ACET
Striving for **Excellence**
Empowering Achievement
Shaping **Learning**

Aughton Primary Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

(including allegations against staff, low-level concerns and visitors to academies)

DATE: October 2026
POLICY LEAD: Trust DSL & Academy DSL
APPROVED BY: Trustees & LGB

Aughton
PRIMARY ACADEMY

Excellence Equity Empowerment

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Policy Level	Trust Template
Approved By	Trustees & LGB
Approval Date	

This policy remains valid until it is reviewed and replaced; it does not expire by date alone. Policies are reviewed annually, or sooner if required by statutory or legislative changes, in line with best practice

Policy Lead / Author	Trust DSL & Academy DSL

Version Number	***Date Issued***	***Updated Information***
V1	01.09.2026	Policy re-written to ensure trust wide standardisation where appropriate and that this policy is fully in line with KCSIE 2026. This updated version is based on The Key model policy, ACET standard items have been pre-populated and then the remaining sections have been fully contextualised by each academy. Visitors to academies has been included as an appendix and has been updated in line with statutory requirements.
V1.2	23.09.2026	Updated based on the final released version of KCSIE 2026
V1.3	02.11.2026	Updated Section 6 to reflect: Statutory information sharing duties for schools, as outlined in section 16LA of the Childrens Act 2004 and the DfE statutory guidance on information sharing to safeguard children and young people

Contents

Contents 3
Important Contacts 4
1. Aims 5
2. Legislation and statutory guidance 5
3. Definitions 6
4. Equality statement 7
5. Roles and responsibilities 7
6. Confidentiality and Information Sharing 11
7. Recognising abuse and taking action 13
8. Online safety and the use of mobile technology 23
9. Notifying parents or carers 25
10. Pupils/Students with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues 25
11. Pupils/Students with medical conditions 26
12. Young carers 26
13. Pupils/Students with a social worker 26
14. Looked-after and previously looked-after children 27
15. Pupils/Students who are lesbian, gay or bisexual 27
16. Pupils/Students who are questioning their gender 27
17. Complaints and concerns about academy safeguarding policies 29
18. Record-keeping 29
19. Training 30
20. Monitoring arrangements 31
21. Links with other policies 31
Appendix 1: Types of abuse 33
Appendix 2: Allegations against staff (including low-level concerns) policy 35
Appendix 3: Specific safeguarding issues 43
Appendix 4: Visitors to Academies Policy 54

This policy sets out the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures for Aston Community Education Trust (ACET)

Sections 5, 6, 7, 10 and appendix 3 set out the specific arrangements for Aughton Primary Academy.

Important Contacts

Role	Name	Contact details
Principal	Toni Tomlinson	apa-safeguarding@aughtonacademy.org 0114 2873091
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Toni Tomlinson	apa-safeguarding@aughtonacademy.org 0114 2873091
Deputy DSL	Michelle Hartley Sara Jinks	apa-safeguarding@aughtonacademy.org 0114 2873091
Academy Prevent Lead	Toni Tomlinson	apa-safeguarding@aughtonacademy.org 0114 2873091
Designated Teacher for LAC	Toni Tomlinson	apa-safeguarding@aughtonacademy.org 0114 2873091
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	01709 336491 01709 336080 (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub MASH)
Lead Practitioner for the Local Authority	Lindsay Wooton-Ashforth	01709 336080 (MASH) rscp@rotherham.gov.uk
SLT Member responsible for Filtering & Monitoring checks	Toni Tomlinson Sara Jinks	apa-safeguarding@aughtonacademy.org 0114 2873091
Chair of governors	James Beighton	govjb@astoncetrust.org governance@astoncetrust.org
Link Safeguarding Governor	Louise Smith	govls@astoncetrust.org governance@astoncetrust.org
Trust Safeguarding Lead	Natalie Borrington	Natalie.borrington@astoncetrust.org
Safeguarding Trustee	Sarah Sprack	governance@astoncetrust.org
Channel helpline		020 7340 7264

1. Aims

The trust aims to ensure that:

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare
- All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding
- Staff are properly trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026), and the Academy trusts: governance guide. We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners.

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils/students at the school
- Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18
- Statutory guidance on FGM, which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and The Crime and Policing Act 2026), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- The Human Rights Act 1998, which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- The Equality Act 2010, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation). This means our governors and headteacher should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils/students with regard to these characteristics. The Act allows our trust and its academies to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils/students with certain protected characteristics (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils/students. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there's evidence that they're being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils/students may be more at risk of harm from issues such as: sexual violence; homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or racial discrimination
- Operation Encompass statutory guidance, which explains that the police must notify any relevant education establishment of any incidents involving domestic abuse

As ACET has academies with pupils under 8:

- The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (referred to in this policy as the '2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations') and Childcare Act 2006, which set out who is disqualified from working with children

As ACET has academies who provide early years education:

- This policy also meets requirements relating to safeguarding and welfare in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

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

Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

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

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

Making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes is where children share nude or semi-nude images, such as photographs, videos or live streams. This also includes images that are digitally altered or wholly AI-generated (sometimes called 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes') that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video. The sharing of nude or semi-nude images requires a safeguarding response whether they are consensual or non-consensual.

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

The following 3 **safeguarding partners** are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

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

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

Alleged perpetrator(s) and **perpetrator(s)** are widely used and recognised terms. However, we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children) as, in some cases, abusive

behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what's appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

4. Equality statement

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

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or health conditions (see section 10)
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language (EAL)
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after (see section 14)
- Are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or frequently
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from the academy to be home educated

5. Roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and trustees, and those serving on committees or local committees and governance professionals across our trust and is consistent with the procedures of the 3 safeguarding partners. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities.

The trust and its academies play a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of a whole-school approach to preparing pupils/students for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, racism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, sexual violence/harassment, derogatory behaviour or other forms of physical violence and conflict. This will be underpinned by our:

- Behaviour policy
- Pastoral support system
- Planned programme of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), which is inclusive and delivered regularly, tackling issues such as:
    - Healthy and respectful relationships
    - Boundaries and consent
    - Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
    - Body confidence and self-esteem
    - How to recognise an abusive relationship (including coercive and controlling behaviour)
    - The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and FGM and how to access support
    - What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why they're always unacceptable

5.1 All staff

All staff will:

- Read and understand at least part 1 of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), in full and review this guidance at least annually
- Sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to say that they have read and reviewed the guidance
- Reinforce the importance of online safety when communicating with parents and carers. This includes making parents and carers aware of what we ask children to do online (e.g. sites they need to visit or who they'll be interacting with online)
- Provide a safe space for pupils/students who are LGBTQ+ to speak out and share their concerns

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems that support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff code of conduct, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and DDSLs, the behaviour policy, the online safety policy that includes the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education/who are absent from education.
- Be aware of the trust's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures
- The early help assessment process and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment
- The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play
- The process for community-based Family Help assessments
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals
- The signs of different types of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery, including domestic and sexual abuse (including controlling and coercive behaviour, as well as parental conflict that is frequent, intense, and unresolved), as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child-on-child abuse, grooming, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM, radicalisation and serious violence (including that linked to county lines)
- The safeguarding issues that often overlap and can put children at risk of harm, including:
    - Drug taking and/or alcohol misuse
    - Unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education
    - Serious violence, criminal exploitation (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation
    - Consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes
- New and emerging threats, including online harm, grooming, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, radicalisation, and the role of technology and social media in presenting harm
- The importance of reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- The fact that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home, at school and online
- The fact that mental health can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. This could include self-harm, suicidal ideation or risk of suicide. They could also be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation
- That children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay or bisexual can be vulnerable to discriminatory bullying
- The potential vulnerabilities of children who are questioning their gender

- That children may experience prejudice-based harm including racism, faith-based prejudice and other forms of discrimination. These experiences may affect a child's welfare, wellbeing, mental health and ability to seek help
- That a child and their family may be experiencing multiple needs at the same time
- What to look for to identify children who need help or protection

Appendix 3 of this policy outlines in more detail how staff are supported to do this.

5.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is a member of the senior leadership team. The DSL at Aughton Primary Academy is Toni Tomlinson, Principal. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding in the academy. This includes online safety and understanding our filtering and monitoring processes on academy devices and academy networks to keep pupils/students safe online.

During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

When the DSL is absent, the deputies – Sara Jinks (Assistant Vice Principal) and Michelle Hartley (Inclusion Manager) – will act as cover.

If the DSL and deputies are not available or absent, we have cover arrangements in place. This includes:

- A shared mailbox so other members of the senior leadership team can act on safeguarding concerns – apa-safeguarding@aughton.academy.org
- Additional members of the senior leadership team, with relevant safeguarding training, to act on safeguarding concerns as required
- A member of the Trust Executive Leadership team to support and act on safeguarding concerns as required

The DSL will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so
- Contribute to the assessment of children
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority children's social care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly
- Have a good understanding of harmful sexual behaviour
- Have a good understanding of the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place at our academy
- The DSL will also:
- Keep the headteacher informed of any issues
- Liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate
- Discuss the local response to sexual violence and sexual harassment with police and local authority children's social care colleagues to prepare the academy's policies
- Be confident that they know what local specialist support is available to support all children involved (including victims and alleged perpetrators) in sexual violence and sexual harassment, and be confident as to how to access this support
- Be aware that children must have an 'appropriate adult' to support and help them in the case of a police investigation or search
- Ensure that child protection files are kept up to date
- Where children leave the academy, ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school

The full responsibilities of the DSL and DDSL are set out in their job description.

5.3 The Board of Trustees

The board will:

- Facilitate a trust-wide approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of, and underpin, all relevant aspects of process and policy development
- Ensure that all staff who work directly with children read at least Part 1 of Keeping Safe in Education (KCSIE) and those staff who do not work directly with children read Part 1 of KCSIE
- Evaluate and approve this policy at each review, ensuring it complies with the law, and hold the principals to account for its implementation
- Be aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and each academy's local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
- Appoint a senior board level (or equivalent) lead to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full governing board. This is always a different person from the DSL
- Ensure all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, and that such training is regularly updated and is in line with advice from the safeguarding partners
- Ensure that each academy has a policy in respect of the use of restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force and which reflects that the adoption of a 'no contact' policy can leave staff unable to fully support and protect pupils/students
- Ensure the trust and its academies have appropriate cyber security systems in place
- Ensure that the trust and its academies have has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place, and review their effectiveness at least once every academic year. This includes:
    - Making sure that the leadership team and staff are aware of the provisions in place, and that they understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of safeguarding training
    - Ensuring that reviews are carried out by the SLT member responsible for filtering and monitoring, with the support of the DSL and IT Team. The review will include checks that filtering is working appropriately on all internet-connected devices in all relevant locations. A record of these checks will be kept
    - Reviewing the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards, and discussing with IT staff and service providers what needs to be done to support the trust/academies in meeting these standards
- Make sure:
    - The DSL has the appropriate status and authority to carry out their job, including additional time, funding, training, resources and support
    - Online safety is a running and interrelated theme within a whole-school approach to safeguarding and related policies
    - The DSL has lead authority for safeguarding, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place
    - The academy has procedures to manage any safeguarding concerns (no matter how small) or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold (low-level concerns) about staff members (including supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors). Appendix 2 of this policy covers this procedure
    - That this policy reflects that children with SEND, or certain medical or physical health conditions, can face additional barriers to any abuse or neglect being recognised
- Where another body is providing services or activities (regardless of whether or not the children who attend these services/activities are children on the school roll):
    - Seek assurance that the other body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies/procedures in place, and inspect them if needed
    - Make sure there are arrangements for the body to liaise with the academy about safeguarding arrangements, where appropriate
    - Make sure that safeguarding requirements are a condition of using the academy premises, and that any agreement to use the premises would be terminated if the other body fails to comply

The Chair of the Board of Trustees may act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against a senior Trust leader, where appropriate (see Appendix 2).

