



## Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

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## Notes of clarification:

- The word “Director/s” is used to refer to Directors of St Francis of Assisi Academies Trust; the Directors are variously members of the Governing Body of each of the Trust Schools which are called Academy School Improvement Groups (ASIG) and Directors are also members of the Academy Committees including the “Catholic Life” Committee which is responsible for monitoring Safeguarding in the schools.
- The word “Governor/s” includes all Directors and Academy Committee Representatives.
- References to the “Governing Board” or “Governing Body” is to the Board of Directors of the St Francis of Assisi Academies Trust; reference to the Governing Body/Board of an individual school is a reference to the Academy School Improvement Group (ASIG)

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## 1. Purpose and Aims

1.1 As part of the St Francis of Assisi Academies Trust St John Rigby Catholic School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its children. We believe that:

- All children/young people have equal right to be protected from harm
- Children/young people need to be safe and to feel safe in school
- Children/young people need support which matches their individual needs, including those who may have experienced abuse
- All children/young people have the right to speak freely and voice their values and beliefs
- All children/young people must be encouraged to respect each other's values and support each other
- All children/young people have the right to be supported to meet their emotional, and social needs as well as their educational needs – a happy healthy sociable child/young person will achieve better educationally
- Schools can and do contribute to the prevention of abuse, victimisation, bullying, exploitation, extreme behaviours, discriminatory views and risk-taking behaviours; and
- All staff and visitors have an important role to play in safeguarding children and protecting them from abuse.

1.2 Our policy applies to all staff, volunteers, Directors and visitors in the school.

1.3 There are five main elements to our policy:

- Ensuring we practice safer recruitment in line with national legislation by using at least one suitably trained recruiter on all interview panels and by checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children and ensuring any unsuitable behaviour is reported and managed using the Allegations Management procedures
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
- Supporting children/young people who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

1.4 We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. Each of our schools will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried
- Include opportunities across the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

## 2. Statutory Framework and the Ofsted definition of safeguarding

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

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019).  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education>
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- *The Children Act 1989 & 2004* <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41> & <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>

- Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board Interagency Child Protection Procedures <http://bedfordscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/contents.html>
- *The Education Act 2002 (section 175)* <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/21/contents/enacted>
- *The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005* <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1437/regulation/6/made>  
<http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publications/young-person-guide-working-together-safeguard-children> (updated young people version)  
<http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publications/young-persons-guide-keeping-children-safe> (updated younger children version)
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children (May 2018)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused Advice for practitioners (March 2015)
- Information Sharing Practice Guidance (2018)
- Revised *Prevent* Duty Guidance: for England and Wales (March 2016)
- Guidance for safer working practices for those working with children and young people in education settings October 2015
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (amended July 2018)

As a Trust, Bedford Catholic Schools believe in supporting all aspects of children and young people's development and learning and keeping children safe.

Ofsted's definition of safeguarding as defined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2019:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding action may be needed to protect children and learners from:

- Neglect
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- bullying including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying
- peer on peer abuse
- racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse
- gender based violence /violence against women and girls
- honour based violence
- radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour
- child sexual exploitation and trafficking
- the impact of new technologies on sexual behaviour e.g. sexting
- teenage relationship abuse
- substance misuse
- issues specific to a local population e.g. gang violence
- female genital mutilation
- forced marriage
- fabricated or induced illness
- poor parenting
- other issues that pose a risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm, neglect and failure to act. It relates to broader aspects of care and education, including:

- Children's and learners' health and safety and well- being including mental health
- The use of reasonable force

- Meeting the needs of children and learners with medical conditions
- Meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities
- Awareness of the needs of Looked After children in the school
- Providing first aid
- Intimate care and emotional well-being
- Online safety and associated issues
- Appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect including sexual abuse or exploitation and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.
- Appropriate arrangements for children visiting host families, attending work experience and school visits (procedures available in other school policies).
- Appropriate arrangements to ensure children's and learners' security, taking into account the local context."

***Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings*** (updated September 2018)

This policy should therefore be understood alongside each school's policies on related safeguarding issues.

