



CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

GEOFFREY FIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL

2025/2026

Introduction

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all staff will make sure their approach is child-centred, considering, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

No single person 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 them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 gives schools a statutory duty to promote and safeguard the welfare of children. This school recognises its legal duty protect children from harm, and respond to child abuse. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as:

- protecting children from maltreatment; inside or outside the home, including online
- preventing 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;
- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

This policy is written in conjunction with:

- **DfE Statutory Guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) September 2025**
- **HM Government Guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children** (updated as per latest KCSIE 2025 references)
- **DfE Guidance Keeping children safe in education: childcare disqualification requirements - supplementary advice October 2014**
- **DfE Statutory Guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)**
- **NSPCC guidance: when to call the police**
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Guidance for Schools** Metropolitan Police
- **Guidance on Forced Marriages** NASUWT
- **Tackling Child Exploitation** Guidance from Barnardos
- **The Prevent Duty** – Departmental advice for school and child care providers March 2024
- The School and Governing Body will also have due regard to the Statutory Guidance on **Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions**, August 2017
- The LA guidance on **Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions**, September 2021
- **OFSTED framework – inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings** July 2023

- **Mental health and behaviour in schools** guidance
- **Improving the educational outcomes of children in need of help and protection**
- **Revised relationships, sex and health education (RHSE) guidance (updated KCSIE 2025 references) and related updates**
- **Safer working practises** guidance
- **Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines**
- **Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges** guidance (September 2021)
- **Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges (2024)**
- **DfE Guidance on Arranging Alternative Provision (February 2025)**
- **DfE Generative AI: product safety expectations (updated KCSIE 2025 references)**
- **Keeping children safe during community activities, after school clubs and tuition: non-statutory guidance for providers running out of school settings (September 2023)**
- **Whistle Blowing Policy**
- **Anti-Bullying Policy**
- **Positive handling policy**
- **Online safety policy**
- **Remote Learning Policy**
- **Staff Code of Conduct and Guidance on Safer Recruitment**
- **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**
- **Data Protection Act 2018**
- **Human Rights Act (1998)**
- **Equality Act (2010)**
- **Data Protection: toolkit for schools**
- **Domestic Abuse Act (2021)**
- **The Teachers' Standards (2021)**
- **UKCIS guidance: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes advice for education settings (2024)**
- **Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement**
- **What to Do if You Are Worried a Child is Being Abused -Advice for Practitioners**
- **<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice> (May 2024)**
- **<https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/>**
- **Lucy Faithfull Foundation 'Shore Space' online resource (KCSIE 2025 reference for child-on-child abuse)**

Every child, regardless of age, has a right to feel safe and protected from situations or practices that result in a child being physically or psychologically damaged.

We agree that we have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge, and we will carry out this duty through the pastoral care we provide and the curriculum we teach in the context of the school's values. In order to achieve this, all staff and volunteers in this school, in whatever capacity, will act proactively in child welfare matters; and work with other agencies, to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

It is important to note that The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. As per KCSiE 2021 (para 105,) 'Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect, and in promoting children's welfare, including their educational outcomes. Schools have clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes.'

The Governing body ensures relevant staff have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow school to share (and withhold) personal information, as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR. This includes:

- being confident of the processing conditions which allows school to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information, which is sensitive and personal, and should be treated as 'special category personal data'.

- understanding that ‘safeguarding of children and individuals at risk’ is a processing condition that allows school to share special category personal data. This includes allowing school to share information without consent where there is good reason to do so, and that the sharing of information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner but if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that school gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk.
- for school not providing pupils’ personal data where the serious harm test under the legislation is met. For example, in a situation where a child is in a refuge or another form of emergency accommodation, and the serious harm test is met, we must withhold providing the data in compliance with schools’ obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR. Where in doubt, the school will seek independent legal advice.

Aims and Objectives

‘Good safeguarding requires a continuing commitment from governing bodies and all staff to ensure the safety and welfare of children is embedded in all the school’s processes and procedures, and consequently enshrined in the ethos of the school’ (KCSiE 2025).

The school aims to focus on the needs of the child, but also seeks to understand their family context as part of its responsibility for pastoral care. The school encourages parents/carers and children to talk freely about any concerns or difficulties they may be facing and to see the school as a resource and place of safety.

Children’s worries and fears are taken seriously. Staff cannot guarantee confidentiality if they feel that an onward referral is required in order to safeguard a child’s welfare, however, unless it puts the child at further risk, the school will inform parents prior to any referral.

All school staff are aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another, therefore staff are always vigilant and will always raise any concerns with the designated safeguarding team.

If the school suspects that a child’s physical, sexual or emotional well-being is in danger, action will be taken.