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

Section 15 has information on how trustees and local governors are supported to fulfil their role.

5.4 Local governing bodies

Governors on local governing bodies will review the school-specific elements of the policy after the trust level policy has been reviewed and approved.

They will also hold the principal to account for the implementation of the policy.

We will appoint a member of each local governing body to act as the governor responsible for safeguarding, to liaise with the school DSL on local safeguarding issues and report to the safeguarding trustee.

The Chair of the local governing body may act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the Principal, where appropriate (see Appendix 2).

5.5 The Principal

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

- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers:
    - Are informed of our systems that support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction
    - Understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect
- Communicating this policy to parents/carers when their child joins the academy and via the academy website
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate (see appendix 3)
  Making decisions regarding all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL on this

In ACET academies with early years and primary aged pupils we:

- Ensure the relevant staffing ratios are met
- Make sure each child in the Early Years Foundation Stage is assigned a key person
- Oversee the safe use of technology, and devices like mobile phones and cameras in the setting

5.6 Virtual School Heads

Virtual school heads (VSHs) have a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment and progress of pupils/students with a social worker.

They also have a non-statutory responsibility to promote the educational achievement of children in kinship care (children who live with a relative or close family friend).

VSHs should also identify and engage with key professionals, e.g. DSLs, special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs), social workers, mental health leads and others.

6. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Across ACET we understand that Information sharing is vital in identifying all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and in promoting children's welfare, including in relation to their educational outcomes. As part of meeting a child's needs ACET recognises the importance of information sharing between practitioners and local agencies. Further information can be found in the ACET Data Protection Policy.

When considering information sharing, our academy adopts the following principles:

- Under section 16LA of the Children Act 2004, our schools have a statutory duty to share information with other relevant organisations if we consider that we hold information that is relevant to safeguarding or promoting a child's welfare, or if we receive a request for relevant information from another organisation/practitioner
- We will share information with other organisations/practitioners if it is considered that sharing may help the recipient's relevant functions, including assessing need, making a decision, providing support or taking action to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child

- Timely information-sharing is essential to effective safeguarding. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of a child, and it should not prevent the school from fulfilling its legal duty
- Arrangements are in place setting out the processes and principles for sharing information within the school and with local authority (LA) children's social care, the safeguarding partners and other organisations, agencies and practitioners as required
- Thresholds for sharing: The duty to share information is not limited to situations where a child is in immediate danger or meets child protection thresholds. Relevant information must also be shared where it is relevant to safeguarding and promoting a child's welfare, including where concerns relate to early help, prevention and unmet need
- In extremely limited circumstances, we will not share information where we consider that doing so would be more detrimental to the child than not sharing. Examples of the extremely limited circumstances include:
    - The child being placed at immediate risk of harm by the information being shared
    - Interfering with a police investigation, such that the consequence is likely to be of greater detriment to a child, including placing another child at increased risk of harm
    - Contravention of the Family Procedure Rules, or order of the Family Court or Family Division of the High Court
- Any decision not to share information to avoid greater detriment to the child will be rare, and will be carefully considered, with the welfare of the child central to the judgement.
- The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018, Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, and the UK GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Data protection must not be treated as a reason to withhold information where the statutory duty applies
- Consent and confidentiality: When sharing information for safeguarding purposes under the section 16LA statutory duty, the common law duty of confidentiality does not apply. The statutory guidance warns against seeking consent to share information if the statutory duty dictates it must be shared, as this presents children and families with a "false choice". Instead, the school will identify the appropriate lawful basis from the outset and will explain what will happen rather than seeking permission where consent is not required or would be inappropriate for safeguarding purposes, unless doing so would place the child at greater risk
- Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests
- If a victim asks the academy not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment:
    - There's no definitive answer, because even if a victim doesn't consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there's another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies
    - The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children
    - The DSL should consider that:
    - Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)
    - The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care
    - Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. While the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the police remains.
- Regarding anonymity, all staff will:
    - Be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system
    - Do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment – for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved
    - Consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities

- We will only use information received by the trust under the information sharing duty for the specified purposes
- If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the DSL (or deputy)
- Where a child leaves the academy the DSL should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. The DSL should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving

Confidentiality is also addressed in this policy with respect to record-keeping in section 18, and allegations of abuse against staff in appendix 2.

7. Recognising Abuse and Taking Action

All staff are expected to be able to identify and recognise all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery and shall be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Has a disability 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 (EHC) plan)
- Has a mental health need
- Is a young carer
- Is pregnant and/or is a parent themselves
- Has exhibited early signs of abusive, violent and/or harmful behaviours
- Is bereaved
- Is showing early signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, care or home
- Has been repeatedly removed from the classroom, experienced multiple suspensions, is on a part-time timetable, is at risk of permanent exclusion and in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit
- Is at risk of exploitation, modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- Is at risk of being radicalised into terrorism
- Has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- Is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate online content (for example, linked to violence), or developing inappropriate relationships online
- 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
- Has returned home to their family from care
- Is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage
- Is a privately fostered child

Staff, volunteers, trustees and local governors must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue.

Please note – in this and subsequent sections, you should take any references to the DSL to mean 'the DSL (or deputy DSL)'.

7.1 If a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or in immediate danger

Make a referral to local authority children's social care and/or the police **immediately** if you believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger. **Anyone can make a referral.**

Tell the DSL (see section 5.2) as soon as possible if you make a referral directly.

At Aughton Primary Academy, under the statutory arrangements set by the three safeguarding partners (the Local Authority, South Yorkshire Police, and the NHS Integrated Care Board), all non-emergency safeguarding concerns are submitted via dedicated multi-agency referral pathways.

For all pupils, staff contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 01709 336080 or use the official online multi-agency referral forms provided via Rotherham Safeguarding. Staff may also complete the online form 'Report child abuse to a local authority' via https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council

Before making a referral, staff Inform the pupil's family unless doing so places the child at immediate risk of significant harm or compromises a police criminal investigation.

If a pupil is in urgent or immediate danger, staff call 999 immediately.

7.2 If a child makes a disclosure to you

If a child discloses a safeguarding issue to you, you should:

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset
- Tell the child they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not tell them they should have told you sooner
- Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not promise to keep it a secret
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible in the child's own words. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it
- Sign and date the write-up and pass it on to the DSL. Alternatively, if appropriate, make a referral to local authority children's social care and/or the police directly (see 7.1), and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so. Aside from these people, do not disclose the information to anyone else unless told to do so by a relevant authority involved in the safeguarding process

Bear in mind that some children may:

- Not feel ready, or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected
- Not recognise their experiences as harmful
- Feel embarrassed, humiliated or threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation and/or language barriers

None of this should stop you from having a 'professional curiosity' and speaking to the DSL if you have concerns about a child.

Specifically referring to those ACET academies that have Early Years provision, we will ensure that staff have sufficient understanding and use of English to ensure the well-being of children in their care. For example, to keep records in English, liaise with other agencies in English, be able to summon emergency help, and understand instructions, for example about the safety of medicines or food hygiene.

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

Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs".

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as 'female genital cutting' 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

Possible indicators that a pupil has already been subjected to FGM, and factors that suggest a pupil may be at risk, are set out in Appendix 3 of this policy.

Any teacher who either:

- Is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or

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

Must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a mandatory statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it.

Unless they have been specifically told not to, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve local authority children's social care as appropriate.

Any other member of staff who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **pupil under 18** must speak to the DSL and follow local safeguarding procedures.

The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a pupil is at risk of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine pupils/students.

Any member of staff who suspects a pupil/student is at risk of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out should speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

Local Procedures

If a child may be at risk in Rotherham; The member of staff should contact Rotherham's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 01709 336080 or South Yorkshire Police Public Protection Unit on 0114 220 2020. In an emergency they should call 999.

7.4 If you have concerns about a child (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger)

Figure 1 below, before section 7.7, illustrates the procedure to follow if you have any concerns about a child's welfare.

Where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local authority children's social care. You can also seek advice at any time from the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000. Share details of any actions you take with the DSL as soon as practically possible.

Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' below). Share any action taken with the DSL as soon as possible.

Early Help Assessment

If an early help assessment is appropriate, the DSL will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner.

We will discuss and agree, with statutory safeguarding partners, levels for the different types of assessment, as part of local arrangements.

The DSL will keep the case under constant review and the academy will consider a referral to local authority children's social care if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.

An Early Help Assessment (EHA) in Rotherham identifies family needs early and creates a support plan for children aged 0 to 19. Practitioners must check for existing open assessments by calling the Triage Team on 01709 330495, gain family consent, complete the form, and email it to ehassess@rotherham.gov.uk

This assessment should always be completed with the child(ren) and family and focus on the relationships within families, as well as being clear about what needs to change to help and support families to achieve positive outcomes.

Referral

If it is appropriate to refer the case to local authority children's social care or the police, the DSL will make the referral or support you to do so.

If you make a referral directly (see section 7.1), you must tell the DSL as soon as possible.

The local authority should make a decision within 1 working day of a referral about what course of action to take and will let the person who made the referral know the outcome. The DSL or person who made the referral must follow up with the local authority if this information is not made available, and ensure outcomes are properly recorded.

If the child's situation does not seem to be improving after the referral, the DSL or person who made the referral must follow local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the child's situation improves.

If the DSL is experiencing a disagreement with a MASH outcome they must follow the local Practice Resolution Protocol. They can also contact the Local Authority Education Safeguarding Officer.

7.5 If you have concerns about extremism

If a child is not suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger, where possible speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or seek advice from local authority children's social care. Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' above). Inform the DSL or deputy as soon as practically possible after the referral.

