in Appendix 2 of this policy of KCSIE, relevant to role, (DfE, 2025)
 - online safety policy

Information regarding the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) **should be provided to all staff on induction**

- Local Governing Committees / Trust Boards should have a LGC member / Trustee (or equivalent) member to oversee accountability in respect of their schools' safeguarding arrangements.

The Headteacher is:

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is:

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) is(are):

The Chair of the Governing Committee is:

The Safeguarding Lead Governor is:

Headteachers should:

- Ensure that the policies and procedures, above, adopted by governing bodies and proprietors, and particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, and safer recruitment requirements are followed by all staff, this includes conducting online pre-employment checks for shortlisted candidates in regulated activity (e.g. social media screening).

- Ensure that the school contributes to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance **Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE,2023) and the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2025.**
- Ensure that new safeguarding partners and child death review partner arrangements are in place.
- Understand the local criteria for action and the local protocol for assessment (by reference to the Devon Children and Families Partnership levels of need framework <https://www.dcfp.org.uk/training-and-resources/levels-of-need/lon-framework/>) and Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership procedures <https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/somerset/contents.html> and ensure they are reflected in their own policies and procedures. They should also be prepared to supply information as requested by the three safeguarding partners.
- Ensure that schools work with social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a coordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans.
- Ensure arrangements are in place that set out clearly the aims and principles for sharing information within the school and with the three safeguarding partners, other organisations, agencies and practitioners as required.
- Ensure child protection files are transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained.
- Ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety inclusive of understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) and other training mandated by Blackdown Education Partnership at induction. The training should be regularly updated. Induction and training should be in line with advice from the local three safeguarding partners
- Ensure that all staff receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings) as required.
- Provide opportunities for staff to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and the child protection policy.
- Ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety. Schools should consider this as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. Education (for all primary pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for all secondary pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state-funded schools).

Trustees and Local Governing Committees should:

- prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by adhering to statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required and ensuring volunteers are

appropriately supervised.

- Ensure schools have written recruitment and selection policies and procedures in place and at least one of the persons who conducts an interview has completed safer recruitment training. (See BEP HR policies).
- Should ensure there are procedures in place (as described in part 4 of KCSIE) to manage concerns and allegations against staff including volunteers and supply staff.
- There must be procedures in place to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns or would have been had they not resigned. (refer to *Type of DBS checks* in KCSIE (DfE 2025a) pages 67-72).

All staff

All staff should be clear about their school's policy and procedures about child-on-child abuse.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place for children to express their views and give feedback. Ultimately, all systems and processes should operate with the best interests of the child at heart.

All DSLs, including deputies should undergo formal child protection training every two years, in line with KCSIE, Blackdown Education Partnership and DCFP/SSCP procedures, and receive regular, at least annual, safeguarding updates via e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments.

Schools should prioritise the welfare of children and young people and create a culture where staff are confident to challenge senior leaders over any safeguarding concerns.

Schools should ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place on school machines and on school networks to safeguard children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material including the use of generative AI. Additional information to support governing bodies and proprietors is provided in Part 2 of KCSIE paras 140- 146 (DfE 2025).

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/filtering-and-monitoring-standards-for-schools-and-colleges>

6. When to be concerned

Knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse, neglect and exploitation. All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation so that they are able to identify cases of children who may need help or protection.

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children maybe abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

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.

Indicators in a child/ young person

Bruises – shape, grouping, site, repeat or multiple	Withdrawal from physical contact
Bite-marks – site and size	Aggression towards others, emotional and behaviour problems
Burns and Scalds – shape, definition, size, depth, scars	
Improbable, conflicting explanations for injuries or unexplained injuries	Frequently absent from school
Untreated injuries	Admission of punishment which appears excessive
Injuries on parts of body where accidental injury is unlikely	Fractures
Repeated or multiple injuries	Fabricated or induced illness

Emotional abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another including witnessing/hearing domestic abuse between family members (which automatically renders the child a victim by association). It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Indicators in a child/ young person

Self-harm	Over-reaction to mistakes / Inappropriate emotional responses
Chronic running away	Abnormal or indiscriminate attachment
Drug/solvent abuse	Low self-esteem
Compulsive stealing	Extremes of passivity or aggression
Makes a disclosure	Social isolation – withdrawn, a 'loner' Frozen watchfulness particularly pre school
Developmental delay	Depression
Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking)	Desperate attention-seeking behaviour

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, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. (See also, the DCFP neglect toolkit, link below table)

Indicators in a child/ young person	
Failure to thrive - underweight, small stature	Low self-esteem
Dirty and unkempt condition	Inadequate social skills and poor socialisation
Inadequately clothed	Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
Dry sparse hair	Abnormal voracious appetite at school or nursery
Untreated medical problems	Self-harming behaviour
Red/purple mottled skin, particularly on the hands and feet, seen in the winter due to cold	Constant tiredness
Swollen limbs with sores that are slow to heal, usually associated with cold injury	Disturbed peer relationships

<https://www.dcfp.org.uk/child-abuse/neglect/neglect-information-for-professionals/>

https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/somerset/p_neglect.html?zoom_highlight=neglect

Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as child-on-child abuse) in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or colleges policy and procedures for dealing with it.