### **3. The Role of the Governing Body**

The governing board must have regard to the DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', September 2019 to ensure that the policies, procedures and training in the school are effective and comply with the law at all times. As part of these overarching responsibilities the Governing Body will:

- 3.1 Through the Head teacher, remedy without delay any deficiencies or weaknesses regarding child protection arrangements that are brought to the attention of the school management or Governing Body. Further it is recommended that schools submit an annual safeguarding report to the Governing Body.
- 3.2 Ensure that a senior member of staff of the school's leadership team is identified to take the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as defined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and given in Appendix 2 of this document. A second member of staff, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) will fulfil this role when the DSL is unavailable.
- 3.3 Ensure that the school has a nominated Director responsible for child protection, to take lead responsibility in the Governing Body for Safeguarding and Child Protection, and to provide support and challenge to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure that the work of the school conforms to this policy
- 3.4 Ensure that on arrival at school all visitors (including contractors) are provided with information making them aware of their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and their responsibility for referring any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or his/her Deputy (DDSL), and the names of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) and his/her Deputy (DDSL)
- 3.5 Make this policy available to parents and carers through the school website and ensure that parents understand the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the school prospectus.
- 3.6 Ensure that children and young people are taught about keeping themselves safe.
- 3.7 Ensure that the school contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (DfE, 2018). This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans. This covers a range of work such as
  - Working with the named Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Co-ordinator in Children's Social Care
  - Working to help identify children and young people who are privately fostered
  - Working to help protect children from extremist and violent views through multi-agency work.
- 3.8 Ensure that the school develops effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters, including:
  - Attendance at Child Protection conferences

- Notifying Children's Social Care (Via MASH – see page 12) immediately (on the first day of absence) if there is an unexplained absence of a child on a **Child Protection Plan**
- Contacting the child's social worker directly if there is an unexplained absence of a child who is **Looked After**. This will then trigger actions identified in the 'Joint Police and Children's Social Care Protocol for Dealing with Children Missing from Care'.  
[http://www.bedford.gov.uk/health\\_and\\_social\\_care/children\\_young\\_people/safeguarding\\_children\\_board/local\\_guidance.aspx](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/health_and_social_care/children_young_people/safeguarding_children_board/local_guidance.aspx)

3.9 Ensure that the school's Child Protection procedures are in accordance with Local Authority guidance and inter-agency procedures agreed through the Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board (BBSCB).

3.10 Ensure there is a staff behaviour (code of conduct) policy, which links to this child protection policy, and the Safer Working Practices document and which is shared with all current staff and forms part of the induction training for new staff.

3.11 Ensure that<sup>1</sup> any member of staff found not suitable to work with children will be notified to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration for barring, following resignation, dismissal or when we cease to use their service as a result of a substantiated allegation, in the case of a volunteer<sup>2</sup>.

3.12 Review this Child Protection policy, and its effectiveness, annually (no later than the date of next review given on the front cover).

### **The Governor with Responsibility for Safeguarding**

The role of the Governor Safeguarding lead will include ensuring:

- A DSL has been appointed and trained in each of the Trust's schools
- Training for the DSL every two years and that the DSL is kept abreast of developments and changes in law
- That sufficient time and resources are allocated to the DSL to carry out their role effectively
- All staff /governors/volunteers have received safeguarding training including induction training for all staff and at regular intervals
- The Single Central Record is accurate and up to date
- Numbers and trends of safeguarding issues are monitored
- Regular meetings with DSL
- That Bedford Catholic School's Child Protection and Safeguarding policies are updated in line with legislation and annually
- Governing board is informed about safeguarding regularly and provided with an annual report
- Support DSL and Head teacher in preparing for Ofsted and other inspections
- Children are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum
- Robust safer recruitment practice is in place
- Ensure safer recruitment and selection practice is in line with legal requirements, including the requirement for governors and to have enhanced DBS checks.

*(This list is not exhaustive and governors can access an information sheet with more information about their role by contacting the Bedford Borough Governor Training & Development Co-ordinator, [governorstraining@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:governorstraining@bedford.gov.uk) and by reading 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2019).*

<sup>1</sup> Following guidance from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

<sup>2</sup> Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2018) states "If an organisation removes an individual (paid worker or unpaid volunteer) from work such as looking after children (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children, the organisation must make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service. It is an offence to fail to make a referral without good reason."

#### **4. The Role of the Headteacher**

- 4.1 The Headteacher, supported by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), must ensure that this policy and associated procedures are followed by all staff.
- 4.2 Ensure that the school is alert to possible private fostering arrangements, and that in the school admission process, the parents/carers resident with each child or young person indicate whether they are parent, other relative (to be specified), friend of the family, or other (to be specified).