Therefore, we

- Ensure that all staff (including volunteers, specialists and governors) are an integral part of the child safeguarding process;
- Ensure that all of the above are alert to the possibility that a child is at risk of suffering harm, and know how to report concerns or suspicions;
- Accept our responsibility for safeguarding children and see it as part of our function as a school;
- Designate senior members of staff (Head teacher, Deputy Head, SENCO and Family Worker) with experience, knowledge and skills in recognising and acting on child protection concerns, to train and support staff and co-ordinate action within the school and liaise with other agencies;
- Share our concerns with others who need to know, and assist in any referral process;
- Ensure that if somebody is concerned that a child may be suffering abuse or neglect, they will refer such concerns to the designated members of staff, who will then consider what action needs to be taken;
- Safeguard the welfare of children whilst in school, through positive measures to address bullying, (see anti-bullying policy) and report when this is aggravated by sexual or racial factors, or disability or special educational needs;
- Ensure all that all staff are aware of the child protection procedures established by the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership (BWSCP) and act on any guidance or advice given by them; see www.proceduresonline.com/berks/
- Ensure through our recruitment and selection of employees and volunteers that all people who work in our school are suitable to work with children;
- Take the appropriate action where an allegation is made against a member of staff

Designated Member of Staff

The designated member of staff for child protection in this school is:

Diana Choudhry - SENCO

The child protection team also includes

Rebecca Brown - Head Teacher, Dave Marks - Deputy Head, Faiza Millward and Kelly Bunker – Assistant Heads, Rose Ryan-George - Family Worker and Frances Lancaster – Year 5 Lead

- The DSL and deputies liaise regularly (including day to day as issues arise and also formal meetings every week). The Head Teacher is routinely informed of issues, especially ongoing enquiries under S47 of the Children’s Act 1989 and police investigations.
- The designated member of staff and the child protection team, is central to ensuring that effective procedures and policies are in place and are followed with regard to child safeguarding issues. They also act as a support for staff, volunteers, governors and parents (where this is appropriate).
- The Safeguarding team take ‘lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children’s attendance, engagement and achievement at school’ (KCSiE 2025).

The school ensures that:

- At least one designated member of staff is a senior leader within the school;
- All members of staff are made aware of the designated person and the safeguarding team and how they can be contacted;
- The safeguarding team acts as a source of advice and coordinate action within the school with child protection cases;
- The safeguarding team liaises with other agencies and builds good working relationships with colleagues from these agencies, in the interests of the child;
- The safeguarding team liaise with the senior mental health lead and, where available, the Mental Health Support Team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health;
- The Safeguarding Team are aware of the requirement for children to have an appropriate adult available (Statutory Guidance – PACE CODEC 2019);
- The safeguarding team has skills and experience in recognising and dealing with safeguarding concerns;
- Appropriate training and support is given to staff, governors and volunteers;
- The safeguarding team are the first people staff report concerns to. It is then the responsibility of the safeguarding team to discuss the situation with the relevant agencies;
- The safeguarding team are responsible for referring cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies according to the procedures established by Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership;
- If an allegation is made against members of staff, this will be dealt with by the Head Teacher and, in his absence, the Deputy Head Teacher. Where appropriate, allegations will then be passed on to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (LADO@brighterfuturesforchildren.org) Tel: 0118 937 2684. If the allegation is against the Head Teacher, it will be passed onto the Chair of Governors who may then refer it to the LADO, if appropriate.

To be effective, the designated member of staff and the safeguarding team will:

- Receive appropriate training carried out every two years in order to act as a source of advice, support and expertise within the school and be responsible for coordinating action regarding

referrals by liaising with Social Care and other relevant agencies regarding cases of abuse and allegations of abuse.

- Ensure that all staff have regular updates and training in line with the advice from the BWSCP
- Ensure each member of staff and volunteers at the school, and regular visitors (such as trainee teachers, supply teachers and students) are aware of, and can access readily, this policy;
- Ensure there is always cover for the role;
- Ensure that this policy and procedures are updated and reviewed regularly, in line with changes to legislation and work with the designated governor for child protection regarding this;
- Keep accurate, secure records of referrals/concerns and actions: ie., CPOMS;
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among staff, and in any measures the school may put in place for them;
- Understand the difficulties that children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication;
- Ensure parents are aware of the child protection policy and its responsibilities for making referrals. The policy is on the school website and paper copies are available via the school office;
- Where children leave the school, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible, to allow the new school to continue supporting children who have had a social worker and been victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives, also ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt will be obtained. This will be transferred separately from the main pupil file;
- In addition to the child protection file, the designated safeguarding lead will also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school to continue supporting children who have had a social worker and been victims of abuse, or those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme and have that support in place for when the child arrives;
- Alert the DfE if a child leaves and the new school is not known, so that these children can be included on the database for lost pupils.

The designated members of staff also have an important role in ensuring all staff and volunteers receive appropriate training. They will:

- Follow the recommendations of the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership; referring to <http://proceduresonline.com/berks>
- attend training in how to identify abuse and know when it is appropriate to refer a case;
- have a working knowledge of how Reading Area Child Protection Committee operates and the conduct of a child protection case conference and be able to attend and contribute to these when required;
- attend any relevant or refresher training courses and then ensure that any new or key messages are passed to other staff, volunteers and governors;
- make themselves known to all staff, volunteers and governors (including new starters and supply teachers) and ensure those members of staff have had training in child protection. This should be relevant to their needs to enable them to identify and report any concerns to the designated teacher immediately.

Designated Governor:

The designated governor for child protection at this school is:

Sophie Appleby

All members of the Governing body have had section 128 checks. They all receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenges to test and assure themselves that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training is regularly updated.

Governing bodies have a strategic leadership responsibility for school safeguarding arrangements and must ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation. They must have regard to the KCSiE (2025) guidance, ensuring policies, procedures and training are effective and comply with the law at all times.

The governing body ensures they facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding. This means ensuring safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. Ultimately ensuring that all systems, processes and policies operate with the best interests of the child at heart.

The Governing Body will ensure that sufficient resources are made available to enable the necessary tasks to be carried out properly under inter-agency procedures.