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include the police or Channel, the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of becoming involved with or supporting terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team.

The DfE also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which academy staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a pupil. You can also email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk. Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.

In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger
- Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
- See or hear something that may be terrorist-related

7.6 If you have a concern about mental health

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.

Mental health problems can also, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns (for example, self-harm).

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. However, staff will be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. If a child is struggling with their mental health, self-harming, has an eating disorder or is experiencing suicidal ideation and making plans to end their life, there are likely to be potential warning signs which education staff are well placed to recognise, including:

- Significant changes in behaviour,
- Ongoing difficulty sleeping
- Withdrawing from social situations
- Not wanting to do things they usually like
- Physical signs of self-harm or neglecting themselves

If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action by following the steps in section 7.4. If you feel that a child is in danger, call 999 or arrange for the child to be taken to A&E immediately by their parent or other suitable person.

If the child needs help urgently for their mental health, but it's not an emergency, staff can get help from NHS 111 online or call 111 and select the mental health option.

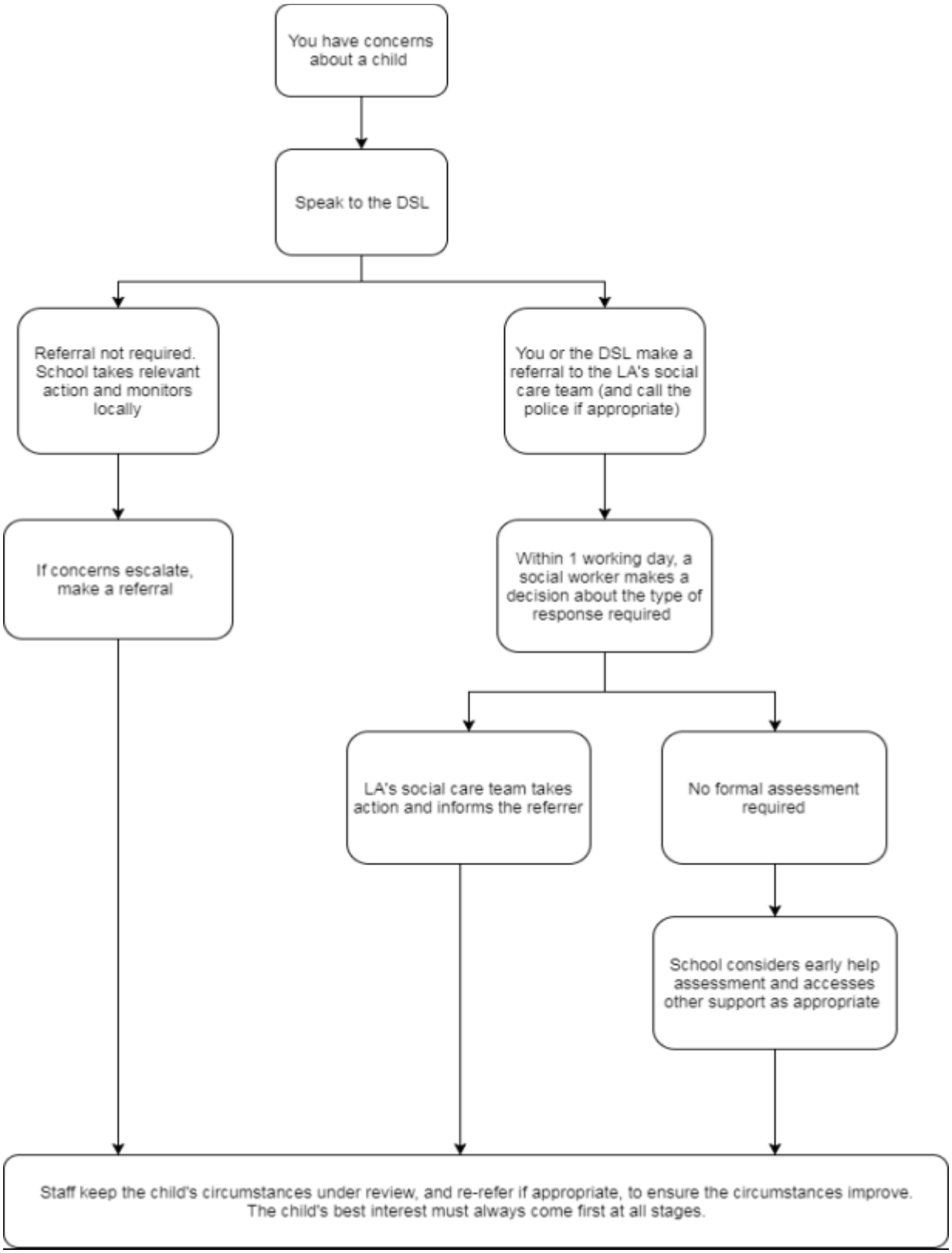
If you have a mental health concern that is **not** also a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL to agree a course of action.

Aughton Primary Academy follow the Department for Education (DfE) non-statutory advice titled Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools to help staff identify and support pupils whose mental health issues manifests as disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, or depressed behaviour. Staff receive training on recognizing signs, a whole school approach, early intervention and support from external agencies.

Aughton Primary Academy also works with 'With Me in Mind' an NHS Mental Health Support Team service for children and young people aged 5 to 19 to provide early intervention for mild to moderate mental health needs.

Figure 1: procedure if you have concerns about a child's welfare (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger)

(Note – if the DSL is unavailable, this should not delay action. See section 7.4 for what to do.)



7.7 Concerns about a staff member, supply teacher, trainee teacher, volunteer or contractor

If you have concerns about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, trainee teacher, volunteer or contractor), or an allegation is made about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, trainee teacher, volunteer or contractor) posing a risk of harm to children, speak to the principal as soon as

possible. If the concerns/allegations are about the principal, speak to the Chair of the local governing body.

The principal /chair of local governing body will then follow the procedures set out in Appendix 2, if appropriate.

Where you believe there is a conflict of interest in reporting a concern or allegation about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, trainee teacher, volunteer or contractor) to the principal, report it directly to the local authority designated officer (LADO).

If you receive an allegation relating to an incident where an individual or organisation was using the academy premises for running an activity for children, follow the academy safeguarding policies and procedures, informing the LADO, as you would with any safeguarding allegation.

For academies that provide early years provision and are subject to the relevant Ofsted early years registration requirements, the school will notify Ofsted of any allegation or other notifiable incident where required, and within the relevant timescale. See Appendix 2 for further details.

7.8 Allegations of abuse made against other pupils/students

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up", or "boys being boys", as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, misogyny/misandry and an unsafe environment for pupils/students.

For some (but not all) forms of child-on-child abuse it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys' perpetrators. However, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Most cases of pupils/students hurting other pupils/students will be dealt with under our behaviour policy, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put pupils/students in the academy at risk
- Is violent
- Involves pupils/students being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including where generated by AI), which may include or be driven by misogyny/misandry

See Appendix 3 for more information about child-on-child abuse.

Procedures for dealing with allegations of child-on-child abuse

If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil:

- You must record the allegation and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it
- The DSL will contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed. This will include considering school transport as a potentially vulnerable place for a victim or alleged perpetrator(s)
- The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate

If the incident is a criminal offence and there are delays in the criminal process, the DSL will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required) while protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator. We will ask the police if we have any questions about the investigation.

Creating a supportive environment in the academy and minimising the risk of child-on-child abuse

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents.

To achieve this, we will:

- Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting, making or sending sexual images
- Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils/students, and initiation or hazing-type violence with respect to boys
- Ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils/students about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensure pupils/students are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems (as described in section 7.10 below)
- Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
- Be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with safeguarding partners
- Recognise the intersection of misogyny/misandry and harmful sexual behaviour. We will actively identify, challenge and address how misogynistic/misandrist attitudes contribute to the normalisation of inappropriate behaviour and increases the risk of leading to child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence, within our academy environment
- Be alert to the prevalence of harmful online material and extreme misogynistic/misandrist ideologies, including misogynistic influencers, and recognise the impact this content could have on shaping pupils/students' attitudes
- Support children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. We will do all we can to make sure the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed
- Consider intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment
- Ensure staff are trained to understand:
    - How to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports
    - That even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in the academy, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of "it could happen here"
    - That if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
        - Children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to
        - A friend may make a report
        - A member of staff may overhear a conversation
        - A child's behaviour might indicate that something is wrong
    - That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation
    - That a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
    - The important role they have to play in preventing child-on-child abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it
    - That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns
    - That social media is likely to play a role in the fall-out from any incident or alleged incident, including for potential contact between the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and friends from either side
    - That exposure to misogynistic/misandrist content online can indicate a safeguarding concern and requires early discussion with the DSL

The DSL will take the lead role in any disciplining of the alleged perpetrator(s). We will provide support at the same time as taking any disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action can be taken while other investigations are going on, such as by the police. The fact that another body is investigating or has investigated an incident doesn't (in itself) prevent the academy

from coming to its own conclusion about what happened and imposing a penalty accordingly. We will consider these matters on a case-by-case basis, taking into account whether:

- Taking action would prejudice an investigation and/or subsequent prosecution – we will liaise with the police and/or local authority children's social care to determine this
- There are circumstances that make it unreasonable or irrational for us to reach our own view about what happened while an independent investigation is ongoing

7.9 Making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes

This is a suggested approach based on guidance from the UK Council for Internet Safety and Department of Science, Innovation and Technology for all staff and for DSLs and senior leaders.

Your responsibilities when responding to an incident

All incidents involving the sharing of nude or semi-nude images, regardless of whether they are consensual or non-consensual, require a safeguarding response. If you are made aware of an incident involving the consensual or non-consensual making or sharing of nude or semi-nudes, including where generated by AI, you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must **not**:

- View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a pupil to share or download it (if you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL)
- Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it
- Ask the pupil(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility)
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the pupil(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved

You should explain that you need to report the incident and reassure the pupil(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

Initial review meeting

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate academy staff – this may include the staff member who reported the incident and the safeguarding or leadership team that deals with safeguarding concerns. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to pupil(s)
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children's social care
- If it is necessary to view the image(s) in order to safeguard the young person (in most cases, images or videos should not be viewed)
- What further information is required to decide on the best response
- Whether the image(s) has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown)
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images or videos from devices or online services
- Any relevant facts about the pupils/students involved which would influence risk assessment
- If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the pupils/students involved (in most cases parents/carers should be involved)

The DSL will make an immediate referral to police and/or children's social care if:

- The incident involves an adult. Where an adult poses as a child to groom or exploit a child or young person, the incident may first present as a child-on-child incident. See appendix 3 for more information on assessing adult-involved incidents
- There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to their SEN)

- What the DSL knows about the images or videos suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
- The imagery involves sexual acts and any pupil in the images or videos is under 13
- The DSL has reason to believe a pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming)

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with the headteacher and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care. The decision will be made and recorded in line with the procedures set out in this policy.