#### **5. The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

- 5.1 The broad areas of responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) involve managing referrals/cases and raising awareness of safeguarding and child protection amongst staff.
- 5.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will have the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post including committing resources and, where appropriate, supporting and directing other staff.
- 5.3 In making decisions on whether to refer child protection concerns/disclosures to Children's Social Care (via MASH) (for contact details see page 12) the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must use Bedford Borough's Children's Social Care "A Child Centred System Understanding Thresholds". This document can be found via this link:  
[http://www.proceduresonline.com/bedfordborough/childcare/pdfs/understanding\\_thresholds.pdf](http://www.proceduresonline.com/bedfordborough/childcare/pdfs/understanding_thresholds.pdf)

The DSL will consult with the Multi Agency Support Hub (MASH) (see page 12 for contact details) if still unsure on whether to refer.

#### **Key Responsibilities:**

- Refer suspected abuse and neglect to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- Report allegations made against members of staff to the Local Authority Designated Officer or LADO (and Ofsted if Early Years /Play Providers /Childminders)
- Develop and update the Child Protection and other safeguarding policies, ensuring that staff and children/families/parents are aware of them
- Provide support and advice to all members of staff within the setting regarding child protection concerns
- Keep the Head teacher informed about any issues that arise
- Ensure that cover is provided for the role when absent from the setting
- Ensure that a child's child protection file is copied for the new educational establishment as soon as possible when a child moves educational settings, and that this file is transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file
- Ensure that all staff receives appropriate Child Protection and Safeguarding Training and maintain training records
- Cooperate with any requests for information from the local authority, such as Child Protection training returns and self-evaluative forms for safeguarding and child protection, in compliance with Section 11, Children Act 2004.

#### **6. The Role & Responsibilities of all Staff within School**

- 6.1 All staff and volunteers must read this policy and Part One of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (Appendix 1) and ensure they are aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection in being alert to the signs of abuse and of their responsibility to report and record any concerns or disclosures.
- 6.2 It is the responsibility of all members of staff to ensure that all safeguarding concerns, both minor and serious, are reported to the DSL as soon as reasonably possible.



- 6.3 All staff and volunteers must act in accordance with this policy if a child he/she presents with indicators of abuse (see Appendix 1 for details). Procedures for reporting concerns are given in sections 5 and procedures for dealing with a disclosure are given in section 6 of this document.
- 6.4 If there are concerns or allegations regarding a member of staff or the Headteacher then the processes outlined in section 14 of this document must be followed.
- 6.5 Any member of staff, discovering that an act of Female Genital Mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 must report this to the DSL who must then report to the police.

## **7. Use of Force, Restraint and Positive Handling**

The law forbids a teacher or other members of staff from using any degree of physical contact that is deliberately intended to punish a pupil, or that is primarily intended to cause pain or injury or humiliation.

Teachers at a school are allowed to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils under certain exceptional circumstances. In some circumstances, teachers and authorised members of staff can restrain pupils in order to protect them and others.

Any concerns or allegations that a member of staff, volunteer or governor may have acted inappropriately should be brought to the Head teacher immediately, in confidence. The Head teacher, in turn, will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The current guidance is: *Use of reasonable force: Advice for Head teachers, staff and governing bodies*, July 2013.

## **7. Safeguarding Training**

- 7.1 The Head teacher in each school must undertake appropriate and relevant training on child protection at least once every two years (statutory requirement), via the Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board (BBSCB). If the Headteacher is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) then he/she shall meet the training requirements set out in 7.2 below.
- 7.2 In addition to basic in-house child protection training the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must attend the Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board (BBSCB)'s *Working Together* training course Modules 1 and 2 as a matter of priority, and then undertake further refresher/specialist safeguarding/child protection training via the Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board (BBSCB) at least every two years (statutory requirement).
- 7.3 Each school must have clear deputising arrangements in place for the safeguarding lead and these personnel must be supported in this role by the provision of access to appropriate Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board (BBSCB) learning opportunities. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) must meet the training requirements in section 7.2.
- 7.4 Any newly appointed Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must attend the Bedford Borough Safeguarding (BBSCB) *Working Together* training course Modules 1 and 2 before taking lead responsibility for safeguarding. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) will take a leading role on safeguarding for the short time that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is waiting to receive training.
- 7.5 All other staff, who work with children, will undertake safeguarding and child protection training in-house at level 1, or its equivalent, to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively. This must be kept up to date by refresher training at three yearly intervals (however two-yearly intervals would be recommended), and temporary staff and volunteers who work with children must be made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities the Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board (BBSCB) offers free on-line training for such workers. These can be found at <http://bedfordshirelscb.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/>
- 7.6 The Chair of Directors, the designated Director for Safeguarding and Child Protection will undertake the Local Authority's Director safeguarding training at least once every three years.