The Governing Body will ensure that the designated member of staff for child protection is given sufficient time to carry out his or her duties, including accessing training.

The Governing body will review child protection practices in the school on a regular basis, to ensure that:

- the school is carrying out its duties to safeguard the welfare of children at the school;
- members of staff and volunteers are aware of current practices in this matter, and that staff receive training where appropriate;
- child protection is integrated with induction procedures for all new members of staff and volunteers;
- the school follows the procedures agreed by the ACPC, and any supplementary guidance issued by the BWSCP;
- only persons suitable to work with children shall be employed in the school, or work in a voluntary capacity.

Recruitment

In order to protect children, we ensure that staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised.

The school ensures that:

- One member of the recruitment panel has undertaken safer recruitment training;
- The single central record is maintained in line with government guidelines;
- References are followed up before appointment and specific reference is made to the candidates' suitability to work with vulnerable children;
- The flow chart in Appendix A is followed to ensure that adults with access to children have the required enhanced disclosure check from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before starting work, and prior to confirmation of appointment.

In addition, we will ensure that the following checks are satisfactorily completed before a person takes up a position in the school:

- identity checks to establish that applicants are who they claim to be;¹
- proof of necessary qualifications, to ensure that qualifications are genuine;
- professional and character references prior to offering employment;
- conditions satisfied as to health and physical capacity;
- previous employment history will be examined and any gaps accounted for;
- verify the person's right to work in the UK, including EU nationals;

¹ e.g., through birth certificate, passport, driving licence, etc...

- if the person has lived or worked outside the UK, make any further checks that we consider appropriate;
- ensure that an applicant to be employed to carry out teaching work is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State.

Short listed candidates

In addition, as part of the short-listing process, we will consider carrying out an online search as part of our due diligence on the short-listed candidates. This is to help identify any incidents or issues that have happened and are publicly available online, which we might want to explore with the applicant at the interview. We will inform the candidate that we will be carrying out online searches as part of due diligence.

Volunteers

The school is alert to the possibility that people otherwise unsuitable for working with children may use volunteering to gain access to them. For this reason, volunteers in the school will go through the above checks. To further safeguard the pupils within the school's care, a risk assessment will be carried out prior to the volunteer commencing their placement. This will consider their exact duties, their experience/abilities and the possible risk factors involved.

Where a parent or other volunteer helps on a one-off basis, he/she will only work under the direct supervision of a member of staff, and at no time have one to one contact with children.

Before and after school activities/contracted services/other visiting professionals

The school has many after school opportunities for children and children may come into contact with other professions such as social workers, educational psychologists or speech and language therapists. School ensures that those responsible for these activities are vetted as follows:

- IDs are checked
- appropriate DBS checks are carried out
- visitors are part of the school's Single Central Register
- they are made aware of the school's safeguarding procedures and checks are made to ensure they comply with this
- an assessment of their education value and the age appropriateness of what is going to be delivered.

The school maintains its responsibility for safeguarding children placed with an Alternative Provision (AP) provider. This includes ensuring the AP provider supplies written confirmation that full safer recruitment checks have been carried out on all staff and that arrangements "that might put a child at risk" are reported to the school immediately. The school must know the address where the pupil is being educated and review the placement at least half-termly to ensure the child is attending, their needs are met, and the setting is safe.

Where services or activities are provided by another body, the Head Teacher seeks assurance that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed) and ensures that there are arrangements in place to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate.

In line with KCSiE (2025), we have set out our safeguarding arrangements in any lease or hire agreement as a condition of use and occupation of the premises and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.

Induction and Training

New members of staff will receive induction training, which will give an overview of the school, its vision and values and its procedures for identifying and reporting abuse, and ensuring confidentiality.

New staff at the school will receive level 1 safeguarding training and a copy of this policy and be required to read the document 'Keeping Children Safe' (Appendix C).

'The training that staff receive, including online safety training, is integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole school safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning' (KCSiE 2025). Staff will be expected to attend training on safeguarding children that will enable them to fulfil their responsibilities in respect of child protection effectively and this will be regularly updated, ensuring that updated information is shared and applied.

All staff are made aware of the local Early Help process and understand their role in it. All staff are made aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments. The school will provide this training through the Safeguarding Team.

The CPD programme is reviewed to ensure that all the knowledge staff need is included and that they understand how it is implemented.

Dealing with Concerns

Members of staff and volunteers are not required to investigate suspicions. If somebody believes that a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering significant harm, they refer such concerns to the designated person or a member of the safeguarding team, who will make the onward referral (see appendices G and H).

Social Care and the Thames Valley Police are empowered to carry out investigations and decide whether children have been abused or are at significant risk of abuse.

Staff (and volunteers) follow the procedures below:

1. Upon the receipt of any information from a child, or if any person has suspicions that a child may be at risk of harm, or
2. if anyone observes injuries that appear to be non-accidental, or
3. where a child or young person makes a direct allegation or discloses that they have been abused, or
4. makes an allegation against a member of staff

They discuss their concerns immediately with the designated person or member of the safeguarding team, who will then take the appropriate actions. Following a discussion, the staff member will record their concern on the CPOMs safeguarding system accurately stating what they have seen, heard or know.

Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child. All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

As well as ensuring that child protection concerns are addressed, the school also ensures that children are kept safe from harm while they are at school.