Indicators in a child/ young person	
Self-harm - eating disorders, self-mutilation and suicide attempts	Poor self-image, self-harm, self-hatred
Running away from home	Inappropriate sexualised conduct
Reluctant to undress for PE	Withdrawal, isolation or excessive worrying
Pregnancy	Sexual knowledge or behaviour inappropriate to age/stage of development, or that is unusually explicit
Inexplicable changes in behaviour, such as becoming aggressive or withdrawn	Poor attention / concentration (world of their own)
Pain, bleeding, bruising or itching in genital and /or anal area	Sudden changes in schoolwork habits, become truant
Sexually exploited or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners	

If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately. If staff have a concern, they should follow this policy and speak to the DSL/DDSL. The DSL/DDSL are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the response to a safeguarding concern.

Any staff member should be able to make a Multi -Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) /Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP) referral.

All staff should be aware of the process for making Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)/SSCP Referrals to Children's Services 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 - from abuse or neglect), along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. They should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision. *In emergency situations for example outside of the normal school hours or during planned school closures, staff harbouring the concern must contact the MASH/SSCP and/or Police if they believe that a child needs urgent protection and support, such action should not be delayed or deferred to a third party.*

Options will then include:

- Managing support for the child internally via the school's own pastoral support processes including signposting where appropriate.
- Completing an Early Help Assessment via Right for Children (Devon) or Early Help Assessment (Somerset) or making a request for early help support.
- A Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) referral/enquiry ("request for help")/SSCP referral for statutory services, for example as the child might need services, or suffering / likely to suffer significant harm from abuse or neglect.

Extra Familial Harm (formerly contextual Safeguarding)

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside the school setting. All staff, but especially the DSLs and their Deputies, should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. The systems and processes are set out, in part, in the Devon Children and Family Partnership Safer Me; Adolescent Safety Framework (ASF) protocols.

<https://www.dcfp.org.uk/training-and-resources/policies-and-procedures/adolescent-safety-framework-safer-me/> and in the Somerset SCP procedures.

A child centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's responsibility**. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, each professional should make sure their approach is **child centred**. This means that they should consider, always, what is in the best interests of the child.

Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This system is based on the principle of providing help for families to stay together where it is safe for the children to do so, and looking at alternatives where it is not, whilst acting in the **best interests** of the child at all times.

Children who may require early help

Early Help is delivered by Devon Children and Families Partnership (DCFP) through both the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and locality-based partnerships arrangements

<https://www.dcfp.org.uk/early-help/> and/or through SSCP's Early Help Assessment protocol

https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/somerset/p_assessment.html?zoom_highlight=early+help+assessment which will help practitioners and families find information and support to prevent escalation of needs and crisis.

All staff should be aware of the **early help process**, and understand their role in identifying emerging problems, sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment of a child's needs. It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. This also includes staff monitoring the situation and feeding back to the DSL any ongoing/escalation of concerns so that consideration can be given to a

MASH Referral to Children's Services/SSCP referral if the child's situation doesn't appear to be improving.

If early help is appropriate, the DSL or a Deputy will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an Early Help (Right for Children) Assessment as appropriate. In Trust Secondary settings the DSL will manage internal systems and processes to ensure that early help is facilitated in accordance with school personnel structures and systems.

Any child may benefit from early help, but all school staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan – "EHCP");
- has a mental health need;
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- has returned home to their family from care;
- is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage;
- is a privately fostered child; and
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.
- is experiencing multiple suspensions, or is at risk of permanent exclusion

School staff members should be aware of the main categories of maltreatment: **physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect** as well as being aware of the indicators of maltreatment and **specific safeguarding issues** so that they are able to identify cases of children who may need help or protection.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities:

Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include:

- ❖ Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's impairment without further exploration.
- ❖ Assumptions that children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying- without outwardly showing any signs.

- ❖ Communication barriers and difficulties.
- ❖ Reluctance to challenge carers, (professionals may over empathise with carers because of the perceived stress of caring for a disabled child).
- ❖ Disabled children often rely on a wide network of carers to meet their basic needs and therefore the potential risk of exposure to abusive behaviour can be increased.
- ❖ A disabled child's understanding of abuse.
- ❖ Lack of choice/ participation.
- ❖ Isolation.

Child on Child Abuse; Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

It must be understood that no reports of child-on-child abuse is not an indication that no such incidents are happening. There will be barriers to reporting that all schools should strive to address and overcome. Children must be strongly encouraged to report. It must never be assumed that sexual violence and harassment "doesn't happen here".

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

- Bullying (including cyberbullying).
- 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.
- Up-skirting, 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.
- Down blousing, which typically involves taking pictures down a person's shirt/blouse without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their chest/breasts to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.
- Sexting (also known as sharing nudes or semi-nudes).
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

All staff should be aware that abuse is abuse and child on child abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up". Furthermore, they should recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse (i.e. that it is more likely that girls will

be victims and boys' perpetrators), but that all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

In order to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse the school should:

- Provide a developmentally appropriate PSHE and RSE curriculum which develops pupils' understanding of acceptable behaviour and keeping themselves safe.
- Have systems in place for any student to raise concerns with staff, knowing that they will be listened to, believed and valued.
- Ensure victims, perpetrators and any other child affected by child-on-child abuse will be supported.
- Develop robust risk assessments where appropriate (e.g. Using the Risk Assessment Management Plan (RAMP), Brook Traffic Light tool and Safety and Support Plan tools available to DSL/DDSL personnel on the Trust DSL/DDSL TEAMS area).
- Have relevant policies in place (e.g. behaviour policy).
- Will engage proactively in discussions with statutory safeguarding partners and explain to children that the law is in place to protect rather than criminalise them.
- Understand the need to support siblings following incidents of intra-familial harm.