- 7.7 All new members of staff will receive child protection training as indicated in 7.5 above as part of their induction programme.
- 7.8 Briefings and updates on child protection and safeguarding procedures and local safeguarding issues (including the signs of abuse and procedures for reporting concerns and disclosures) will be provided on a regular basis, at least annually, but more frequently when necessary, to ensure that all members of staff are familiar with any changes to the school policy as they occur. These updates must be carried out in line with the Ofsted overview provided with the new Common Inspection Framework entitled "Inspecting safeguarding in Early years, education and skills settings". Particular attention will be paid to the Prevent Strategy, the BBC Early Help Strategy, the BBC Relay initiative (to support victims of domestic abuse) and the additional advice in "What to do if you are worried that a child is being abused" (DofE: March 2015).
- 7.9 At least one member of every appointments panel will have gained accreditation through Safer Recruitment training. The school will ensure that there are always sufficient numbers of suitably trained staff or Directors in post.
- 7.10 Bedford Borough Council will communicate the Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board (BBSCB) safeguarding training attendance statistics to individual schools with commentary.

## **8. Mental Health, Emotional Well-being and resilience**

Our Trust is committed to embedding and promoting a whole school approach to emotional health, wellbeing and resilience.

8.1 The school will teach children about safeguarding and ensure that the school contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (DfE, 2018). This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans. Schools should also ensure that they promote effective E-safety to children.

8.2 Child Protection procedures shall be seen within the context of this broader framework as a response when there is a perceived need to protect a child or young person who is at risk of significant harm. We understand that emotional and social aspects of learning create a foundation for all academic learning. If a child has not been supported to understand, express and resolve their feelings, they may not have the ability to share with other children, resolve the small conflicts that arise in day-to-day classroom life, or concentrate on learning. Their frustrations may cause a range of antisocial, disruptive, overly compliant or withdrawn behaviours.

8.3 All staff will work to ensure that:

- Children and young people feel listened to, valued and respected
- Staff are aware of indicators of abuse and know how to share their concerns appropriately
- Staff are aware that when recognising abuse in pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, additional barriers can exist.
- All staff, volunteers and governors are subject to rigorous recruitment procedures which include enhanced DBS checks.
- All staff, volunteers and governors are given appropriate support and training to deliver a safe school.

All staff, volunteers and governors who work with children will have appropriate checks carried out to ensure they are not disqualified under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009. Education staff play a crucial role in helping to identify welfare concerns, and indicators of possible abuse or neglect, at an early stage.

All of Bedford Catholic Schools are committed to referring those concerns via the Designated Safeguarding Lead to the appropriate organisation, normally local authority children's social care, contributing to the assessment of a child's needs and, where appropriate, to ongoing action to meet those needs.

## **9. School Attendance and Children Missing Education**

9.1 Bedford Catholic Schools will monitor attendance and patterns of attendance. All staff are aware that children who do not attend school regularly act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child

criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. St John Rigby Catholic School contacts parents or carers on each day of a child's absence, where they have not explained the absence. The attendance officer works closely with the Borough Education and Welfare Officer to investigate low attendance. They also work closely with the school Safeguarding leads where this is indicated. The school follows Borough guidance on Children Missing Education. Please see the school Attendance Policy for more detail.

9.2 Staff must be aware of our school's Attendance Policy and children missing from education procedures. Please see the Attendance Toolkit provided to schools by the Early Help and Intervention Team.

9.3 All our schools ensure that parents /carers provide at least two emergency contact numbers and these details are updated as required and at least annually.

## 10. Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Children

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can sometimes exist when recognising abuse in SEND children. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- The potential for children with SEND being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying and harassment, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties overcoming these barriers.

10.1 Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will therefore require close liaison with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) and the SENCO.

Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBT) can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, a child who is perceived by their peers to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT. Incidents of this sort must be reported in line with school policy.

## 10. Dealing with concerns or disclosures regarding a child or young person

- 10.1 All staff and volunteers must be aware that the main categories of abuse are:
- Physical abuse
  - Emotional abuse
  - Sexual abuse including child sexual exploitation
  - Neglect
  - Peer on Peer abuse (KCSIE 2018)

These categories are described in more detail in Appendix 3 and signs indicating the possibility of abuse are described in Appendix 4. The abuse may be instigated by one or more adults, and/or other children and young people.

10.2 If any member of staff has a concern that a child in their care has suffered any of these forms of abuse, they must report their concerns to, and seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or in his/her absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), as soon as possible, and never later than the end of the working day. If there is concern as to whether it is safe to allow the child to go home that day, then all effort must be made to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately so that the Multi Agency Support Hub (MASH) (see page 12 for contact details) can be informed and the necessary protective measures implemented.