Further review by the DSL

If at the initial review stage a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL will conduct a further review to establish the facts and assess the risks.

They will hold interviews with the pupils/students involved (if appropriate).

If at any point in the process there is a concern that a pupil has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

Informing parents/carers

The DSL will inform parents/carers at an early stage and keep them involved in the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the pupil at risk of harm.

Referring to the police

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through dialing 101.

Recording incidents

All incidents of making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including where generated by AI, and the decisions made in responding to them, will be recorded. The record-keeping arrangements set out in section 14 of this policy also apply to recording these incidents.

Curriculum coverage

Pupils/Students are taught about the issues surrounding the making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes as part of our RSHE and computing programmes of study. Teaching covers the following in relation to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes:

- What it is
- How it is most likely to be encountered
- The consequences of requesting, forwarding or providing such images, including when it is and is not abusive and when it may be deemed as online sexual harassment. This also includes making such images, including where generated by AI
- Issues of legality
- The risk of damage to people's feelings and reputation

Pupils/Students also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:

- Specific requests or pressure to make, provide (or forward) such images
- The receipt of such images

This policy on the making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes is also shared with pupils/students so they are aware of the processes the academy will follow in the event of an incident.

Teaching follows best practice in delivering safe and effective education, including:

- Putting safeguarding first
- Approaching from the perspective of the child
- Promoting dialogue and understanding
- Empowering and enabling children and young people
- Never frightening or scare-mongering

- Challenging victim-blaming attitudes

7.10 Reporting systems for our pupils/students

Where there is a safeguarding concern, we will take the child's wishes and feelings into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

We recognise the importance of ensuring pupils/students feel safe and comfortable to come forward and report any concerns and/or allegations.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Put systems in place for pupils to confidently report abuse**. This includes having members of staff available for pupils to talk to at any time in the day, staff trained by the NHS With Me in Mind team, the use of 'Zones of Regulation' discrete check ins, and ChildLine posters displayed throughout the academy.
- **Ensure our reporting systems are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for pupils.** This is done through displays in classroom and around the academy, weekly reminder in Monday class briefings, assemblies delivered by staff and outside agencies, With Me in Mind drop-in sessions, taking part in the NSPCC "Speak Out Stay Safe" Program and our RSHE curriculum.
- **Make it clear to pupils/students that their concerns will be taken seriously, and that they can safely express their views and give feedback.** We will deliver regular training for staff on positive body language, undivided attention, reassurance without promise and validating feelings. We will explain the next steps to pupils and ensure regular check-ins continue.

8. Online safety and the use of mobile technology

KCSIE outlines that your policies on online safety and the use of mobile and smart technology should be reflected in your child protection and safeguarding policy. Among other things, this should include filtering and monitoring on academy devices and the academy network, and your approach to ensuring your trust is a mobile phone-free environment by default.

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

To address this, our trust and academies aim to:

- Have robust processes (including filtering and monitoring systems) in place to ensure the online safety of pupils/students, staff, volunteers and governors
- Protect and educate the whole school community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (which we refer to as 'mobile phones')
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole school community, including the expectation that our academy is a mobile phone-free environment by default
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate

In relation to the ACET academies who have Early Years provision, the following applies

Using screens and digital devices in your day-to-day role

Digital devices support the successful running and management of early years settings in today's digital world, including engaging with parents and professional services.

For example, digital devices might be used in conducting assessments of children. Pre-reception assessments should not involve asking a child to do activities on a screen in order to determine their level of development but should be based on observation and your professional judgement.

Ensure use of digital devices in assessment and communicating with parents is proportionate, conducted in short stints and does not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive administrative burden, to maintain focus on time to engage with and teach children.

For safeguarding purposes, you should keep the number of images or videos taken of children to a minimum, including for assessment purposes, and only share images or videos of children with their parents through technically secure methods.

Screens for business use must comply with the EYFS statutory framework, data protection and security requirements.

Personal devices

In accordance with the EYFS framework, personal devices should be used in compliance with the early years setting's safeguarding policy.

The 4 key categories of risk

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

- Content – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, extreme sexual or physical violence, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories
- Contact – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes
- Conduct – online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images including those generated using AI and online bullying; and
- Commerce – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams

To meet our aims and address the risks above, we will:

- Educate pupils/students about online safety as part of our curriculum. For example:
  - The safe use of social media, the internet and technology
  - Keeping personal information private
  - How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
  - How to report any incidents of cyberbullying, ensuring pupils/students are encouraged to do so, including where they're a witness rather than a victim
- Train staff, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying, the risks of online radicalisation, and the expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring. All staff members will receive refresher training as required and at least once each academic year
- Educate parents/carers about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and during parents' evenings. We will also share clear procedures with them so they know how to raise concerns about online safety
- Make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their mobile phone and cameras, for example that:
  - Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to the academy for their own use, but will limit such use to non-contact time when pupils/students are not present
  - Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils/students on their personal phones or cameras
- Make all pupils/students, parents/carers, staff, volunteers and governors aware that they are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the internet in the academy, use of the trust/academy's ICT systems and use of their mobile and smart technology.
- Explain the sanctions we will use if a pupil is in breach of our policies on the acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones
- Make sure all staff, pupils/students and parents/carers are aware that staff have the power to search pupils/students' phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation
- Put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems to limit children's exposure to the 4 key categories of risk (described above) from the academy's IT systems.

- Carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks faced by our school community
- Carry out an annual review of our filtering and monitoring effectiveness. This will be conducted by the member of SLT responsible for filtering and monitoring with the support of our DSL and IT support
- Provide regular safeguarding and children protection updates including online safety to all staff, at least annually, in order to continue to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard effectively
- Review the child protection and safeguarding policy, including online safety, annually and ensure the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly

This section summarises our approach to online safety and mobile phone use. For full details about our school's policies in these areas, please refer to our online safety policy and mobile phone policies which can be found on our website.

8.1 Artificial intelligence (AI)

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

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

ACET and its academies will treat any use of AI to access harmful content or bully pupils/students in line with this policy and our anti-bullying/behaviour/ artificial intelligence policies.

Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools while they are still being developed and should carry out risk assessments for any new AI tool being used by the trust/academy. Our trust/academy's requirements for filtering and monitoring also apply to the use of AI, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

9. Notifying parents or carers

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with the child's parents or carers. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure.

Other staff will only talk to parents or carers about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL.

If we believe that notifying the parents or carers would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the local authority children's social care team before doing so.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents or carers of all the children involved. We will think carefully about what information we provide about the other child involved, and when. We will work with the police and/or local authority children's social care to make sure our approach to information sharing is consistent.

The DSL will, along with any relevant agencies (this will be decided on a case-by-case basis):

- Meet with the victim's parents or carers, with the victim, to discuss what's being put in place to safeguard them and understand their wishes in terms of what support they may need and how the report will be progressed.
- Meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss support for them, and what's being put in place that will impact them, e.g. moving them out of classes with the victim, and the reason(s) behind any decision(s).

10. Pupils/Students with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues

We recognise that pupils/students with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. Children with disabilities are more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, exploitation and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration
- Pupils/Students being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other pupils/students
- The potential for pupils/students with SEN, disabilities or certain health conditions being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges risks that they do not understand that what is happening to them is abuse
- The need for intimate care or that these children are isolated from others
- That these children are more likely to be dependent on adults for care
- Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in the academy or being unable to understand the consequences of doing so

We offer extra pastoral support for these pupils/students. This includes:

- Key adult system: Assigning a familiar, trusted staff member for daily contact.
- Safe disclosure tools: Using the 3 houses worry boxes, visual feelings logs, and non-verbal signal cards.
- Early identification: Tracking subtle shifts in behaviour rather than assuming changes stem solely from a pupil's existing SEND profile.
- Adapted safety education: Teaching online safety and personal boundaries in clear, accessible formats including through the Autism Education Trust programme.
- Visual systems: Using visual timetables, symbol boards, and object references to reduce anxiety and aid comprehension.
- Alternative formats: Providing information using simplified text, symbol software, or multimedia options.
- Therapeutic input: Partnering with speech and language therapists to build functional communication plans.
- Non-verbal expression: Supporting children to use gestures, sign language, or tech communication aids during check-ins

Any abuse involving pupils/students with SEND will require close liaison with the DSL (or deputy) and the SENCO. The school will consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children and ensure any appropriate support for communication is in place.

11. Pupils/Students with medical conditions

An incident relating to the management of a child's medical condition (including allergies) does not itself warrant a referral to local safeguarding partners.

A safeguarding referral will be made where an incident highlights concern that the child might be at an increased risk of being neglected, abused or exploited by persons inside or outside of their family because of their medical condition. For example, information about the child's medical condition might be withheld from the academy, or the child may be repeatedly sent to school without essential medication, putting them at risk.

12. Young carers

The trust recognises that caring responsibilities can impact on a child's attendance, attainment, behaviour and wellbeing, and early identification is essential to ensure young carers receive support at the right time and by the appropriate services including additional support from external partners, or local authority and health service.

13. Pupils/Students with a social worker

Pupils/Students may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. We recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

The DSL and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

Where we are aware that a pupil has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the pupil's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. For example, it will inform decisions about:

- Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks
- The provision of pastoral and/or academic support

14. Looked-after and previously looked-after children

We will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked-after children and previously looked-after children safe. In particular, we will ensure that:

- Appropriate staff have relevant information about children's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements
- The DSL has details of local authority children's social workers and relevant virtual school heads

We have appointed a designated teacher who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children and previously looked-after children in line with statutory guidance.

The designated teacher is appropriately trained and has the relevant qualifications and experience to perform the role.

As part of their role, the designated teacher will:

- Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- Work with virtual school heads to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including discussing how pupil premium plus funding can be best used to support looked-after children and meet the needs identified in their personal education plans

15. Pupils/Students who are lesbian, gay or bisexual

The trust recognises that a child being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself a risk factor for harm. However, pupils/students who are (or who are perceived by other children to be) lesbian, gay, or bisexual can sometimes be vulnerable to discriminatory bullying. See our behaviour policy for more detail on how we prevent bullying based on sexuality.

Any concerns should be reported to the DSL.

16. Pupils/Students who are questioning their gender

16.1 Supporting pupils/students who are questioning their gender

We are aware of the potential vulnerabilities of children who are questioning their gender, including the possibility of complex mental health and psychosocial needs, such as relating to relationships with family, peers or their broader social environment.

We will take a strong, proactive stance on all forms of bullying based on gender. See our behaviour policy for more detail. The trust will ensure that children and their families are aware that, while the trust will appropriately sanction any cases of bullying or harassment, and take a strong stand against bullying, it must also be conscious of the rights of pupils/students and staff in relation to their religion or belief.