Where there is an allegation or concern that a child has abused others, staff should also refer closely to the Trust's policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment and, Part five (5) of KCSIE (DfE 2025) – **'Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment'**:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Serious violence

Refer to ; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-to-schools-and-colleges-on-gangs-and-youth-violence>
and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines>

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime.

- Increased absence from school
- Change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- Significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm or significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- Unexplained gifts/new possessions

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in 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. More information include definitions and indicators are included in Annex B KCSIE DfE 2025.

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 appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem.** Staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

All staff should be aware of the potential safeguarding issues (including impact on mental health) linked to children being absent from school or college, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, including children missing education.

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 the schools DSL.

Prevent: Safeguarding Children and Young People from Radicalisation

Children can be vulnerable to extreme ideologies and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse, protecting children from radicalisation must be part of all school and college safeguarding approaches.

All schools are subject to the Prevent Duty under Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism." Pages 157 - 159 KCSIE (DfE 2025).

There are signs and vulnerability factors that may indicate a child is susceptible to radicalisation or is in the process of being radicalised. It is possible to protect vulnerable people from extremist thinking and intervene to safeguard those at risk of radicalisation. Staff must be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may need Prevent support. They must act proportionately to the concern using the Prevent 'notice, check, share' approach, which may lead to the DSL making a Prevent referral for those children identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. An individual must give their consent before any support through the Channel programme is provided.

Please refer to the Safer Devon Partnership/Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance;

<https://saferdevon.co.uk/preventing-radicalisation/> ;

<https://www.dcfp.org.uk/child-abuse/radicalisation-and-extremism/radicalisation-and-extremism-information-for-professionals/>

[Radicalisation & Extremism - Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

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.

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

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. See Appendix 4 for information regarding Operation Encompass.

Children in Need of Emergency Medical Assistance/Treatment

Rarely and exceptionally, staff/volunteers may be with children who need urgent medical assistance or treatment. In such circumstances parental communication should be striven for but equally in a genuine emergency the welfare, wellbeing and safety of the child must come first.

Decision making should be child centred, sensitive and workable. Where parental communication cannot be facilitated in a timely manner during the emergency, staff should do what is, in their professional opinion, in the best interests of the child and share a summary of their actions with their line manager or the Headteacher as well also record as their actions and rationale for action, on the safeguarding management information system, as soon as is convenient thereafter.

7. Dealing with a disclosure

If a child confides in a member of staff/volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff/volunteer tell the child in a manner appropriate to the child's age/stage of development that they cannot promise complete confidentiality – instead they must explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe.

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

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff/volunteer should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.

- Accept what is being said.
- Allow the child to talk freely.
- Reassure the child, but not make promises which might not be possible to keep.
- Never promise a child that they will not tell anyone - as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.
- Reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault.
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell.
- Listen, only asking questions when necessary to clarify what is being said. Use the “**TED**” questioning approach; **Tell, Explain, Describe...**
- Not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Explain what must be done next and who must be told.
- Make a written record (see Record Keeping, section 8. below)
- Pass the information to the DSL without delay (if a DSL or Deputy is not available, staff must inform a senior member of staff or complete a MASH/Children’s Social Care referral/enquiry if this disclosure indicates that the child may be at risk of immediate harm and/or have been suffered significant harm to ensure reporting to Police and/or Children’s Services where necessary is not delayed)

It is the school’s responsibility to clarify, not investigate, when disclosures are made. It is the responsibility of statutory agencies whose personnel are trained to achieve best evidence, to investigate disclosures and concerns.

Third Party Disclosures

It is **everyone’s** responsibility to report concerns related to children and take supportive action/make referrals to Children Services and the Police if suspected that a child has been abused or is at risk of abuse.

Therefore, when safeguarding concerns are shared to the DSL in a 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 also directly rather than assume the responsibility is that of the school. If unsure of how to do this speak to the DSL / head teacher and they will advise accordingly.

Support

Dealing with a disclosure from a child, and safeguarding issues can be stressful. The member of staff/volunteer should, therefore, consider seeking support for him/herself and discuss this with the DSL.

If a school staff member receives a disclosure about potential harm caused by another staff member, they should see section 12 of this policy – *Allegations involving school staff/volunteers.*

8. Record keeping

All records will be retained in accordance with the following guidance: [Child protection records retention and storage guidance | NSPCC Learning](#) September 2022)

All practitioners should be confident of the processing conditions under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR which allow them to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information, which is sensitive and personal, and should be treated as 'special category personal data'.

All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded in writing. If in doubt about recording requirements staff should discuss with the DSL.

- Record as soon as possible after the conversation. Use the schools Child Protection Recording system wherever possible. Written records should be timed dated and signed and passed confidentially to the DSL promptly and in person and e-mails should be marked "urgent". **Where a child or young person is believed to be at immediate risk, e-mail must not be relied on as a suitable form of recording.**
- Ensure the date, time, place is recorded, and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child.
- Attach a body map to the record on the secure system to indicate the position of any injuries and a clear description of the injury.
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions.
- Do not destroy the original records in case they are needed by a court.
- All records need to be given to the DSL promptly, as per above. No copies should be retained by the member of staff or volunteer.
- **Staff should not view images on children's social media themselves, nor should they take photographs of any injuries.**

The DSL will ensure that all safeguarding records are managed in accordance with the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005.