10.3 A child may disclose sensitive information at any time of the day, and this may occur outside of normal lesson time, e.g. break periods or during before/after school club sessions. It is therefore imperative that **all** the staff is aware of the signs and behaviour which **may** indicate abuse, as noted in 9.1.

### 10.4 All staff must:

- Recognise that a disclosure may come directly from the child, or from a third party, e.g. friend, neighbour, other family member. Alternatively, it may be through the suspicion of staff based on a variety of symptoms and knowledge of possible indicators of abuse

- Take seriously any disclosures made to them and provide reassurance to the discloser through their responses and behaviour.

10.5 When receiving a disclosure from a child that he/she has been abused in some way the member of staff must:

- Find time and, if necessary, a suitable place to listen to the child, when information about possible abuse comes to light
- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- Not make false promises which may not be able to be fulfilled and do not promise confidentiality. If the child asks that information is kept secret, it is important that you tell the child in a manner appropriate to the child's age/stage in development that you cannot promise complete confidentiality – instead you must explain that you may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child, or other children, safe.
- Allow the child to talk freely. Do not cross examine, interview, probe or ask to see any injury that is not visible. Listen, only asking questions when necessary to clarify
- Not criticise the alleged perpetrator
- Reassure the child that what has happened is not his or her fault
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell
- Explain what must be done next and who must be told
- Find out just enough to be sure of the need to refer, and keep any questions open rather than closed. Education is a referrer, not an investigative agency for child protection matters. An incident may eventually end up as a court case and children's evidence can all too easily be compromised by leading questions or repeated recital.
- Make records that are factual, accurate and relevant and avoid subjective judgements. It is not the school's responsibility to 'check out' what any child claims nor should any abuser be questioned.
- Sign and date the record of the disclosure.

10.6 The member of staff who has the concern or received the disclosure must report the concern/disclosure to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or in his/her absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), immediately. The member of staff must provide the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with a signed, dated written record of the concern/disclosure, using the agreed school pro forma.

10.7 The same approach to receiving a disclosure must be taken if the discloser is not the allegedly abused child but another child or an adult.

10.8 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must place the concern on the school's safeguarding file for the child (creating one if necessary).

10.9 When the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or in his/her absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), has been informed, he/she shall make the decision whether or not to refer the concern to Children's Social Care (via the MASH) On the question of how to decide whether to refer to MASH, the Bedford Borough document 'Children's Social Care A Child Centred System Understanding Thresholds document states:

**“Professionals in all agencies have a responsibility to refer a child to Children's Social Care when it is believed or suspected that the child:**

- **Has suffered significant harm; or**
- **Is likely to suffer significant harm.**

**All referrals to Children's Social Care must be made in writing using the Multi Agency Referral Form or CAF assessment where one has been completed. A history of key events is useful when communicating concerns so that any emerging patterns are recognised."**

The full Bedford Borough's Children's Social Care 'A Child Centred System Understanding Thresholds' document is available at:

[http://www.proceduresonline.com/bedfordborough/childcare/pdfs/understanding\\_thresholds.pdf](http://www.proceduresonline.com/bedfordborough/childcare/pdfs/understanding_thresholds.pdf)

The Multi Agency Support Hub (MASH) will be consulted when there is uncertainty about whether to refer.

- 10.10 Referrals must be made as soon as possible, and the appropriate forms completed and sent at the same time. Referrals to Children's Social Care must be made to the Multi Agency Support Hub (MASH).

#### **MASH**

Telephone: 01234 718700 8.50am-5.20pm Mon-Thurs  
8.50am-4.20pm Fri  
0300 300 4200 For outside the hours above

Email: [multiagency@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:multiagency@bedford.gov.uk)

### **10. Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

All schools in the Trust share information lawfully and fairly having regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Information is held safely and securely. Staff and volunteers understand the importance of sharing information as early as possible. If staff or volunteers are unsure about whether or not to share information they understand that they must speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018) states 'The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent'

- 10.1 Safeguarding information should be treated as confidential and only shared as part of the agreed school and Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board (BBSCB) protocols.
- 10.2 All staff/volunteers in school have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals.
- 10.3 Staff / volunteers who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work shall only share that information within appropriate contexts.

### **11. Communication with Parents / Carers**

- 11.1 Parents and carers will be made aware of the school/service policy through published information and in initial meetings with parent and carers of new children. Parents and carers will be informed that in certain circumstances there may be a need to contact other agencies without first notifying them. This decision will be made in partnership between Education Services and Children's Social Care Services. It will be made clear that this is a legal obligation and not a personal decision.