The school aims to have at least two emergency home contacts for each pupil in case of injury, accident or emergency medical issues.

To this end, this policy must be seen in the context of the school's policies on Personal, Social and Health Education and Sex and Relationships Education. Child protection issues will be addressed through the curriculum as appropriate. Specifically, these will be:

- bullying - the school works with the children to identify bullying behaviour and gives strategies to address these issues (see anti-bullying policy);

- e-safety (including awareness of misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories as online content risks, and reference to DfE Generative AI guidance) (see internet safety pupil agreement and my digital rights Appendix E);
- discriminatory incidents;
- confidentiality (see GFJS Confidentiality Policy)
- positive behaviour management (see behaviour policy and strategies for inclusion document);
- health & safety (see health and safety policy);
- physical intervention (see positive handling policy);
- allegations against members of staff (see appendix D which outlines the procedures set by BWSCP) .

In addition to the above, staff in school have regular training to support them in identifying children or families

- who may benefit from early help, and in particular alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:
 - is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs;
 - has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan);
 - has a mental health need;
 - is a young carer;
 - is showing signs of being drawn into antisocial or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines;
 - is absent from education frequently missing/goes missing from, home or care;
 - is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation;
 - is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
 - has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from school and in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit;
 - has a parent or carer in custody, 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.

Through the school's PSHE programme and through the good relationships developed between pupils and their teachers, difficult issues like these are raised in class, when appropriate. At the heart of the school's strategy for safeguarding is the development of the child's self-worth, their respect for others and their ability to develop their own set of values, in the context of the values held by the school.

Supporting children who need a social worker

All members of staff (including volunteers and governors) will be proactive in matters relating to children's welfare and safety. Where any member of staff fails to act in accordance with this policy, this may be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

School has an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and the Governing board ensures that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse, neglect, exploitation and complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health. The safeguarding team takes responsibility to promote the educational outcomes of all children who are considered a safeguarding risk.

Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership shares the fact that a child has a social worker. As a matter of routine, the safeguarding team uses this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. There are clear powers to share this information under existing duties on both the BWSCP and school to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Where children need a social worker, this informs decisions about safeguarding. School works with children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services).

School has a pivotal role to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The Governing body ensures that the school contributes to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance.

Children Looked after, previously looked after, children with a social worker and children in kinship care.

The designated teacher is:

Diana Choudhry, SENCO and DSL

Children looked after and previously children looked after are potentially vulnerable and all staff should have the knowledge and understanding to keep current and previously children looked after safe. The designated teacher has responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders; or who were adopted from state care outside of England and Wales. The designated teacher will work with the Virtual School Head to promote the educational achievement of children looked after. The designated teacher will ensure that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status and the child's contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.

Information will be kept on:

- The child's legal status
- Contact arrangements with those with parental responsibility
- Child's care arrangements and levels of authority delegated by the authority
- Details of the child's social worker
- The name of the Virtual Head in the authority who looks after the child is clare.houlton@reading.gov.uk

In addition to their statutory duties, the role of the Virtual School Head was extended in June 2021, to include a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment and progress of children with a social worker. The role of the Virtual School Head was further extended in September 2024 to include a non-statutory responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children in kinship care.

Private fostering

When school staff become aware that a child younger than 16 (or 18 if disabled) is being privately fostered, they will notify the designated teacher who will then inform BWSCP to check if the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child. Notifications will contain the information specified in Schedule 1 of The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 and will be made in writing.

SEND children

The SENCO is:

Equality legislation

As per the Equality Act 2010 school:

- will not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their protected characteristics;
- will consider how they are supporting pupils with protected characteristics;
- will take positive action, where proportionate, to deal with the disadvantages these pupils face;
- understands that pupils with protected characteristics may be more at risk of harm and have integrated this into safeguarding policies and procedures.

At our setting we recognise that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. For example, 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 disability or special educational needs without further exploration;
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children;
- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Safeguarding SEND children's welfare is everybody's responsibility and awareness among staff about safeguarding this particular group of young people and what constitutes best practice is essential. The same procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns are applied to disabled and non-disabled pupils, but recognising that additional resources and support may be required for the young person and their family. Where necessary, the school will put into place extra pastoral support and attention, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place for children with SEN and disabilities.

When the school is considering excluding, either for a fixed term or permanently, a vulnerable pupil or one who is the subject of a Child Protection Plan or where there is an existing Child Protection file, we will call a multi-agency risk-assessment meeting prior to making the decision to exclude. In the event of a one-off serious incident resulting in an immediate decision to exclude, the risk assessment should be completed prior to convening a meeting of the Governing Body.

Alternative provision

Where school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the provider meets the needs of the pupil. School should obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment and of any arrangements that might put a child at risk, such as new staff starting with the AP provider. The school will review the alternative provision placement at least half-termly to ensure the child is attending, their needs are met, and the setting is safe.

Elective Home Education

The DfE recognises that 'many home educated children have an overwhelmingly positive learning experience.' In line with paragraph 178 of KCSiE (2025), which states that 'where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home,' we will work with other key professionals, such as the Local Authority, to follow the guidance in Elective Home Education DfE Guidance for LAs April 2019. This would include coordinating a meeting with parents/carers where possible to ensure that decisions have been made which are in the best interests of the child. School will inform the LA of all deletions from our admission register when a child is taken off roll.