When supporting a pupil questioning their gender, we will take into account the principle of taking a careful approach.

The DSL will lead in these cases.

16.2 Involving parents/carers in cases of pupils/students questioning their gender

Where a child who is questioning their gender asks for support from the academy, we will engage parents/carers as a matter of priority.

However, in the rare circumstances where involving parents/carers might put a pupil at greater risk than not involving them, the DSL will determine a course of action needed to safeguard the child before contacting parents/carers or any decisions are taken.

Where a child confides in a member of staff about their feelings but does not ask the academy to make changes to how they are treated, the school will only break any confidence if there is a related safeguarding risk.

16.3 Considering requests for support with social transition

The trust/academy will not initiate any action regarding social transition. However, when a pupil or their parent/carer requests that the academy makes changes or puts support in place to facilitate the pupil presenting as the opposite biological sex ("social transition"), we will work together with parents/carers to determine what is in the best interests of the child and other children.

Members of staff will not adopt any changes relating to social transition unless a decision has been made by the trust/academy and a child's parents/carers have been involved (as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education).

In making decisions about supporting social transition, the trust/academy will ensure compliance with its obligations in respect of safeguarding legislation and equality and human rights law, ensuring that any assessment of discrimination is informed by the school's evaluation of the welfare and best interests of the child and other children. The trust/school will make decisions in line with the following principles:

- The trust has statutory duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children: the first step when considering a child's request for support with social transition will be to consider what is in the best interests of the child and other children, and a decision relating to social transition may not be the same as a child's wishes
- Parents and carers should be actively involved and their views treated with importance: (except in the rare circumstances where involving parents or carers would constitute a greater risk to the child than not involving them) where a child who is questioning their gender asks for support from the academy parents/carers will be engaged as a matter of priority and their views will carry great weight and be properly considered
- Accommodating social transition is an active intervention so the academy will take a very careful approach: social transition is an active intervention that may have significant effects on the child in terms of their psychological functioning and longer-term outcomes
- The academy will comply with obligations under the Equality Act and Human Rights Act when considering requests for support with social transition

The trust/academy will ensure that the decision-making process is documented and records are kept.

The circumstances or needs of a child may change over time, and the trust/academy may need to review its original decision and will involve the DSL in doing so.

16.4 Rules on single-sex spaces

Pupils/Students are not allowed into toilets, changing rooms, showers designated for the opposite biological sex, with no exceptions.

16.5 Rules on single-sex sports

The trust/academy may teach and play some sports or games, or activities of a competitive nature, in single-sex groups where the physical strength, stamina or physique of the average girl would put her at a disadvantage in competition with the average boy (or vice versa). The trust/academy can separate children according to their biological sex in these circumstances.

Some sports may need to be played in single-sex groups from a certain age to ensure children's safety. Where single-sex sports are implemented for safety reasons, there are no exceptions and pupils/students must not be allowed to participate in sports designed for the opposite sex.

17. Complaints and concerns about academy safeguarding policies

17.1 Complaints against staff

Complaints against staff that are likely to require a child protection investigation will be handled in accordance with our procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against staff (see appendix 2).

17.2 Other complaints

Concerns, complaints or allegations relating to safeguarding arrangements, safeguarding practice, the behaviour of pupils/students, the conduct of visitors, contractors or third-party providers, or the suitability of academy premises will be taken seriously and investigated promptly.

Concerns should normally be raised in the first instance with the Principal or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Where the concern relates to the Principal, or where the concern relates to trust-wide safeguarding arrangements, it may be raised with the Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead or via the Trust Whistleblowing Procedures.

Complaints will normally be managed in accordance with the ACET Complaints Policy. Any complaint that raises a safeguarding concern will be referred immediately to the DSL and managed in line with this policy and local safeguarding procedures. Where required, the academy or trust will seek advice from Children's Social Care, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the police, Ofsted or any other relevant agency.

Early years providers should take account of requirements related to complaints set out in the safeguarding and welfare section of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (section 3).

17.3 Whistleblowing

All staff, volunteers, governors, trustees, contractors and agency workers have a responsibility to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice, failures in safeguarding arrangements, or conduct that may place a child at risk of harm.

Concerns relating to safeguarding practice may be raised through normal management channels, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Principal, Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead or via the Trust's Whistleblowing Procedures, as appropriate. Where concerns relate to the Principal, senior leaders or the handling of safeguarding concerns themselves, individuals should utilise the Trust's Whistleblowing Procedures or raise concerns directly with the Chief People Officer, Chief Executive Officer, Chair of Trustees or other appropriate senior leader.

The trust is committed to ensuring that any individual who raises a genuine concern in good faith is able to do so without fear of victimisation, detriment or reprisal. Concerns will be treated seriously, handled sensitively and, wherever possible, managed confidentially in accordance with the Trust's Whistleblowing Procedures.

Nothing in this policy prevents an individual from raising concerns directly with external agencies where appropriate, including Children's Social Care, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Ofsted, the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line, the Education and Skills Funding Agency or the police.

18. Record-keeping

We will hold records in line with our records retention schedule.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the rationale for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as local authority children's social care or the Prevent programme, etc. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- A note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome

Concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate child protection file for each child and should only be accessed by those who need to see it.

Safeguarding records relating to individual children will be retained for a reasonable period of time after they have left the academy.

If a child for whom the academy has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that their child protection file is forwarded as soon as possible, securely, and separately from the main pupil file.

To allow the new school/college to have support in place when the child arrives, this should be within:

- 5 days for an in-year transfer, or within
- The first 5 days of the start of a new term

In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child.

At Aughton Primary Academy We use CPOMs (an electronic safeguarding management system) to record and manage all safeguarding and child protection concerns in line with statutory guidance.

To keep records secure, we:

- Use password protection: All CPOMs users must maintain secure passwords that are changed regularly
- Enable audit trails: CPOMs automatically logs who has accessed records and when
- Ensure encryption: All data is encrypted both in transit and at rest
- Control permissions: Access levels are assigned based on staff roles, ensuring staff can only view information relevant to their safeguarding responsibilities
- Regular reviews: We review user access permissions termly to ensure only current, authorised staff have access

We retain child protection records in accordance with statutory guidance:

When a pupil leaves Aughton Primary Academy to attend another school, we transfer their child protection records to that school separately from their main pupil file. If a pupil doesn't move to another school, we retain their records as outlined above.

In addition:

- The ACET Safer Recruitment Policy sets out our policy on record-keeping specifically with respect to recruitment and pre-appointment checks
- Appendix 2 sets out our policy on record-keeping with respect to allegations of abuse made against staff

19. Training

19.1 All staff

All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistleblowing procedures and online safety, to ensure they understand the academy's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse, exploitation or neglect.

This training will be regularly updated and will:

- Be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole-school safeguarding approach and wider staff training, and curriculum planning
- Be in line with advice from the 3 safeguarding partners
- Include online safety, including an understanding of the expectations, roles and responsibilities for staff around filtering and monitoring
- Have regard to the Teachers' Standards to support the expectation that all teachers:
    - Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe environment
    - Have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils/students

All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of becoming involved with or supporting terrorism, and to challenge extremist ideas.

Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including on online safety, as required but at least annually (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings).

Contractors who are provided through a private finance initiative (PFI) or similar contract will also receive safeguarding training.

Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

19.2 The DSL and DDSLs

The DSL and DDSLs will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years.

In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments).

They, or any other designated Prevent lead, will also undertake more in-depth Prevent awareness training, including on extremist and terrorist ideologies.

19.3 Trustees and local governors

All trustees and local governors receive training about safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) at induction, which is regularly updated. This is to make sure that they:

- Have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities, such as providing strategic challenge.
- Can be assured that safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support the academy to deliver a robust whole-school approach to safeguarding.

19.4 Recruitment – interview panels

At least 1 person conducting any interview for any post at the trust will have undertaken safer recruitment training. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

See the ACET Safer Recruitment Policy for more information about our safer recruitment procedures.

19.5 Staff who have contact with pupils/students and families

All staff who have contact with children and families will have supervisions which will provide them with support, coaching and training, promote the interests of children and allow for confidential discussions of sensitive issues.

Where applicable the EYFS lead of the academy will hold an approved qualification at level 3 or above and at least half of all other staff must hold at least an approved level 2 qualification. We will make sure that children are adequately supervised, especially whilst eating, and decide how to use staff to ensure children's needs are met. We will inform parents and/or carers about how staff are organised, and, when relevant and practical, aim to involve them in these decisions. Children will usually be within both sight and hearing of staff and always within sight or hearing.

20. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead in conjunction with DSLs. At every review, it will be approved by the full board of trustees and the locally set sections then reviewed by the local governing body/principals.

21. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour & Anti- Bullying

- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Whistleblowing
- Health and safety & Lettings
- Attendance
- Online safety
- AI
- Mobile phone use
- Equality
- Relationships and sex education
- First aid
- Curriculum
- Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Privacy notices
- RSHE
- SEND
- Data Protection

These appendices are based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

Appendix 1: Types of abuse

Abuse is 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. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others.

This can be particularly relevant in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.

Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. Children may also cause harm to other family members, often referred to as child to parent or care giver abuse.

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

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse 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
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- 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
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children
- Verbal abuse such as criticism, belittling, or name-calling

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

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or penetration with an object) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse

Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

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

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

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)

- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

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

Appendix 2: Allegations against staff (including low-level concerns) policy

Section 1: allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff, including a supply teacher, trainee teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place both inside and outside of school

If we're in any doubt as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold, we will consult our local authority designated officer (LADO).

We will deal with any allegation of abuse quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. In ACET academies, this will ordinarily be:

- the Principal where the allegation concerns a member of academy staff;
- the Chair of the Local Governing Body or a Trust Leader where the allegation concerns the Principal;
- the Chair of Trustees where the allegation concerns the Chief Executive Officer or another senior Trust leader; or
- such other person as may be appointed by the Trust where a conflict of interest exists or circumstances require an alternative arrangement.

The Principal may delegate the case manager role to a suitable senior leader within the academy where appropriate. Any such delegation does not remove the Principal's overall accountability for ensuring that allegations are managed in accordance with statutory guidance, trust policy and local safeguarding procedures. The case manager will be identified at the earliest opportunity

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

If we receive an allegation of an incident happening while an individual or organisation was using Aughton Primary Academy premises to run activities for children, we will follow our safeguarding policies and procedures and inform our LADO.

Suspension of the accused until the case is resolved

Suspension of the accused will not be the default position, and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that there might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- Redeployment within the trust so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned
- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children
- Redeploying the individual to alternative work in the trust so that they do not have unsupervised access to children
- Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents/carers have been consulted
- Temporarily redeploying the individual to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school or other work for the trust

In considering suspension, the case manager will seek advice from their HR link and the designated officer at the local authority, as well as the police and local authority children's social care where they have been involved.

Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- Substantiated: there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation

- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive, or to cause harm to the subject of the allegation
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)
- **Unfounded**: to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made

Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the case manager will take the following steps:

- Conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation before carrying on with the steps below
- Discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the local authority. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or local authority children's social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police *before* consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police)
- Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or local authority children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or local authority children's social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies
- Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the academy is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, HR, police and/or local authority children's social care services, as appropriate
- Where the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the individual's family, they will discuss these concerns with the DSL and make a risk assessment of the situation. If necessary, the DSL may make a referral to local authority children's social care
- **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with HR and the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the academy and their contact details
- **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation
- **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or local authority children's social care services as appropriate
- Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate. Allegations can be distressing for all involved. Individuals who are the subject of an allegation will be offered appropriate welfare support throughout the process. This may include access to the Trust's Employee Assistance Programme, occupational health support where appropriate, trade union representation and a named management contact to provide updates on the progress of the case.

- Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with local authority children's social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents

or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice

- Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case (only in relation to their child – no information will be shared regarding the staff member)
- Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child. The case manager should seek HR support with any DBS referrals.

For early years provision: we will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), and any action taken in respect of the allegations. This notification will be made as soon as reasonably possible and always within 14 days of the allegations being made.

If the trust is made aware that the secretary of state has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the trust will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the academy's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

Additional considerations for supply teachers, trainee teachers, and all contracted staff

If there are concerns or an allegation is made against someone not directly employed by the trust, such as a supply teacher, a trainee teacher, or contracted staff member provided by an agency, the trust shares safeguarding responsibilities with the employment agency or business. We will take the actions below in addition to our standard procedures.

- We will not automatically decide to stop using an individual due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with our LADO to determine a suitable outcome
- The case manager will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the individual while the academy carries out the investigation
- We will involve the agency fully, but the school/trust will take the lead in collecting the necessary information and providing it to the LADO as required
- We will address issues such as information sharing, to ensure any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account (we will do this, for example, as part of the allegations management meeting or by liaising directly with the agency where necessary)

When using an agency, we will inform them of our process for managing allegations, and keep them updated about our policies as necessary. Teacher training providers are expected to follow the same procedures as set out for supply agencies.

Timescales

We will deal with all allegations as quickly and effectively as possible and will endeavour to comply with the following timescales, where reasonably practicable:

- • Any cases where it is immediately apparent that the allegation is unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious should be resolved within 5 working days.
- • Where it is determined that an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, appropriate action should normally be taken within 3 working days of that determination being made.
- Where further investigation is required, the matter will be progressed without unreasonable delay and in accordance with this policy, the ACET Disciplinary Policy and any advice provided by the LADO, police, Children's Social Care or other relevant agencies.

These timescales are objectives only. Where they cannot reasonably be achieved, for example due to the complexity of the case or the involvement of external agencies, the trust will take all reasonable steps to progress the matter and conclude the process as soon as practicable.

Specific actions

Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution

The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or local authority children's social care services.

Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the academy ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the trust will make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the trust will consider whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

Individuals returning to work after suspension

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this, with HR support.

The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the academy.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports

If a report is:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to local authority children's social care may be appropriate
- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the academy will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegations

If an allegation is:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO and case manager will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation needs help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to local authority children's social care may be appropriate
- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the academy will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it

Confidentiality and information sharing

The trust will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. All parties involved in the management, investigation or consideration of an allegation are expected to maintain appropriate confidentiality throughout the process. Unauthorised disclosure of information may be addressed under the Trust's disciplinary procedures or other appropriate policies.

The case manager will take advice from the LADO, HR, police and local authority children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community
- How to manage media interest, social media activity and wider community speculation if, and when, it arises

Record-keeping

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and provide full records to HR for retention on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case.

The records of any allegation that, following an investigation, is found to be malicious or false will be deleted from the individual's personnel file (unless the individual consents for the records to be retained on the file).

For all other allegations (which are not found to be malicious or false), the following information will be kept on the file of the individual concerned:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- Notes of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome
- A declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference

In these cases, the academy will provide a copy to the individual, in agreement with local authority children's social care or the police as appropriate.

We will retain all records at least until the accused individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

In addition to the individual personnel records maintained by HR, Principals will maintain a confidential safeguarding concern register for their academy. This will record allegations and low-level concerns raised about staff (including supply staff, trainee teachers and contractors), together with outcomes and actions taken. The register will be reviewed regularly to identify trends, recurring themes or wider safeguarding issues and to support the academy's safeguarding culture, quality assurance and leadership oversight. Records should be made available where required for inspection, audit or safeguarding review purposes.

References

When providing employer references, we will:

- Not refer to any allegation that has been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any repeated allegations which have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious
- Include substantiated allegations, provided that the information is factual and does not include opinions

Learning lessons

After any cases where the allegations are *substantiated*, the case manager will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the academy/trust's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

For all other cases, the case manager will consider the facts and determine whether any improvements can be made.

Non-recent allegations

Abuse can be reported, no matter how long ago it happened.

We will report any non-recent allegations made by a child to the LADO in line with our local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations.

Where an adult makes an allegation to the academy that they were abused as a child, we will advise the individual to report the allegation to the police.

Section 2: concerns that do not meet the harm threshold

The section is based on 'Section 2: Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

This section applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, including supply teachers, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors, which do not meet the harm threshold set out in section 1 above.

Concerns may arise through, for example:

- Suspicion
- Complaint
- Safeguarding concern or allegation from another member of staff
- Disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside the academy
- Pre-employment vetting checks

We recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns in a timely manner to safeguard the welfare of children.

Definition of low-level concerns

The term 'low-level' concern is any concern – no matter how small – that an adult working in or on behalf of the trust and/or its academies 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 designated officer at the local authority

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being overly 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
- Humiliating pupils/students

Sharing low-level concerns

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to confidentially share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.

We will create this culture by:

- Ensuring 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
- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns as per section 7.7 of this policy
- Empowering staff to self-refer
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- Helping to identify any weakness in the academy or trust's safeguarding system

ACET is committed to a culture of openness, transparency and professional curiosity. Staff are encouraged to raise concerns, no matter how small, at the earliest opportunity. Low-level concerns may be shared with the Principal, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead or via the Trust's Whistleblowing Procedures, as appropriate. Concerns will be handled sensitively, proportionately and in accordance with this policy.

Responding to low-level concerns

If the concern is raised via a third party, the Principal will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

- Directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously
- To the individual involved and any witnesses

The Principal will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action in line with ACET policies and procedures. The Principal will be the ultimate decision-maker in respect of all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL and/or HR.

Where a low-level concern is identified, the Principal will consider the nature of the concern, any contextual information, previous concerns relating to the individual and whether any wider safeguarding issues are indicated. The outcome may include advice, guidance, supervision, additional training, informal management action, formal management action or referral under the allegations procedures where the concern is assessed as meeting the harm threshold.

Record keeping

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. In addition to details of the concern raised, records will include the context in which the concern arose, any action taken and the rationale for decisions and action taken.

Records will be:

- Kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018, Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, and UK GDPR
- Reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, we will decide on a course of action, either through our disciplinary procedures or, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harm threshold as described in section 1 of this appendix, we will refer it to the designated officer at the local authority
- Retained at least until the individual leaves employment at the academy

Where a low-level concern relates to a supply teacher or contractor, we will notify the individual's employer, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Principals should record any low-level concerns raised about staff (including supply staff, trainee teachers and contractors) on the confidential safeguarding concern register for their academy (as outlined in section 1 of this appendix.), together with outcomes and actions taken.

References

We will not include low-level concerns in references unless:

- The concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the designated officer at the local authority and is found to be substantiated; and/or
- The concern (or group of concerns) relates to issues which would ordinarily be included in a reference, such as misconduct or poor performance

If in doubt, advice should be sought from HR.

Appendix 3: Specific safeguarding issues

Assessing adult-involved nude and semi-nude sharing incidents

This section is based on part 1 of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and the UK Council of Internet Safety's advice for education settings.

All adult-involved nude and semi-nude image sharing incidents are child sexual abuse offences and must immediately be referred to police/social care. However, as adult-involved incidents can present as child-on-child nude/semi-nude sharing, it may be difficult to initially assess adult involvement.

There are two types of common adult-involved incidents: sexually motivated incidents and financially motivated incidents.

Sexually motivated incidents

In this type of incident, an adult offender obtains nude and semi-nudes directly from a child or young person using online platforms.

To make initial contact, the offender may present as themselves or use a false identity on the platform, sometimes posing as a child or young person to encourage a response and build trust. The offender often grooms the child or young person on social media, in chatrooms or on gaming platforms, and may then move the conversation to a private messaging app or an end-to-end encrypted (E2EE) environment where a request for a nude or semi-nude is made. To encourage the child or young person to create and share nude or semi-nude, the offender may share pornography or child sexual abuse material (images of other young people), including AI-generated material.

Once a child or young person shares a nude or semi-nude, an offender may blackmail the child or young person into sending more images by threatening to release them online and/or send them to friends and family.

Potential signs of adult-involved grooming and coercion can include the child or young person being:

- Contacted by an online account that they do not know but appears to be another child or young person
- Quickly engaged in sexually explicit communications, which may include the offender sharing unsolicited images
- Moved from a public to a private/E2EE platform
- Coerced/pressured into doing sexual things, including creating nudes and semi-nudes
- Offered something of value such as money or gaming credits
- Threatened or blackmailed into carrying out further sexual activity. This may follow the child or young person initially sharing the image or the offender sharing a digitally manipulated image of the child or young person to extort 'real' images

Financially motivated incidents

Financially motivated sexual extortion (often known as 'sextortion') is an adult-involved incident in which an adult offender (or offenders) threatens to release nudes or semi-nudes of a child or young person unless they pay money or do something else to benefit them.

Unlike other adult-involved incidents, financially motivated sexual extortion is usually carried out by offenders working in sophisticated organised crime groups (OCGs) overseas and are only motivated by profit. Adults are usually targeted by these groups too.

Offenders will often use a false identity, sometimes posing as a child or young person, or hack another young person's account to make initial contact. To financially blackmail the child or young person, they may:

- Groom or coerce the child or young person into sending nudes or semi-nudes and financially blackmail them
- Use images that have been stolen from the child or young person taken through hacking their account
- Use digitally manipulated images, including AI-generated images, of the child or young person

The offender may demand payment or the use of the victim's bank account for the purposes of money laundering.