### **12. Record Keeping**

- 12.1 The completed forms/records/chronologies will be kept for the duration of the child's school career and where a child changes school the forms/records will be copied to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at the receiving school. The school will retain a receipt for the records signed by the receiving school.
- 12.2 The information contained will be regarded as confidential. Any request for access to the information by non-Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board agencies (e.g. Solicitor, investigating agent) will be referred to the Head teacher/Child Protection Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is advised to seek legal advice before acting.

### **13. Safer Recruitment**

- a. The School will comply with the guidance set out in Part 3 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.
  - b. Safeguarding Children in Education (2015) outlines Safer Recruitment processes in education settings. At least one member of staff on every recruitment panel has undertaken training in Safer Recruitment. Staff and governors have undertaken safeguarding checks including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, and for staff barred list checks together with two references with at least one being from the previous employer and interview information. In addition to obtaining the DBS certificate, anyone who is appointed to carry out teaching work will require an additional check to ensure they are not prohibited from teaching. Volunteers are appropriately supervised. It is good practice to ask new governors for references
- 13.3 Although not a statutory requirement, but in response to Bichard recommendations, at least one member of every appointments panel will have gained accreditation through Safer Recruitment training.

### **14. Dealing with concerns regarding school staff or volunteers**

- a. To reduce the risk of inappropriate or unprofessional behaviour towards children, all staff and volunteers must be aware of safer working practice and must be familiar with Keeping Children Safe in Education(2016) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education>
  - b. A concern, sometimes referred to as an allegation, is any information which indicates that a member of staff/volunteer may have failed to meet the requirements set out in the staff behaviour (code of conduct) policy, or 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 that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children<sup>3</sup>.
- 14.3 This applies to any child the member of staff/volunteer has contact with in their personal, professional or community life.
- 14.4 All members of staff/volunteers must report any such concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (or in his/her absence to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), unless the concern relates to these members of staff (in which case they should report directly to the Headteacher). Failure to report it in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter.
- 14.5 The person to whom a concern or allegation is reported must take the matter seriously, keep an open mind, and must:
- Find time and, if necessary, a suitable place to listen to the person's concerns or allegations
  - Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
  - Not make false promises which may not be able to be fulfilled and do not promise confidentiality. If the person asks that information is kept secret, it is important that you tell the person that you cannot promise complete confidentiality.
  - Allow the person to talk freely. Do not cross examine, interview, or probe. Listen, only asking questions when necessary to clarify.
  - Not criticise the alleged perpetrator
  - Stress that it was the right thing to share the concerns
  - Explain what must be done next and who must be told.

- Make records that are factual, accurate and relevant and avoid subjective judgements. It is not the school's responsibility to 'check out' what any child tells, nor should any abuser be questioned.
  - Sign and date the record of the disclosure
- 14.6 The member of staff must provide the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (or in his/her absence, his/her Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) with a signed, dated written record of their concerns, using the agreed school concern pro forma, without delay.
- 14.7 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) receiving the concern/allegation must not unilaterally determine its validity and must report the concern/allegation to the Headteacher immediately.
- 14.8 The Headteacher will not investigate the concern itself, or take written or detailed statements, but will assess whether the concern meets any of the three criteria set out in **section 14.2** above. If any of the criteria are met then the Headteacher must contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day<sup>4</sup>, and provide the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) with written confirmation of the concern. The name and contact telephone of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) are given on the front cover of this policy.
- 14.9 The Head teacher shall, as soon as possible, **following discussion with and agreement** from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) inform the subject of the concern.
- 14.10 If a concern is raised regarding the Headteacher, then the Chair of Directors will be contacted, whose name and contact telephone number is given on the front cover of this policy.
- In the absence of the Chair of Directors, the Vice Chair will be contacted, whose name and contact telephone are given on the front cover.
- 14.11 In the event of a concern regarding the Headteacher, the Chair of Directors (or the Vice Chair) shall contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (within one working day), whose contact details are given on the front cover of this policy.