Mental Health

All staff are 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 can make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. However, staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviours suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Where children have suffered abuse, neglect, exploitation or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Staff are made aware, through training, of how these children's experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

Our Family Worker and our trained ELSA's are able to provide some in-school support but parents/carers should also consult with their GP if they are concerned about their child's mental health and wellbeing. We also promote mental health awareness in school by, for example:

- promoting positive self-esteem;
- encouraging pupils to eat healthily;
- promoting school policies that support mental health such as bullying prevention;
- An open-door policy - we are available to listen to pupil's concerns and issues.

Mental health disorders in students is a complex issue that requires a coordinated effort and multilevel approach from parents, schools, health care organisations and digital media outlets. Early detection and intervention are crucial factors in the goal towards reaching at-risk students before conditions manifest into more serious issues.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action will be taken following the Child Protection Policy and speaking to a member of the safeguarding team. The safeguarding team liaise with the senior mental health lead and, where available, the Mental Health Support Team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health.

Prevent

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of the schools' wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse (appendix J).

The Prevent Duty Guidance in England and Wales 2023 definitions:

Radicalisation is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.

Extremism as: "Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs". This also includes a reference to supporting or engaging in any of the following activities: creating or distributing content that is illegal under the Terrorism Act 2006, expressing support for a proscribed organisation, or glorifying or justifying acts of terrorism.

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many different ways and settings. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people.

All schools 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.

This school will approach the Prevent duty on three levels:

1. Be able to identify members of the school community who are vulnerable to and are at risk of being 'radicalised' and show signs of this.
2. Know how to respond when children or young people show indications that they are vulnerable to risk.
3. Ensure that the components of British Values are addressed implicitly and explicitly throughout the curriculum and other aspects of provision.

The Prevent Duty has four general themes:

1. Risk Assessment - this relates to the context of the school's geographical area. This school draws from a diverse catchment area. Within the context of England, Reading is considered a tier 3 priority area. The school will request relevant information from the Prevent lead in BWSCP to understand the risks faced by pupils in this area. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to a terrorist ideology but staff should be alert to changes in a pupil's behaviour.
2. Working in Partnership - policies will take into account the policies and procedures of the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership
3. Training - all staff complete Prevent training <https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/> and this is an induction requirement
4. IT Policies

Channel

As a school we assess the risk of children being radicalised and will make appropriate and timely referrals to Channel for multi-agency assessment should we suspect that a child is being subject to radicalisation themselves or in relation to parents or older siblings. Our aim in referral is to provide support at an early stage to those identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and forms of extremism. All staff undertake appropriate and regular Prevent training as part of the on-going range of safeguarding training. The designated safeguarding lead will consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school to continue supporting victims of abuse or those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme, and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

So-called 'honour-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (previously known as 'honour-based violence' encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBV or who has suffered from HBV, they will speak to the DSL. As appropriate, the DSL will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care.

Female Genital Mutilation (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 with long-lasting harmful consequences. If it is suspected that a child has been subject to or may be subject to FGM, it is the responsibility under law for the individual to contact the police directly themselves to report this for a girl under 18 years old. (Section 5B Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003). Referral to the police must be made following a disclosure or evidence of FGM or in line with BWSCP indicators in the FGM Referral Pathways Pack provided by our Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Staff receive training as part of their annual safeguarding training as the number of reported cases is higher in South Reading than other areas of Reading.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other

form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices as a way to coerce a person into marriage. Staff will immediately inform the designated safeguarding lead if they have been made aware of this occurring.

Extra Familial Harm (previously called Contextual safeguarding)

All staff are aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside of the school environment. All staff, but especially the safeguarding team should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE)

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse 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 clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence, and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence, or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Child criminal exploitation: county lines

“County lines” is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.”

Children are increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network. County line activity and the associated violence, drug dealing and exploitation has a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and local communities.

A number of the indicators for CSE and CCE as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are children who:

- go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from their home;
- have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime);
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs;
- are exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection;
- are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a ‘trap house or cuckooing’ or hotel room where there is drug activity;
- owe a ‘debt bond’ to their exploiters;
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

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

If staff, Governors, visitors suspect or have evidence that a child/children are at risk of CCE, they will immediately report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a member of the safeguarding team who will then contact Social Care and the police as necessary.

Serious violent crime

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

All staff are aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

Child on child abuse (previously known as Peer on Peer Abuse)

We recognise that abuse of pupils does not exclusively happen with an adult perpetrator and that children themselves can be abusers of other children. As a school we recognise that abusive behaviour can happen to pupils in schools and outside of schools and online. We take this as seriously as adult to child abuse.

All staff understand that even if there are no reports in school, it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child on child abuse they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead.

All staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, many of which are listed below, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. We recognise 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. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. We will explain to children that the law is in place to protect rather than criminalise them.