Any data breaches must be reported to the school's Data Protection Officer immediately when they are identified.

9. Confidentiality

Safeguarding children raises issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by all staff/volunteers in schools.

- All staff in schools, both teaching and non-teaching staff, have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the investigative agencies.

- Staff/volunteers who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts.

Information sharing should be necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf

10. School Procedures

Please see Appendix C: KCSIE (DfE 2025)

If any member of staff is concerned about a child, they must inform the DSL. The DSL will decide whether the concerns should be raised to Children's Services and if deemed to have met the threshold a MASH Referral ("request for support")/referral to the SSCP will be completed. If a MASH/SSCP referral to Children's Services is made the DSL will discuss the referral with the parents, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm.

While it is the DSL's role to make MASH/SSCP referrals (requests for support), any staff member can make a MASH/SSCP referral to Children's Services if a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm (e.g. concern that a family might have plans to carry out FGM, Forced Marriage etc). In these circumstances a MASH/SSCP referral should be made to Children's Services and/or the Police immediately. In emergencies where a child needs immediate protection *the staff member harbouring the concern must act immediately and make a referral as described in Part 6, above.* Where MASH/SSCP referrals are made by another member of staff, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible.

If a **teacher** (persons employed or engaged to carry out teaching work at schools and other institutions in England), in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 the **teacher** must report this to the police via 101. **This is a mandatory reporting duty.** KCSIE (DfE 2025) para 42. See also <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/>

Since February 2023 it has been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding "unofficial" marriages as well as legal marriages. All such suspicions must be reported to the Police and a MASH request for support made.

If allegations raised are against other children, the school should follow the Trust's Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy. Please also see the school's anti-bullying policies for more details on procedures to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse.

The member of staff must record information regarding the concerns on the same day. The recording must be a clear, precise and a factual account of any verbal disclosures and observations.

Particular attention should be paid to the attendance and development of any child about whom the school has concerns, or who has been identified as being the subject of a Child Protection Plan and a written record will be kept.

If a pupil who is/or has been the subject of a child protection plan changes school, the DSL will inform the social worker responsible for the case and transfer the appropriate records to the DSL at the receiving school, in a secure manner, and separate from the child's academic file.

The DSL is responsible for making the senior leadership team aware of trends in behaviour that may affect pupil welfare. If necessary, training will also be arranged.

Escalation Protocols

Where responses from MASH/SSCP and other agencies are unsatisfactory , thresholds have been met and there is a professional dispute, the DSL must escalate these concerns via the Devon Children and Families Partnership policy;

https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/devon/p_escalation.html

Or SSCP escalation policy;

https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/somerset/p_escalation.html?zoom_highlight=escalation+process

Where it becomes evident that the disputes are not being satisfactorily resolved then the DSL should liaise with the Trust safeguarding lead or refer matters to the NSPCC 0800 028 0285 or help@nspcc.org.uk .

Partnership Working Arrangements

Where staff are working in partnership with other schools and organisations the following protocols apply:

1. Where staff are not supervising children from their own setting, they must follow the central and/or local safeguarding policies of the settings where they are in situ at the time.
2. Where staff are supervising children from their own settings but at off-site locations, the Trust central and school specific local policies apply.
3. Visitors working on school sites with children are expected to abide by the Trust central and school specific policies at all times.
4. Where locations for off-site activities/events have their own risk assessments for children and visitors, these should be adopted and adhered to.
5. Where locations for off-site activities/events have no risk assessments for children and visitors in place the home/organising school must prepare risk assessments in accordance with the Trust Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
6. No trips or visits must take place under any circumstances without the Trust policy being adhered to most specifically in relation to the local authority trips and visits requirements.
7. Children on work experience must have school-based supervisors allocated who have completed introductory level safeguarding and child protection training. The Trust safeguarding policy applies to all children on such work experience and must be shared with employers. Employers and children must be made aware of how to report concerns and who to report to. Reports should be made to the home school DSL. Welfare checks must be made at least weekly, by school-based supervisors, when children are on work experience.
8. A child educated off site on dual roll arrangements will be safeguarded by the

DSL/safeguarding leads, in conjunction with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator if the child has SEND, at the alternative provision venue, and the policies of these providers will apply. However, the child remains the substantive responsibility of their original school who must assure themselves and ensure that the setting is fit for purpose. Annual quality assurance of offsite/dual roll/alternative provision is the responsibility of the DSL at the original (substantive or referring) school. Regular contact must be made with the alternative provider and the DSL's in each setting should communicate and update each other regularly. **Schools remain responsible for safeguarding pupils placed in any alternative provision, including oversight and the secure transfer of safeguarding files.**

9. Before any child attends Alternative Provision, schools should:

- gain written confirmation from the alternative provider that appropriate staff safeguarding checks have been carried out, as well as written information about any arrangements that may put the child at risk.
- have records of the address of the alternative provider and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the child may attend.
- regularly review any alternative provision placements to make sure the placement continues to be safe and meets the child's needs. If safeguarding concerns occur, the placement should be immediately reviewed and ended if necessary.

10. Third party organisations using or hiring Trust premises for their own activities and/or events must provide their own safeguarding policies to Headteachers and DSL's of those venues that are being used. Providers must meet the expectations of the guidance and leasing agreements must reflect this expectation;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/keeping-children-safe-in-and-out-of-school-settings>

Where allegations are received relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using their premises for the purposes of running activities for children, the school should follow its own safeguarding policy and procedures, including informing the LADO. This responsibility falls on the school and not the out of school setting. (para 384 KCSIE 2025).