Safeguarding training can be accessed through the BBSCB. Training is provided as a joint arrangement between Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Boards. Please use this link to go the training section: <http://www.centralbedfordshirelscb.org.uk/lscb-website/training/training>

## 15 Trips and Visits

- Risk assessments will be completed in line with Local Authority Visits Policy. On residential visits, all supervising adults are DBS checked

## 16 Visitors

- No visitors, including tradespeople, should be allowed to wander around the premises unaccompanied when children and young people are present
- Staff should be alert to strangers frequently waiting outside a venue with no apparent purpose
- Children should not be collected by people other than their parents unless written notification has been received in advance

## 17. Children Looked After

- A 'Child Looked After' is usually in foster care, short or long term, or children's home. They can also still be in the family home, but under the care of Social Services. Many of these children will have had significant family problems or will have suffered abuse or neglect in early childhood and the school recognises that such life experiences may have a significant long-term impact on personal, emotional and social well-being. St John Rigby therefore seeks to provide a safe secure and supportive environment for these students so that their sense of personal safety and their achievement of full potential can be actively promoted.
- To raise educational attainment for these students, recommendations have been made by the government.

### **Each school will:**

- Appoint a designated member of staff to ensure there is a link person with Social Services for Children Looked After. This person will liaise with key staff in school to ensure the welfare of all children who are looked after is monitored. St John Rigby DSL is **Michele McGettigan**
- Appoint a named School Governor who will keep the governing body informed of the progress and attainment of Children Looked After. (**Mrs Ilona Bond**). They will also liaise with the designated teacher.
- The designated teacher for Children Looked After will:
  - Maintain a list of Children Looked After in the school
  - Ensure the monitoring of termly attendance, educational progress, achievement, emotional state and relationships with peers through the Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
  - Support PEPs for all Children Looked After in the school and use these to monitor progress
  - Ensure progress is reviewed with the student
  - Ensure teachers, tutors and heads of year contribute to Education Planning Meetings and their part of PEP for the child's care review
  - Hold confidential information about the child and inform teachers on a 'need to know' basis
  - Liaise with the named School Governor
  - Ensure the student is represented at Education Planning Meetings
  - Ensure there is access to additional educational support to help students reach their potential and improve their access to the curriculum.

### **18.Prevent and Extremist Ideology**

- All schools and colleges are subject to a 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". This duty is known as the Prevent duty.
- Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces. These fundamental values are woven into our curriculum.
- Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- Children can be vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse, protecting children from this risk is part of our safeguarding approach. As with other safeguarding risks, staff are alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection.
- Staff receive Prevent training and use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) making a referral to the Channel programme.



## **19. Policies/Guidance**

We work in accordance with guidance documents on:

- Use of Reasonable Force
- Private Fostering Arrangements
- PSHE
- Behaviour and Attendance
- Drug and Alcohol Education
- Sex and Relationship Education
- SEND
- Anti-bullying
- Children Missing Education
- Racist incident
- E Safety
- Prevent Duty
- Staff Code of Conduct

## Appendix 1: Relevant parts of Keeping Children Safe

### What school staff should know and do:

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes
- Children includes everyone under the age of 18
- Where a child is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so, action should be taken to protect that child. Action should also be taken to promote the welfare of a child in need of additional support, even if they are not suffering harm or are at immediate risk.

### The role of school and college staff

- School and college staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating
- **All** school and college staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn
- Every school and college should have a designated safeguarding lead who will provide support to staff members to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as children's social care
- The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers, including head teachers, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties<sup>4</sup>
- **All** school and college staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn
- **All** staff members should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding, and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This should include: the child protection policy; the staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct); and the role of the designated safeguarding lead
- **All** staff members should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated. 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.

### What school and college staff should look out for:

- **All** school and college staff members should be aware of the types of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection
- Staff members working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'** where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the **best** interests of the child
- Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. If staff members are unsure, they should always speak to the designated safeguarding lead.

<sup>4</sup>The Teachers' Standards apply to: trainees working towards QTS; all teachers completing their statutory induction period (newly qualified teachers [NQTs]); and teachers in maintained schools, including maintained special schools, who are subject to the Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012.

## Appendix 2: The Designated Safeguarding Lead

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) states that;

Governing bodies, proprietors and management committees should appoint an appropriate **senior member** of staff, from the school or college **leadership team**, to the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The Designated Safeguarding Lead should take **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection. This should be explicit in the role-holder's job description. This person should have the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post. They should be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters, to take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings – and/or to support other staff to do so – and to contribute to the assessment of children. Usually, the DSL is also the named person who responds to allegations made against members of staff.

### Deputy designated safeguarding leads

It is a matter for individual schools and colleges as to whether they choose to have one or more deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s). Any deputies should be trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead. Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate **lead responsibility** for child protection, as set out above, remains with the Designated Safeguarding Lead; this **lead responsibility** should not be delegated.