Potential signs of adult-involved financially motivated sexual extortion can include the child or young person being:

- Contacted by an online account that they do not know but appears to be another child or young person. They may be contacted by a hacked account of a child or young person
- Quickly engaged in sexually explicit communications which may include the offender sharing an image first
- Moved from a public to a private/E2EE platform
- Pressured into taking nudes or semi-nudes
- Told they have been hacked and they have access to their images, personal information and contacts
- Blackmailed into sending money or sharing bank account details after sharing an image or the offender sharing hacked or digitally manipulated images of the child or young person

Children who are absent from education

A child being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may be absent or become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk of becoming missing from education. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse, exploitation and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the academy without a new school being named, and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

In our EYFS settings:

If a pupil is absent for a prolonged period of time, or if a child is absent without notification from the parent or carer, attempts will be made to contact the child's parents and/or carers and alternative emergency contacts.

We will consider patterns and trends in a child's absences and their personal circumstances and use our professional judgement when deciding if the child's absence should be considered as prolonged.

Consideration will be given to the child's vulnerability, parent's and/or carer's vulnerability and their home life. Any concerns will be referred to local children's social care services and/or a police welfare check requested.

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being absent, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an

immediate referral to the local authority children's social care team, and the police, if the child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

Child criminal exploitation

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity. It may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can be perpetrated by organised networks or gangs, and the victim may identify as part of this group.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. It does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be forced to work in cannabis factories, coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. It can include children who have been moved for the purpose of exploitation. This may constitute modern slavery.

Indicators of CCE can include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education
- Not taking part in education

If a member of staff suspects CCE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity. It may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. It may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. Most sexual abuse is committed by individuals known to the victim. It can be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and the victim may identify as being part of this group. Victims are not always recognised and can be criminalised for actions they take while under coercion.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. Children or young people who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship. Most sexual abuse is committed by individuals known to the victim.

CSE can include both physical contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity. It can also happen online. For example, young people may be persuaded or forced to share sexually explicit images of themselves, have sexual conversations by text, or take part in sexual activities using a webcam. CSE may also occur without the victim's immediate knowledge, for example through others copying videos or images. It can include children who have been moved for the purpose of exploitation. This may constitute modern slavery.

In addition to the CCE indicators above, indicators of CSE can include a child:

- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend

- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence)

Child-on-child abuse is when children abuse other children. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of the academy. It can also take place both face-to-face and online and can occur simultaneously between the two.

Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both victim and alleged perpetrator, it is preventable and it may involve serious physical harm or threats involving weapons.

Our school has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. We recognise that even if there are there no reports, that doesn't mean that this kind of abuse isn't happening.

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

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Discriminatory behaviour (including racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other prejudice-based incidents)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (this is sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- Physical abuse such as 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)
- Physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon
- Harmful sexual behaviour (an umbrella term widely used in child protection, and which applies to behaviour occurring online, face-to-face, or both), sexual violence and sexual harassment, which may include misogyny/misandry
- 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 making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including those generated using AI
- Upskirting, which is a criminal offence, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- 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)

Where children abuse their peers online, this can take the form of, for example, abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages; the non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images, especially around chat groups; and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content.

If staff have any concerns about child-on-child abuse, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section 7 of this policy, as appropriate. In particular, section 7.8 and 7.9 set out more detail about our academy's approach to this type of abuse.

When considering instances of harmful sexual behaviour between children, we will consider their ages and stages of development. We recognise that children displaying harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced their own abuse and trauma, and will offer them appropriate support.

Domestic abuse

Children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse and/or violence at home where it occurs between family members. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse (abuse in intimate personal relationships between children including physical, sexual,

emotional abuse, and stalking) and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. It can be physical, sexual, financial, psychological or emotional. It can also include ill treatment that isn't physical, as well as witnessing the ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background, and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. Children who witness domestic abuse are also victims.

In our Secondary Academies:

Older children may also experience and/or be the perpetrators of domestic abuse and/or violence in their own personal relationships. This can include sexual harassment.

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children and affect their health, wellbeing, development and ability to learn.

Police must notify a school/education setting of a domestic abuse incident where a child is involved, has witnessed or been present, lives at (or is linked to) the address where it occurred, or where a Child Concern Notification has been issued, regardless of whether the child was there at the time. The police will inform the key adult in school (usually the designated safeguarding lead) before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This notification should reflect the 'voice of the child' (for example, statements made the child or behaviour observed). This is the procedure set out in the statutory Operation Encompass guidance for information sharing.

The DSL will provide support according to the child's needs and update records about their circumstances.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare.

The DSL and DDSLs will be aware of contact details and referral routes in the local housing authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity (where appropriate and in accordance with local procedures).

Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will also make a referral to local authority children's social care. Where children are living independently from their parent/carers (e.g. if they've been excluded from their family home), we will work with the local authority children's social care team to support them.

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

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including FGM, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

Abuse committed in this context often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

All forms of HBA are abuse and will be handled and escalated as such. All staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA or already having suffered it. If staff have a concern, they will speak to the DSL, who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

FGM

The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to children affected by FGM or at risk of FGM.

Section 7.3 of this policy sets out the procedures to be followed if a staff member discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out or suspects that a pupil is at risk of FGM.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A pupil confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
- A family/pupil already being known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:

- Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
- Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)
- Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
- Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
- Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE
- Being repeatedly absent from school, or absent for a prolonged period
- Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour
- Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations
- Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
- Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

Potential signs that a pupil may be at risk of FGM include:

- The girl's family having a history of practising FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider)
- FGM being known to be practised in the girl's community or country of origin
- A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out
- A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
    - Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM
    - Having limited level of integration within UK society
    - Confiding to a professional that she is to have a "special procedure" or to attend a special occasion to "become a woman"
    - Talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents/carers stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period
    - Requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM
    - Talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other children about it (although it is important to take into account the context of the discussion)
    - Being unexpectedly absent from school
    - Having sections missing from her 'red book' (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication

The above indicators and risk factors are not intended to be exhaustive.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of 1 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.

It is also illegal to cause a child under the age of 18 to marry, even if violence, threats or coercion are not involved.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the '1 chance' rule, i.e. we may only have 1 chance to speak to the potential victim and only 1 chance to save them.

If a member of staff suspects that a pupil is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the pupil about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the pupil about the concerns in a secure and private place
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or fmu@fco.gov.uk

- Refer the pupil to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate

Preventing radicalisation

- **Radicalisation** refers to the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence
- **Extremism** is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs **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 of terrorism 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.

Schools have a duty to prevent children from becoming involved with or supporting terrorism. The DSL, or designated Prevent lead, will undertake in-depth Prevent awareness training, including on extremist and terrorist ideologies. They'll make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk.

We will assess the risk of children in our academy from becoming involved with or supporting terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

We will ensure that suitable internet filtering is in place and equip our pupils/students to stay safe online at school and at home.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period.

Staff will be alert to changes in pupils/students' behaviour.

The government website Educate Against Hate and the NSPCC say that signs that a pupil is being radicalised can include:

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance
- Rejecting activities they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions
- Accessing extremist material online, including on social media
- Possessing extremist literature
- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem, or be victims of bullying or discrimination. It is important to note that these signs can also be part of normal teenage behaviour – staff should have confidence in their instincts and seek advice if something feels wrong.

If staff are concerned about a pupil, they will follow our procedures set out in section 7.5 of this policy, including discussing their concerns with the DSL.

Staff should **always** take action if they are worried.

Further information on the academy's measures to prevent radicalisation are set out in other school policies and procedures.

Harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools

The school will respond to all signs, reports and concerns of harmful sexual behaviour (HSB), child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence. This includes incidents occurring outside of the school premises, and/or online.

Sexual violence refers to specific sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 involving:

- Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents
- Assault by penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents
- Sexual assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. Sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault)
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party)

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, and can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity, and each time activity occurs. A child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity, the age of consent is 16, and sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

HSB can occur:

- Between 2 children of any age and sex
- Through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children
- Online and face to face (both physically and verbally)

HSB exists on a continuum and may escalate into sexual harassment or sexual violence. It can occur online or face-to-face (both physically and verbally) and is never acceptable. Sexual violence and sexual harassment may overlap.

Children who are victims of HSB, sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school.

If a victim reports an incident, it is essential that staff make sure they 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 any form of abuse or neglect. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

When supporting victims, staff will:

- Reassure victims that the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them, not criminalise them
- Regularly review decisions and actions, and update policies with lessons learnt
- Look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, and decide on a course of action where we identify any patterns
- Consider if there are wider cultural issues within the academy that enabled inappropriate behaviour to occur and whether revising policies and/or providing extra staff training could minimise the risk of it happening again

- Remain alert to the possible challenges of detecting signs that a child has experienced sexual violence, and show sensitivity to their needs

Some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay and bisexual children, or children questioning their gender are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- Challenging inappropriate behaviours
- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them
- Recognising the intersection of misogyny/misandry and harmful sexual behaviour. It's important not to dismiss issues that may seem minor at first, such as derogatory language, as behaviours can escalate into more severe forms of child-on-child abuse

If staff have any concerns about HSB, sexual violence or sexual harassment, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section 7 of this policy, as appropriate. In particular, section 7.8 and 7.9 set out more detail about our academy's approach to this type of abuse.

Serious violence

Serious violence is a continuing safeguarding concern which may involve:

- Physical assault
- Carrying, threatening with or using weapons (often in the context of peer conflict or bullying)
- Criminal exploitation

Indicators which may signal that a child is at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime may include:

- Increased absence from school
- Change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- Significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions (this could indicate that the child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation (see above))

Risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence include:

- Having been frequently absent, suspended, spent time in alternative provision, or permanently excluded from school
- Having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery
- Being male
- Having experienced child maltreatment
- Having used drugs or alcohol in early adolescence
- Having previously been a victim or previously perpetrated violence

Staff will be aware of these indicators and risk factors and will be alert to when children might be at highest risk around the school day (for example, immediately after school).

If a member of staff has a concern about a pupil being involved in, or at risk of, serious violence, including a child carrying or using a weapon (or expressing intent to do so), they will report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Assess the risk to both the individual pupil and others in the academy, consider wider information or concerns and take appropriate action
- Put in place a safety and support plan for the pupil (depending on the risk)
- Where relevant, consider action to de-escalate peer conflict

Checking the identity and suitability of visitors

All visitors to the academy are managed in line with the Trust's Visitors to Academies procedure, set out in full at Appendix 4. This covers the identification, signing-in and supervision of all categories of visitor, the checks required before a visitor is left unsupervised with pupils/students, the Trust's protocol for visiting speakers (including the Prevent duty and political impartiality requirements), and the process for raising concerns about a visitor or about an organisation using academy premises.