11. Communication with parents

Blackdown Education Partnership and all schools will ensure the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is available publicly via the Trust website/the school website and on request by other means.

Consent to information sharing is always preferable and desirable but not required where a child is deemed to be at risk of significant harm. The welfare of the child remains paramount. Decisions not to obtain consent but to still share information must be discussed with and ultimately made by the DSL. The DSL must outline their reasons and rationale for not seeking consent and record the fact that information was shared without consent and the reasons/rationale for this in the relevant child's chronology on the safeguarding management information recording system.

As above, parents should be informed prior to a MASH/SSCP referral/request for support, unless it is considered to do so might place the child at increased risk of significant harm by:

- The behavioural response it prompts e.g., a child being subjected to abuse, maltreatment or threats / forced to remain silent if alleged abuser informed.
- Leading to an unreasonable delay.

- Leading to the risk of loss of evidential material.

(The individual school may also consider not informing parent(s) where this would place a member of staff at risk).

The school will endeavour to ensure that parents understand the responsibilities placed on the school staff for safeguarding children and that the welfare of the child is always the over-riding and paramount concern.

Where reasonably possible schools should hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil and student. KCSIE (DfE 2025) pg. 30.

Further guidance around information sharing can be located within; **Information sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers** (DfE, 2025);

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>

12. Allegations of abuse made against adults who work with children and young people

An allegation is any information which indicates that a member of staff/volunteer may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way which indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicated they may not be suitable to work with children.

This relates to members of staff, supply staff and volunteers who are currently working in any school or college regardless of whether the school or college is where the alleged abuse took place.

Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching should be referred to the police. Historical

allegations of abuse should also be referred to the police and may be investigated retrospectively.

Schools must retain conduct records and cooperate with investigations.

What staff should do if they have concerns about another member of staff who may pose a risk of harm to children

- If staff have safeguarding concerns, or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including supply staff and volunteers) posing a risk of harm to children, this is to be referred to the Headteacher.
- Where the Headteacher is the subject of a concern or allegation they may wish to speak to the Chair of Governors or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Where the Governing Committee Chair is approached, they must contact the CEO in the first instance.
- Where the Headteacher is the subject of an allegation or concern, the Chief Executive

Officer, should discuss the allegation immediately with the Local Authority Designated Officer(s) LADO. 01392 384964 childsc.localauthoritydesignatedofficersecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk or (Somerset) sdinputters@somerset.gov.uk. **Allegations Management – SSCP (safeguardingsomerset.org.uk)**

Staff may consider discussing any concerns with the designated senior lead (DSL) for safeguarding and if appropriate make any referral via them.

The Chief Executive Officer is; **Lorraine Heath**

The person to whom an allegation is first reported should take the matter seriously and keep an open mind. They should not investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification; it is important not to make assumptions. Confidentiality should not be promised and the person should be advised that the concern will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only. Staff should feel comfortable to discuss matters both within, and where appropriate, outside the workplace (including online), which may have implications for the safeguarding of children. The culture of the setting must be one where any concern can be raised and will be looked into.

Actions to be taken include making an immediate written record of the allegation using the informant's words – including time, date and place where the alleged incident took place, brief details of what happened, what was said and who was present. This record should be signed, dated and immediately passed on to the Headteacher

The recipient of an allegation must **not** unilaterally determine its validity, and failure to report it in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter.

The Headteacher/ Governing Committee Chair/CEO/other will not investigate the allegation itself, or take written or detailed statements, but will assess, in conjunction with HR and Director of Student Support, whether it is necessary to refer the concern to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO Guidance may be used to inform this decision – found at

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/child-protection/managing-allegations-against-adults-working-with-children>

https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/somerset/p_alleg_against_staff.html?zoom_highlight=LADO

The Headteacher will be responsible for making referrals to the LADO (including discussing whether low level concerns meet the harm threshold) or the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Children's Services – 03300 245 321 (Devon) 0300 123 2224 (Somerset)

Out of Hours Service- Children's Services – 0300 555 5000 (Devon)

MASH 0345 155 1071 / mashsecure@devon.gov.uk (Devon)

childrens@somerset.gov.uk (Somerset)

If the allegation meets any of the four criteria set out at the start of this section, contact should always be made with the Local Authority Designated Officer without delay.

If it is decided that the allegation requires a child protection strategy meeting, this will take place in accordance with Devon Children and Families Partnership/ Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership protocols.

If it is decided it does not require a child protection strategy meeting or joint evaluation meeting, the LADO will provide the employer with advice and support on how the allegations should be managed.

The Headteacher should, as soon as possible, following briefing from the Local Authority Designated Officer, inform the subject of the allegation.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer/through the whistleblowing procedure or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them:

- Trust Whistleblowing Policy
- Devon Children's Services 03300 245 321/Somerset SCP 0300 123 2224
- NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Low-Level Concerns

A low-level concern is one that does not meet the threshold for harm and thus for a referral to the LADO. Low level concerns should never be ignored as they represent actions that may damage the Trust and a school's culture of openness, honesty, trust and transparency. Such behaviour is not confined to school hours and may include behaviour which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or to act as an appropriate role model. It might include making, or encourage others to make sexual remarks to, or about, a pupil; use of inappropriate language to or in the presence of pupils, discussing their personal or sexual relationships with or in the presence of pupils. Making (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean, discriminate or humiliate, or might be interpreted as such.