Child on child abuse can take many forms including:

- **physical abuse** – hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- **bullying**– imbalance of power, targeted and repeated (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying against another pupil’s gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation/preference)
- **abuse in intimate personal relationships** between peers
- **sexual violence**, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence). The school will adhere to the guidance in KCSIE 2025 regarding Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB). Young person, under the age of 18, who demonstrates behaviour outside of their normative parameters of development (this includes, but is not exclusive to abusive behaviours) (Hackett 2011, NICE 2014)
- **sexual harassment** such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- **causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent**, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- **consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos** (previously known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- **upskirting** which is now a criminal offence – this is typically when a photograph is taken under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the attention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification or to cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- **coercion** – through threat or through gifts
- **initiation/hazing type violence and rituals** (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)
- **emotional abuse**

Prevention

At our school we will minimise the risk of allegations against other pupils by:

- Providing PHSE as part of the curriculum, which will help students develop their understanding of acceptable behaviours, healthy relationships and keeping themselves safe.
- Having effective systems within our school for students to be able to raise concerns with staff, knowing they will be listened to, supported and valued, and that the issues they raise will be looked into and addressed. We encourage all pupils to identify a ‘trusted adult’.
- Liaising and working with other professionals to develop robust risk assessments for pupils that are identified as posing a potential risk to other students
- Liaising with specialists to deliver appropriate targeted work to pupils identified as being at potential risk

School response to allegations:

School will follow and be mindful of the guidelines set out in the Keeping Children Safe in Education document. For example, if an allegation of child to child abuse is made to a member of staff, they must inform the designated safeguarding lead immediately and then add the information to CPOMs. Staff should not investigate the allegations themselves.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, governing bodies and school leaders will ensure the child's wishes and feelings are considered when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems in place are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing that they can safely express their views and give feedback (para 88 of KCSiE September 2025).

When investigating an allegation of child on child abuse, the designated safeguarding lead should follow the schools safeguarding procedures including making a safeguarding referral to social care immediately if they believe that a child/children is at risk of significant harm. If a crime has been committed, social care will also report this to the police. Where the child is not at risk of significant harm, the designated lead should consider whether a referral to social care for early intervention for the victim and/or the perpetrators would be beneficial. Parents of all parties must be informed of any allegation of peer to peer abuse whether a referral has been made to social care or not.

Further guidance on practice:

- if possible, we will manage reports with two members of staff present, (with one of them being the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy);
- where the report includes an online element, the key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to confiscate any devices to preserve any evidence and hand them to the police for inspection;
- not promising confidentiality at this initial stage as it is very likely a concern will have to be shared further (for example, with the designated safeguarding lead or children's social care) to discuss next steps. Staff should only share the report with those people who are necessary in order to progress it. It is important that the victim understands what the next steps will be and who the report will be passed to;
- recognising that a child is likely to disclose to someone they trust: this could be anyone in the school. It is important that the person to whom the child discloses recognises that the child has placed them in a position of trust. They should be supportive and respectful of the child;
- recognising that an initial disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported, rather than representative of a singular incident and that trauma can impact memory and so children may not be able to recall all details or timeline of abuse;
- keeping in mind that certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation;
- listening carefully to the child, reflecting back, using the child's language, being non-judgmental, being clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed, not asking leading questions and only prompting the child where necessary with open questions – where, when, what, etc. It is important to note that whilst leading questions should be avoided, staff can ask children if they have been harmed and what the nature of that harm was;
- considering the best way to make a record of the report. Best practice is to wait until the child has finished talking. This allows the staff member to devote their full attention to the child and to listen to what they are saying. It may be appropriate to make notes during the report (especially if a second member of staff is present). However, if making notes, staff should be conscious of the need to remain engaged with the child and not appear distracted by the note taking;
- inform the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), as soon as practically possible, if the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not involved in the initial report;
- It is then essential that a written record is made. Only record the facts as the child presents them. The notes should not reflect the personal opinion of the note taker. School is aware that notes of such reports could become part of a statutory assessment by children's social care and/or part of a criminal investigation.

Risk assessment

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the designated safeguarding lead should make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment should consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support;
- whether there may have been other victims,
- the alleged perpetrator(s); and
- all the other children, (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harm.

Risk assessments should be recorded electronically and should be kept under review. At all times, the school should be actively considering the risks posed to all their pupils and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe.

Domestic abuse/violence

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members. The definition captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. Both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be “personally connected” (as defined in section 2 of the 2021 Act).

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

Definition of “domestic abuse:

Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and the behaviour is abusive.

Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following:

physical or sexual abuse;

violent or threatening behaviour;

controlling or coercive behaviour;

economic abuse;

psychological, emotional or other abuse;

and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

“Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or obtain goods or services.

For the purposes of this Act A’s behaviour may be behaviour “towards” B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B’s child).

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. Experiencing domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Reading is an area that has been recognised as having a high prevalence of domestic abuse/violence. If any adults in school are aware that this is taking place, they will take the necessary steps identified above to inform the designated lead or a member of the designated team.

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass operates in all police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the key adult (usually the Head Teacher) in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This ensures that the school has up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable immediate support to be put in place, according to the child's needs. Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures. Where appropriate, the police and/or school will make a referral to children's social care if they are concerned about a child's welfare.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. Its website provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which a safe time from the team for a call can be booked.

Children absent from education/Missing education

A child being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can be a potential indicator to a range of safeguarding issues and it is the school's responsibility to prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. Parents of children not in school without reason are contacted that day. Failure to establish contact is followed up by the Family Worker who may then liaise with the Attendance Support Worker (ASW) or Children's Services. A formal missing child report is made to the police, requesting a welfare check, after 3 days of absence if no contact is made.

If a pupil is subject to a Child Protection Plan, Child in Need Plan or has a Local Authority Family Worker, the school reports any absence to Children's Services on the first day of absence.

The school will also report to the ASW and Missing Education Officer any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period;
- Have been permanently excluded.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. As a school, the safeguarding team are aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so that we can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. If a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral to Children's Social Care will still be made.