### DSL Responsibilities

- Refer suspected abuse and neglect to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- Report allegations made against members of staff to the Local Authority Designated Officer or LADO (and Ofsted if Early Years /Play Providers /Childminders)
- Develop and update the Child Protection and other safeguarding measures, ensuring that staff and children/families/parents are aware of them
- Provide support and advice to all members of staff within the setting regarding child protection concerns
- Keep the Head teacher informed about any issues that arise
- Ensure that cover is provided for the role when absent from the setting
- Ensure that a child's child protection file is copied for the new educational establishment as soon as possible when a child moves educational settings, and that this file is transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file
- Ensure that all staff receives appropriate Child Protection and Safeguarding Training and maintain training records
- Cooperate with any requests for information from the local authority, such as Child Protection training returns and self-evaluative forms for safeguarding and child protection, in compliance with Section 11, Children Act 2004.

## Appendix 3: Types of Abuse and Neglect

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

**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 (e.g. via the internet). They may be 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.

**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 participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate 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.

### Peer on Peer Abuse (KCSIE, 2018)

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

- Bullying (including cyberbullying).
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

All schools in the Trust have procedures to follow regarding peer on peer abuse. These procedures aim to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse and set out how allegations of peer on peer abuse will be investigated and dealt with.

## **Special Circumstances**

The Bedford Borough Child Protection Procedures outline responses to special circumstances in child protection cases, including issues such as:

- Bullying
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Domestic violence
- Drugs
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- Gangs, serious youth violence and violent extremism
- 'Honour'-based violence (HBV)
- Information and communication technology (ICT)-based forms of abuse, including cyberbullying
- Missing from care and home
- Not attending school
- Parental lack of control
- Parental mental illness
- Parents with learning disabilities
- Parents who misuse substances
- Pregnancy
- Private fostering
- Self-harming and suicidal behaviour
- Sexually active children
- Spirit possession or witchcraft
- Trafficked and exploited children
- Young carers
- Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Hate
- Preventing radicalisation
- Sexting
- Relationship abuse.

## Appendix 4: Indicators of Abuse

**NB. This guidance is provided as a useful reminder of the indicators of abuse but should be always be considered within the context of a comprehensive training programme and not as a substitute for more in-depth consideration**

There are four categories of abuse, which may result in a child becoming subject of a Child Protection Plan. They are:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse including Child Sexual Exploitation
- Neglect

### Possible indicators of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries including burns, particularly if they are recurrent
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Untreated injuries
- Admission of punishment which seems excessive
- Bald patches
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Arms and legs covered, even in hot weather
- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Running away

### Possible indicators of Emotional Abuse

- Physical and/or mental and/or emotional development lags
- Admission of punishment that appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviour e.g. thumb sucking, hair twisting, rocking
- Self -mutilation
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging.

### **Possible indicators of Sexual Abuse**

- Sudden changes in behaviour or in school performance
- Displays of affection in a sexual way, inappropriate to age. Tendency to cling or need reassurance
- Regression to younger behaviour e.g. thumb sucking, acting like a baby, playing with discarded toys
- Complaints of genital itching or pain, or anal pain
- Distrust of a familiar adult, or anxiety about being left with a relative, babysitter or lodger
- Unexplained gifts or money
- Depression and withdrawal
- Apparent secrecy
- Bedwetting, daytime wetting and/or soiling
- Sleep disturbances, nightmares
- Chronic illness, e.g. throat infection, venereal disease or other STD
- Anorexia, bulimia
- Unexplained pregnancy
- Fear of undressing, e.g. for sport
- Phobias or panic attacks

### **Possible indicators of Neglect**

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendencies
- Low self esteem
- Neurotic behaviour
- No social relationships
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging

### **Child Sexual Exploitation- Statutory Definition**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. This definition was updated by the DfE in February 2017.

### **Signs and Symptoms**

Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc without plausible explanation; Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks; Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work; Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late; Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls; Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol; Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections; Evidence of/suspicious of physical or sexual assault; Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups; Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers); Frequenting areas known for sex work; Concerning use of internet or other social media; Increasing secretiveness around behaviours; and Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

## **Female Genital Mutilation FGM**

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse.

Staff, volunteers and governors are or must be made aware that there is a statutory duty upon teachers to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18 or is at risk of being carried out. Staff will not be examining children for signs of FGM. When staff are made aware through disclosure or seeing something they suspect may be due to FGM, they will follow the Home Office Mandatory Reporting procedures.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information>

## **Child Criminal Exploitation: County Lines**

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. This can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual.

- It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence.
- It can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults.
- It is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation.

Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Our staff are informed about criminal exploitation and will be aware of this when considering behavioural changes and school absences.