Such concerns should always be shared the Headteacher, unless the concerns relate to the Headteacher in which case, shared with the CEO. Headteachers should keep confidential records and review these regularly to establish whether patterns of behaviour are emerging. Good practice would involve a confidential discussion between the Headteacher and the individual and the issuing of words of professional advice. Records of such discussion should be kept confidentially by the Headteacher. The Headteacher, in conjunction with HR and Director of Student Support, should review summaries of concern and make a decision about whether the thresholds for LADO referral are met by reference to the four descriptors, above. Similarly, breaches of the code of conduct policy for staff should be recorded and the policy reviewed annually in light of any such breaches. Whether allegations are unsubstantiated or not, a "lessons learned" approach must be applied.

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/preventing-abuse-positions-of-trust>

What school or college staff should do if they have concerns about safeguarding practices within the school or college?

- All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school or education setting's safeguarding arrangements.
- Appropriate whistleblowing procedures, which are suitably reflected in staff training and staff behaviour policies, should be in place for such concerns to be raised with the school's senior leadership team.
- Concerns about the DSL should be raised with the Headteacher or, where this person is the Headteacher, their line manager or the CEO.

Safer working practice

To reduce the risk of allegations, all staff should be aware of safer working practice and should be familiar with the guidance contained in the staff handbook/school code of conduct/staff behaviour policy and Safer Recruitment Consortium document. ***Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings February 2022*** [f576a8_0d079cbe69ea458e9e99fe462e447084.pdf \(saferrecruitmentconsortium.org\)](https://saferrecruitmentconsortium.org/f576a8_0d079cbe69ea458e9e99fe462e447084.pdf)

Appendix 1: KCSIE (DfE 2025)

Part One OR Annex A: Information for all school and college staff and Part Five (Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment)

Annex B: Further information

On publication of this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, September 2025, the Trust has decided to provide the hyperlink only to KCSiE rather than the document in its entirety, due to the potential for updates to the content.

Staff should read elements of KCSIE 2025 in accordance with their roles, below

- 1) All student facing staff must read KCSIE 2025 part 1, part 5 and Annex B
- 2) Staff who do not work directly with children may read Annex A in lieu, **with the agreement of the Trustees.** (Otherwise 1, above, applies).
- 3) Anyone involved in Modern Foreign Languages or other school exchanges must also read part 3 and annex D.
- 4) Work Related Learning coordinators must also read part 3 and annex E.
- 5) School Senior Leadership (SLT) team members must read Part 1, Part 5 and Annex B.
- 6) School Governors must read Parts 1 and Part 2.
- 7) Anyone involved in recruitment or with a responsibility for the Single Central Record must also read part 3 annex E.
- 8) The DSL and nominated deputies/ Headteacher/All Trust central team senior leaders, the SG lead governor and all Trustees and Members must read the entire KCSIE 2025 document.
- 9) HR personnel must read the entire KCSIE 2025 but concentrate on parts 3 & 4 , and annex E.

This is to assist staff to understand their role and discharge their responsibilities as set out in this guidance.

Staff are asked to sign to say they have read these sections and should subsequently be re-directed to these documents again should any changes occur.

Link to KCSIE (DfE, 2025):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Annex F KCSIE (DfE 2025): Substantive changes from September 2025.