Child Abduction and Community Safety Incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers. Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation.

If we know that a child may be at risk from abduction, a photo of the person that may want to perpetuate this crime is distributed to adults in school. We can also complete individual risk assessment and put in place the child leaving school through a different exit and at a different time at the end of the day.

As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. It is important that children's confidence and abilities are built upon rather than simply warning them about all strangers. Further information is available at: www.actionagainstabduction.org and www.clevernevergoes.org.

Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including: sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

If we suspect that this is relevant for any of our families, we will immediately report our suspicions to the police. Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in the Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance. Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

Cybercrime

Children with particular skill and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime. As a school, we work to meet the cyber security standards for schools and colleges.

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer).

Cyber-dependent crimes include;

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded;
- denial of Service (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources; and,
- Making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

If there are concerns about a child in this area, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), should consider referring into the Cyber Choices programme. This is a nationwide police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing. It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

To further support children to make positive choices online, the school's online safety curriculum incorporates positive online behaviour and that actions online can break the law.

Photographing Children

We understand that parents like to take photos or video of their children in the school play, at sports day or school presentations. We encourage parents to celebrate their child's success. However, we ask that parents/carers only take photographs of their own children where possible as there may be circumstances in which the taking of another child's photograph or videoing them could result in that child being put at a safeguarding risk. No photos or videos taken on school property are to be shared or posted on any social media platforms.

Parents are asked for their permission to photograph or film their children during a school activity and to use these images on the school website, social media, publicity or press releases and photographs are only used when this permission is given.

Confidentiality and data protection (see also the Confidentiality policy)

The school and all members of staff at the school, will ensure that all data about pupils is handled in accordance with the requirements of the law, and national and local guidance. All child protection records will be kept separately from the child's main file; access is restricted to those who have a role to play in safeguarding the child. Child protection information held electronically will be password protected.

Any member of staff who has access to sensitive information about a child or the child's family must take all reasonable steps to ensure that such information is only disclosed to those people who need to know.

Regardless of the duty of confidentiality, if any member of staff has reason to believe that a child may be suffering harm, or be at risk of harm, their duty is to forward this information without delay to the designated member of staff for child protection.

Conduct of Staff

The school has a duty to ensure that professional behaviour applies to relationships between staff and children, and that all members of staff are clear about what constitutes appropriate behaviour and professional boundaries.

At all times, members of staff are required to work in a professional way with children. All staff should be aware of the dangers inherent in:

- working alone with a child
- physical interventions
- cultural and gender stereotyping
- dealing with sensitive information
- giving to and receiving gifts from children and parents
- disclosing personal details inappropriately
- meeting pupils outside school hours or school duties
- on-line relationships.

All members of staff must understand that in the event of an allegation that they have assaulted a child, or placed a child at risk of harm, the allegation will be multi-agency, involving the Police and Social Services.

There are two aspects to consider when an allegation is made:

1. Looking after the welfare of the child - the Head Teacher and designated safeguarding lead are responsible for ensuring that the child is not at risk and referring cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care.
2. Investigating and supporting the person subject to the allegation - this will be discussed with the LADO, the nature, content and context of the allegation, and agree on a course of action.

Parents or carers of the child or children involved will be:

- formally told about the allegation as soon as possible. Consultations will take place with the LADO and where involved Children’s Social Care and/or the police on what information can be disclosed;
- kept informed about the progress of the case, only in relation to their child -no information can be shared regarding the staff member; and
- made aware of the requirement to maintain confidentiality and unwanted publicity about any allegations made against teachers in schools whilst investigations are in progress as set out in section 141F of the Education Act 2002 (see KCSiE 2025, paragraphs 380-388).

Allegations against members of staff (see also appendix D and I)

If staff have safeguarding concerns, or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors) posing a risk of harm to children, then:

- the allegation will be dealt with in accordance with national guidance and agreements, as implemented locally (including any volunteer or governor);
- concerns should be referred to the Head Teacher;
- where there are concerns/allegations about the Head Teacher, this should be referred to the chair of governors;
- procedures are 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. This is a legal duty and failure to refer when the criteria are met is a criminal offence.

The Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors) will gather information about the allegation, and report this without delay to the LADO (LADO@brighterfuturesforchildren.org) Tel: 0118 937 2684.

‘Low-level’ concerns

As paragraph 420 of KCSiE 2025 explains, ‘The term ‘low-level’ concern does not mean it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold of harm. A low-level concern is any concern - no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Paragraph 421 of KSCiE 2025, gives examples of such ‘low-level’ concerns which ‘could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or;
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

By being aware of low-level concerns, we are able to:

- ensure that staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others;
- empower staff to share any low-level safeguarding concerns with the designated safeguarding team;
- address unprofessional behaviour and support the individual to correct it at an early stage;
- provide a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised;
- help identify any weakness in the school safeguarding system.

Allegations against non-employed individuals

If an allegation is against an individual not directly employed by school, where its disciplinary procedures do not fully apply, for example, supply teachers provided by an employment agency or business or contractors:

Whilst school is not the employer of supply teachers, we will ensure allegations are dealt with properly. We will notify their employers so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified. In no circumstances would the school decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the local authority designated officer (LADO) to determine a suitable outcome. The Governing Body should discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, whilst they carry out their investigation.