Non-collection of children

If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we will:

- Check the school office for any messages about delays or changes to collection arrangements
- Review emails, phone messages, and any notes from parents/carers
- Supervise the child in a designated safe area – *this may include the child joining an after-school club or accessing wraparound care*
- Ensure the child feels reassured and comfortable
- Attempt to contact the pupil's parents/carers using the contact details on the child's data capture forms, in the order of priority listed (making at least two attempts to reach each contact)
- If parents/carers cannot be reached, try all other alternative or emergency contacts
- Work through all authorised contacts systematically
- If unsuccessful and the child is still not collected after 45 minutes, we may notify the police, children's social care or the local safeguarding team, and may need to safely transfer the child to their care. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy DSL will be informed and will make the decision about which agency to contact.
- The incident will be recorded on CPOMs

Missing pupils/students

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child goes missing, we will:

- Notify the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or senior leader on duty
- Begin initial search protocol – all available staff will search the area for 10 minutes
- The Principal or Assistant Vice Principal will contact parents/ carers after the initial searches have been completed and the child is confirmed missing
- They will share what has happened, what actions you're taking, and what is needed from them
- After 15-30 minutes the Principal or Assistant Vice Principal will contact the police or immediately if there are safety concerns
- The Principal or AssisstantVice Principal will contact the Local Authority to inform children's social care, particularly if the child is vulnerable or has a social worker
- Once the child is found – a member of the leadership team will stay with them ensuring the child is safe and hasn't come to any harm
- The incident will be recorded on CPOMs
- A review of procedures will take place
- A risk assessment will be put in place and shared with parents/carers

Water Safety

As Aughton Primary Academy is close to the Ulley Reservoir and Rother Valley Country Park, it is essential we teach our children about Water Safety. we will:

- Make water safety an integral part of our curriculum

- Invite visitors such as the RNLI and the Canal and River Trust in to hold special assemblies for all pupils
- Respond to local incidents and speak to pupils about these in an age-appropriate way
- Share key reminders before each school holiday
- Provide key information in the academy website
- Keep up to date with new guidance

Diversity

As Aughton Primary Academy has pupils from many different cultures and religions, we have developed a school culture that promotes diversity in our classrooms. Teaching children how to live in a society where every individual is unique and how to connect with peers and neighbours with diverse backgrounds and abilities is invaluable. we will:

- Get to know our pupils - through our transition and induction processes staff spend time building relationships with the children in their care.
- Meet diverse learning needs - staff in school have high expectations of all pupils and are committed to ensuring they can achieve their full potential.
- Use stories, resources and teaching materials that celebrate different religions, cultures and disabilities. We also hold assemblies and themed events such as Diversity Day where all children learn about and discuss a particular focus.
- Address inequality - we create a space for children and staff to talk about how issues of discrimination affect them on a personal, classroom and school-wide level.
- Connecting with parents and the community. We welcome questions and ideas from parents and carers and invite them to identify areas in the curriculum that they feel could benefit from more of a focus on diversity.
- Providing professional development opportunities – we ensure all adults in school receive the training they need to support the pupils they work with. This includes Safeguarding, First Aid, Good Autism Practise, EpiPen, and Diabetes.

Appendix 4: Visitors to Academies Policy

Introduction

This appendix provides guidance to assist staff in managing visitors to the academy in a way that ensures the safety of children and adults on site. It applies to all ACET academies.

Responsibilities

Responsibility for implementing this appendix lies with the Principal and the Local Governing Body. Any breaches must be reported to the Principal immediately.

Types of visitors

- Parents and carers
- Local Governing Body members
- Visitors attending in connection with children who have a professional role — e.g. targeted support workers, Social Workers, Police, Educational Psychologists, SEND Officers, Health Professionals
- Visitors working directly with children in a paid or voluntary capacity — e.g. peripatetic tutors, sports coaches
- Site contractors
- Visiting speakers
- Organisations or individuals using academy premises for non-school activities (e.g. community groups, sports associations, extra-curricular providers)

All visits should be pre-planned wherever possible. The Principal and SLT should be made aware of visits in advance.

Procedure for all visitors

- All visits should be pre-arranged wherever possible
- All visitors report to Main Reception, sign in, and state who they've arranged to see
- All visitors are issued a visitors' lanyard
- Visitors remain in Main Reception until met by a member of staff
- Visitors are not left alone with children unless this is a legitimate part of their role and appropriate checks have been assured (see below). Social Workers and Police visiting children under emergency conditions may be given access alongside the DSL/DDSL
- On departure, visitors sign out, return their lanyard, and are seen to leave the premises
- Reception staff regularly check the signing in/out record for compliance

Regulated activity, DBS checks and supervision - updated for KCSIE 2026

Following the Crime and Policing Act 2026, the previous exemption allowing supervised individuals to avoid regulated activity status has been removed. Any visitor who teaches, trains, instructs or supervises children **on more than 3 days in a 30-day period, or overnight**, is in regulated activity in their own right and must hold an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list check - regardless of whether they are supervised by a member of staff. This applies most commonly to peripatetic tutors and sports coaches on our visitor list. Supervision by staff is no longer sufficient in place of this check for anyone meeting this frequency threshold.

Staff from other agencies

KCSIE requires that schools and colleges obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation confirming they have carried out the checks, including enhanced DBS, that the school would otherwise perform itself. Where the agency has obtained an enhanced DBS certificate before the person begins work, the school must obtain a copy of that certificate from the agency. Visitors should also produce photo ID each time they access the site.

Parents/carers and relatives

We do not have the power to request DBS and barred list checks for parents/carers or their relatives. They should be accompanied at all times.

Ofsted

Ofsted Inspectors present their formal ID badge, worn at all times, and sign in/out. There is no requirement to check DBS status, as Ofsted undertakes this beforehand.

Police

The Police are not required to notify parents/carers before questioning a child about a crime, though it's good practice for them to do so unless there's a reason not to. Where parents/carers are not present, the DSL/DDSL or a senior member of staff should be present throughout.

Visiting speakers

We welcome speakers from our wider communities to enrich pupils/students' education, help them make decisions at key stages, understand safety, and broaden their understanding of cultural, world and global issues.

Our responsibility is to ensure the information pupils/students receive aligns with ACET's values and British values, democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

The Prevent duty requires clear protocols to ensure visiting speakers are suitable and appropriately supervised. Schools are also subject to a duty to forbid political indoctrination and secure balanced treatment of political issues (Education Act 1996, ss.406–407), which extends to extra-curricular activity. As a charity, the Trust also has regard to Charity Commission guidance on managing the risk of hosting speakers.

ACET protocols:

- Nominated point of contact within the academy (the organiser), agreed prior to the visit and recorded at sign-in
- Principal informed of all speakers invited in
- Speaker completes the Visiting Speakers to ACET form outlining content and agreeing to the Guidelines for Visiting Speakers
- Slides/handouts provided in advance for suitability checks
- Due diligence carried out before every visit, considering:
    - the topic and purpose of the visit, and its appropriateness for the audience
    - the speaker's/organisation's reputation, including any history of causing disruption at other venues
    - risk to the academy's reputation and ethos
    - the speaker's previous public comments (checked beyond the first page of search results), including by speaking to other settings who have hosted them
    - whether language used is likely to stir up hatred or incite violence
    - where concerns arise, the views of the local police Prevent contact or community safety team
- Refusal to host speakers/organisations with links to extreme groups or views contrary to ACET's/British values. Written justification provided; final decision rests with the Principal and, ultimately, the CEO supported by Trustees
- Formal register of visiting speakers maintained by each academy
- Photo ID on arrival
- Accompanied at all times, never left unsupervised with pupils/students
- Post-event evaluation of how the visit met pupils/students' needs

Speakers encountered off-site (school trips)

The same principles apply where pupils/students will hear from external speakers during off-site visits, not just on our own premises. Before agreeing to a trip involving a speaker, staff should establish who will be speaking, the nature and purpose of the event, and whether the views likely to be expressed pose a safeguarding or Prevent-related risk, applying the due diligence checklist above so far as practicable.

Implications for the Childcare Disqualification Regulations 2009

Not covered: caretakers, cleaners, drivers, transport escorts, catering/cleaning staff and managers, office staff not employed to directly provide childcare (Para 9); health staff, speech therapists, educational psychologists (Para 10); school governors, unless volunteering regularly in relevant childcare or directly managing it (Para 16). Covered: peripatetic teachers/special needs teachers working in reception classes or childcare settings with children under 8 (Para 11).

Concerns about a visitor or an organisation using academy premises

Pupils/Students, staff and parents should know who to raise concerns with about a visitor: any teacher in the first instance, who reports to the Principal/DSL/DDSL. This now also applies where the concern relates to an organisation or individual using academy premises for a non-school activity (e.g. a community group or extra-curricular provider), even though they are not employed by the Trust. In line with KCSIE 2026's school premises requirements, the DSL/DDSL must contact the LADO in the usual way for any such allegation, alongside the relevant agency, and ensure a lessons-learned review is carried out, which may include reviewing any hire/letting agreement in place with that organisation.

Unknown/uninvited visitors

Any visitor not wearing an approved lanyard and ID badge should be challenged politely and escorted to Reception to register. Failure to comply results in a request to leave and the Principal/senior person being informed; police may be called in extreme circumstances. Visitors who become abusive or aggressive are asked to leave immediately, with a warning that police assistance will be called if they fail to do so.

Links with other policies, guidance and legislation

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026; Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for each academy; the Prevent duty guidance; Political impartiality in schools guidance; Charity Commission guidance for schools that are charities; the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations; Parent/Carer Visitor Code of Conduct Policy; [any Trust lettings policy, if adopted — see note below].

Appendix: Visiting Speakers to ACET form & guidelines

Name of Speaker/organisation	
Date of Proposed Visit	
Name of ACET contact	
Reason for visit	
Please outline below the information you wish to communicate to pupils/students/students within the academy during your visit	
Please sign below to confirm: • That the information you have provided is true and accurate • That you agree to the 'Guidelines for Visiting Speakers' overleaf	
	Date

Guidelines for Visiting Speakers

We often welcome speakers from our wider communities into our academies to speak to pupils/students/students. This enriches their experience of school, providing them with information that can help them to: make decisions at different phases of their education, remain safe and gain a wider understanding of cultural, world and global issues. It can also provide motivational inspiration through the sharing of a speaker's experience.

Our responsibility to our students is to ensure that the information they receive is aligned to the values of ACET and to British values which include democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

The "Prevent" statutory guidance (The Prevent Duty: Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers", DfE, June 2015 updated in December 2023) requires schools to have clear protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers to the academies are suitable and appropriately supervised.

All presentations delivered within the academy must support and promote fundamental British values as outlined above, and be in keeping with our mission statement:

Within ACET, we are committed to providing high quality learning and teaching, enabling everyone to reach their full potential, whatever their age, ability, gender or ethnicity.

We believe that every person is unique and we work together in an inclusive environment of mutual respect and consideration, valuing everyone's contribution.

Through our partnership with the local and wider community we aim to support our young people in successfully taking their place in society.

All adults in school have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

With your commitment we will make a difference.