Appendix 2: Declaration for Staff

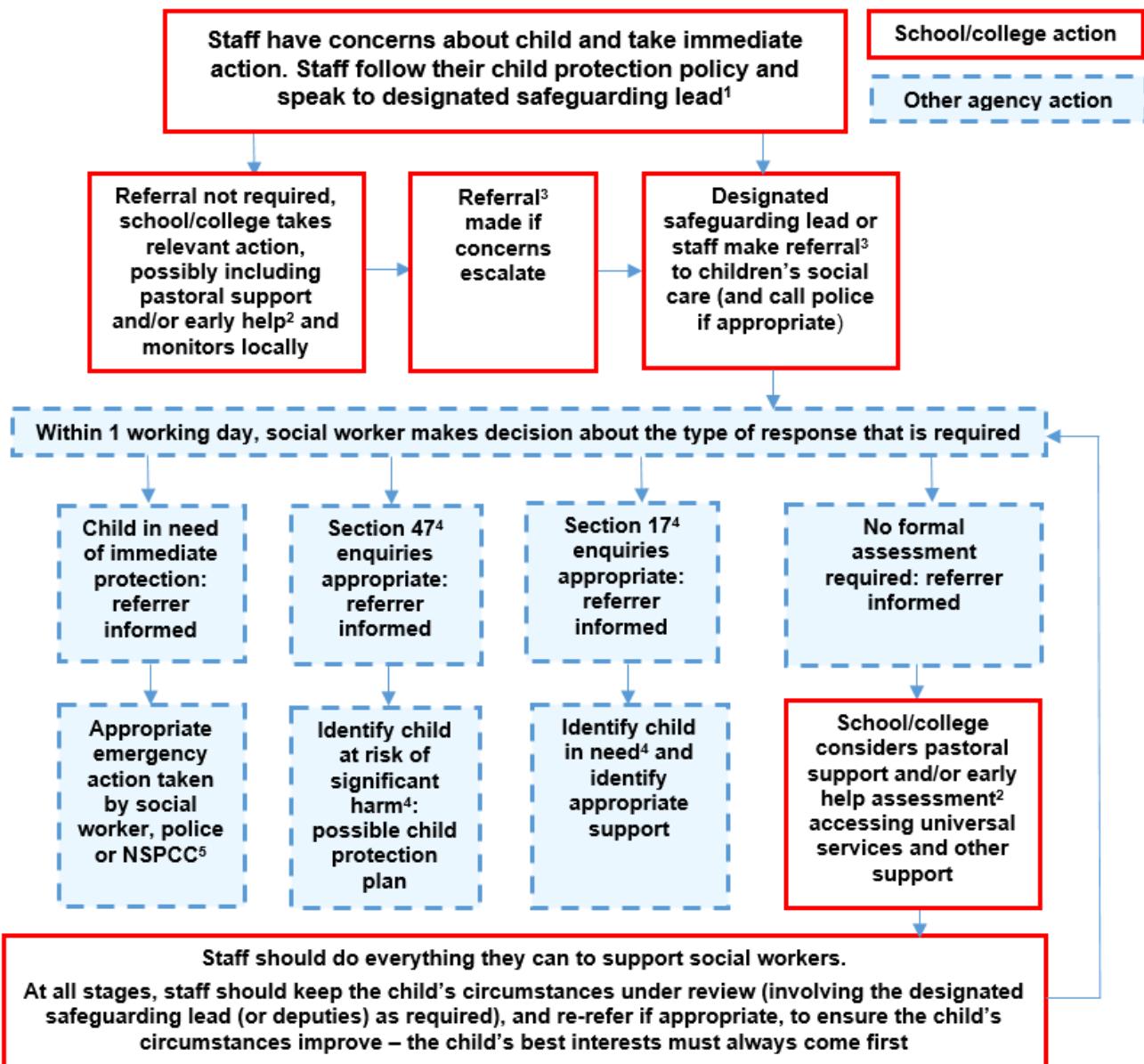
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and KCSIE DfE 2025

Every member of staff and volunteer must sign an annual declaration on IAM Compliant to confirm they have read, and are familiar with, the content of the following documents and that they understand their role and responsibilities:

- The School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- The KCSIE 2025 document parts specified according to their role
- The staff code of conduct
- The Trust whistleblowing policy
- Annual Declaration.

(to confirm they have not been cautioned for, or convicted of, certain violent or sexual criminal offences against adults or children and they are not the subject of an Order, direction or similar in respect of childcare, including orders in respect of your own children. For those in Primary settings, confirmation that their registration has not been refused or cancelled in relation to childcare, including orders made in respect of your own children).

Appendix 3: Actions where there are concerns about a child - Flowchart



The National Police Chiefs' Council- *When to call the police* guidance

This advice covers incidents on school and college premises where students have potentially committed a crime. It provides guidance on what schools and colleges should bear in mind when considering contacting the police. This advice covers the following situations:

- Assault
- Criminal damage
- Cyber crime
- Drugs
- Harassment
- Sexual offences
- Theft
- Weapons

This advice aims to support schools and college to make defensible decisions when considering whether to involve the police. Further guidance can be found at;

<https://www.npcc.police.uk/documents/Children%20and%20Young%20people/When%20to%20call%20the%20police%20guidance%20for%20schools%20and%20colleges.pdf>

Appendix 4: Operation Encompass

OPERATION ENCOMPASS – Information sharing from Police regarding Domestic Abuse notifications (2nd December 2019)

Operation Encompass Safeguarding Statement:

- Our schools are 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 schools PRIOR to the start of the next school day when they have been called to a domestic incident. Sharing is by means of an email to a Key Adult and via a standalone email address dedicated solely to receiving such notifications.
- Our parents are fully aware that our schools are Operation Encompass schools.
- The Operation Encompass information is stored in line with all other confidential safeguarding and child protection information.
- The Key Adult in each school has also led training for all school staff and Governors about Operation Encompass, the prevalence of Domestic Abuse and the impact of this abuse on children. Schools have also discussed how they can support our children following the Operation Encompass notification.
- Schools are aware that we must do nothing that puts the child/ren or the non-abusing adult at risk.
- The Safeguarding Governor member of each **Local Governing Committee** will report on Operation Encompass in the termly report to Governors. All information is anonymised for these reports.
- The Key Adult in each school has used the Operation Encompass Toolkit to ensure that all appropriate actions have been taken by the school.

(THE SCHOOLS'S) KEY ADULTS ARE:

.....
.....
.....

Appendix 5: Ofsted Inspection Handbook – September 2021 (last updated 16th September 2024)

This handbook is primarily a guide for inspectors on how to carry out school inspections. However, it is made available to schools and other organisations to ensure that they are informed about the processes and procedures of inspection. It seeks to balance the need for consistency in inspections with the flexibility required to respond to the individual circumstances of each school.

On publication of this Child Protection Policy, the Trust has decided to provide the hyperlink only to the Ofsted School Inspection Handbook rather than the document in its entirety, due to the potential for updates to the content.

[School inspection handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook)

Appendix 6: Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children

This is advice provided by the Department for Education (the department). Its focus is child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment at schools and colleges. The advice covers children of all ages, from primary through to secondary stage and into colleges and online. For the purposes of this advice, a child is anyone under the age of 18. Whilst the focus of the advice is on protecting and supporting children, schools and colleges should of course protect any adult students and engage with adult social care, support services and the police as required.