Agencies should be fully involved and co-operate in any enquiries from the LADO, police and/or children's social services. The school will usually take the lead because agencies do not have direct access to children or other school staff, so they will not be able to collect the facts when an allegation is made, nor do they have all the relevant information required by the LADO as part of the referral process. Supply teachers, whilst not employed by the school, are under the supervision, direction and control of the governing body when working in the school. They should be advised to contact their trade union representative if they have one, or a colleague for support. The allegations management meeting which is often arranged by the LADO should address issues such as information sharing, to ensure that any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account by the school during the investigation.

When using an agency, school will inform the agency of its process for managing allegations. This should include inviting the agency's human resource manager or equivalent to meetings and keeping them up to date with information about its policies.

The Governing Body ensures that there are procedures in place to manage safeguarding concerns, or allegations against staff (including supply staff and volunteers) that might indicate they would pose a risk of harm to children.

Physical Contact and Restraint (see also positive handling policy and appendix K)

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools to use reasonable force to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom. Members of staff may have to make physical interventions with children in order to safeguard the children. Members of staff should physically intervene where:

- it is necessary to protect a child, or another person, from immediate danger (e.g., stopping a child from running into a road or preventing a child from attacking another pupil or staff member).
- where the member of staff has had appropriate training

Any incidents are recorded on a record of restraint and parents are informed.

We recognise the additional vulnerability of children with SEND and, where appropriate, reasonable adjustments are put into place and individual behaviour plans are drawn up to reduce the occurrence of the types of challenging behaviour that might lead to the need to use reasonable restraint. Staff will not use reasonable force in situations that do not pose an immediate risk of injury or danger, such as punishing a child or refusing to follow an instruction.

Opportunities to teach safeguarding

Governing bodies ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, and recognise that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate for all children, and a more personalised or contextualised approach for more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some SEND children might be needed. This is considered to be part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. This may include covering relevant issues through Relationships Education and Health Education which are taught through the PSHE and SRE curriculums.

Online Safety

As schools increasingly integrate technology into the classroom, it is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. The school's approach to online safety is three-fold: access, monitoring and education. This approach is integrated as a whole-school responsibility to manage online risks, including those posed by the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Access

The school's filtering system restricts access to inappropriate content being accessed through the school network. All devices within the school are managed centrally allowing a consistently secure approach across all devices.

Monitoring

All access to the school's network is monitored. This allows the safeguarding leads to have a clear and accurate picture of any potential breaches or attempted breaches of the school's filtering system. This detailed level of reporting allows breaches to be addressed with the pupil/staff member.

Staff are aware of the expectations and their responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring and receive training at induction, during the academic year and it is included in the annual safeguarding refresher.

Education

Online safety teaching is taught in the first term to every year group with objectives updated yearly to suit the ever-changing needs of our pupils. The online safety curriculum is informed by Project Evolve, NCCE, Childnet & CEOP although adapted to best match our local school context. Where there is a need, additional lessons on specific topics are added to the curriculum. This may be in response to an incident or informed by monitoring.

Online safety is a 'running and interrelated theme' and it is considered 'whilst planning the curriculum, any teacher training, the role and responsibilities of designated safeguarding leads and any parental engagement' (KCSIE 2025, paragraph 127). This includes equipping pupils with the knowledge to use AI tools safely, to understand the potential harms of AI-generated content (e.g., deepfakes, bias), and to promote critical thinking about online information. See our Remote Learning Policy for further information.

Staff are aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life. Children can also abuse their peers online; this can take the form of abusive, harassing and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content.

Parents play an integral role in their child's online safety and the school regularly communicates with parents and carers information to support them with creating a safe online environment at home. This often covers current trends, parental restrictions and how to start conversations surrounding online behaviour. The school website also signposts parents to excellent resources to support them.

All school staff are given regular training by the school's CEOP ambassador to keep their knowledge of online safety issues up to date and to help inform their own practice. The school also has a robust

acceptable use of IT and the internet policy for all staff members governing their conduct when using the school's technology or internet. This forms part of every member of staff's induction.

Monitoring and evaluation

Implementation and day to day working of this policy will be monitored by the Designated Person and Child Protection team who will liaise with the Safeguarding Governor and bring to their attention any concerns that the policy is not being adhered to. The Head teacher will report to the Governing Body termly (12 weeks)

- Incidents of bullying
- Racist incidents
- Complaints by parents about the above
- Number of allegations against members of staff
- Any concerns reported to the BWSCP designated Officer

This policy will be available to all staff, governors and volunteers in hard copy and will be available on the website for parents. Information relating to the named Designated Person will be displayed in the entrance to the school and in the staff room.

USEFUL LINKS AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>

Berkshire child protection procedures: www.proceduresonline.com/berks/

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/what-if-suspect-abuse/>

Children's Single Point of Access (CSPA) : 0118 937 3641 (office hours) 01344 786 543 (out of office hours)

Using a web form to contact CSPA: <http://www.reading.gov.uk/childrensreferralform>

Emailing CSPA: cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 0118 937 3555

Policy Appendices

A Flow Chart for DBS

B Child care disqualification declaration form

C Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated Sept 2025)

D RBC Allegation against staff management

E IT and Internet Acceptable Usage Policy (staff)

F Internet Safety Policy

G Definitions and indicators of abuse

H Dealing with a disclosure of abuse

I Allegations about a member of staff, governor or volunteer

J Indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation

K The use of reasonable force

Updated October 2025

Updated by Diana Choudhry (DSL)

Next review date September 2026 or updated sooner if necessary