The advice sets out what sexual violence and sexual harassment is, how to minimise the risk of it occurring and what to do when it does occur or is alleged to have occurred. The advice highlights best practice and cross-references other advice, statutory guidance and the legal framework.

It is for individual schools and colleges to develop their own policies and procedures. It is important that policies and procedures are developed in line with their legal obligations, including the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010, especially the Public Sector Equality Duty, and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. It is important that schools and colleges consider how to reflect sexual violence and sexual harassment in their whole school or college approach to safeguarding including their curriculum-based responses.

The guidance in KCSIE 2025 should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy.

Appendix 7: Online Safety Guidance

Technology is a significant component of safeguarding issues and abuse can take place concurrently online and in daily life. Online safety is an ongoing and interrelated theme that informs other policy and systems/processes.

The prevalence of issues arising through children's access to the online world is significant and all staff should be aware of associated risks and signs/symptoms. These are categorised within Keeping Children Safe in Education as:

- Content
- Contact
- Conduct
- Commerce

Online safety includes non-age-appropriate content, self-harm, and suicide, sharing nudes or semi-nudes, cyberbullying, grooming, radicalisation, gaming (now identified by the World Health Organisation as a disorder), online gambling, inappropriate advertising, harmful online challenges/hoaxes¹ and cybercrime. Online safety also includes misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories and the use of Generative AI products. Our children will receive sessions to ensure they are aware of the risks associated above and how to report any concerns.

To safeguard children and staff from emerging digital threats, the school is committed to meeting the Department for Education's **Minimum Cyber Security Standards**. This includes implementing robust technical controls, secure data handling practices, and regular audits of digital infrastructure. In parallel, the school will embed **digital resilience education** across the curriculum, equipping pupils with the skills to critically evaluate online content, recognise misinformation and disinformation, and understand the risks associated with emerging technologies such as generative AI. Staff will receive annual training on cyber safety and digital safeguarding, and the school will work closely with parents and carers to promote safe and informed technology use at home and in the community.

Staff will receive annual training around online safety including the signs/symptoms for the content, contact, conduct and commerce as mentioned above, as well as signposting to support available to pupils to build their online resilience. Staff will also work with parents/carers to reinforce the importance of children being safe online and how to support them to achieve this.

Please see **paragraphs 134-151 KCSIE 2025** for national guidance.

KCSIE 2025 guidance now includes disinformation, misinformation and conspiracy theories to the list of content risks under online safety. Disinformation is the deliberate creation and spread of false or misleading content, such as fake news. Misinformation is the unintentional spread of this false or misleading content (Cabinet Office, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, 2023).

Relevant Guidance:

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education - GOV.UK

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/harmful-online-challenges-and-online-hoaxes>

<https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/early-years-toolkit/>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

<https://swgfl.org.uk/services/professionals-online-safety-helpline/>

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>

All staff should refresh their Online Safety training annually.

Appendix 8: GDPR, Data Protection and Freedom of Information

See KCSIE 2025 paragraphs 92 -93

Schools should ensure that all staff are aware of the Trust Data Protection Policy and have completed prescribed GDPR training.

All schools should consider meeting the cyber security standards.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-minimum-cyber-security-standard>

The Trust's DPO is; dposchools@somerset.gov.uk

Further information can be accessed at; <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/>

Appendix 9: Mobile Phone and Electronic Devise use within Trust EYFS settings

To ensure the safety and well-being of children we do not allow staff to use personal mobile phones or other personal devices with imaging and sharing capabilities during working hours.

We use mobile phones supplied by the nursery only to provide a means of contact in certain circumstances, such as outings.

Staff must adhere to the following:

- Mobile phones, or other personal devices with imaging and sharing capabilities are not accessed within the nursery environment.
- Mobile phones, or other personal devices with imaging and sharing capabilities can only be used on a designated break and then this must be away from the children.
- Mobile phones, or other personal devices with imaging and sharing capabilities must be stored safely in staff bags at all times during working hours (out of the nursery environment).
- The use of nursery devices, such as tablets, must only be used for nursery purposes.
- The nursery devices will not have any social media or messaging apps on them, except those used by management for nursery purposes only.
- Any apps downloaded onto nursery devices must be done only by management. This will ensure only age and content appropriate apps are accessible to staff, or children using them.
- Passwords and/or passcodes for nursery devices must not be shared or written down, and will be changed regularly.

- Only nursery owned devices will be used to take photographs or film videos.
- Nursery devices will not be taken home with staff and will remain secure at the setting when not in use.

Parent use of mobile phones and smartwatches

Parents are kindly asked to refrain from using their mobile telephones, or other personal devices with imaging and sharing capabilities, whilst in the nursery or when collecting or dropping off their children. We will ask any parents using their phone/device inside the nursery premises to finish the call or take the call outside. We do this to ensure all children are safeguarded and the time for dropping off and picking up is a quality handover opportunity where we can share details about your child.

Parents are requested not to allow their child to wear or bring in devices with imaging and sharing capabilities. This ensures all children are safeguarded and protects their property as it may get damaged or misplaced at the nursery.

Visitors' use of mobile phones or other personal devices with imaging and sharing capabilities

Visitors are not permitted to use their mobile phones or other personal devices with imaging and sharing capabilities, e.g. smart glasses, whilst at nursery and are asked to leave them in a safe secure place, such as the nursery office, for the duration of their visit.