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We all have a statutory duty to “safeguard and promote the welfare of children”, ([Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 - GOV.UK](#))

If you have any concerns about the health and safety of a child or young person at this education setting or feel that something may be troubling them, you should share this information with an appropriate member of staff straight away.

Some issues such as a child’s appearance, hygiene, general behaviour, can be shared with any teacher or member of support staff in this setting. Do not worry about reporting small matters – we would rather that you tell us things which turn out to be small than miss a worrying situation.

However, if you think that a child, a young person or an adult who cares for them has been or might be harmed, please talk to one of the people below immediately.

You can ask any member of staff to find them and ask them to speak to you straight away about a confidential and urgent matter. Alternatively you can contact Sheffield Safeguarding Hub directly on 0114 273 4855 (24 hours).

PREP SCHOOL

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) :
Mrs Jackie McDermott

Mrs McDermott’s office is located next to the Staff room in Clarke House.
Ext 503

Direct line: 0114 267 0407



Designated Safeguarding Deputies (DSDs):

**Mrs Sarah Lambert
Deputy Head (Academic)**

Mrs Lambert’s office is located next to the staff room in Clarke House.
Ext 503



**Mr Burch
Head (Prep School)**

Mr Burch’s office is located next to the Staff room in Clarke House
Ext 503

Direct line: 0114 267 2067



SENIOR SCHOOL

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):
Mr Phil King

Mr King’s office is located on the first floor of the Oakholme building. Ext 606

Direct line: 0114 229 6606



Designated Safeguarding Deputies (DSDs):

**Mr Ryan Becks
Deputy Head (Academic)**

Mr Becks’ office is on the top floor of the Grayson building.
Ext 635



**Mrs Lisa Marsh
SENCO**




Mrs Marsh is based in the Grayson building.
Ext 647



**Mr Peter Harris
Head (Whole School)**

Mr Harris’ office is on the ground floor of the Oakholme building next to reception
Ext 601



		<p>Mrs Helen Parsons Assistant Head - Director of Sixth Form</p> <p>Mrs Parsons' office is in the Grayson building. Ext 645</p>	
		<p>Ms Jessica Warren Assistant Head- Head of Middle School</p> <p>Ms Warren's office is in the Endcliffe building. Ext: 636</p>	
		<p>Mr Howard Parker Assistant Head- Head of Lower School</p> <p>Mr Parker's office is in the Johnson building. Ext: 664</p>	

An allegation or disclosure involving someone working with children in a paid or unpaid capacity **must** be reported directly to the Head (Whole School), unless it involves them and then it should be reported directly to the Chair of the Governing Body.

Head (Whole School): responsible for implementing policies & procedures, allocating resources to the safeguarding team & addressing staff safeguarding concerns.

Name: Mr Peter Harris (Senior & Whole School)

Tel no: 0114 266 8408

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): a member of the senior leadership team responsible for addressing safeguarding issues, providing advice & support and liaising with the local authority & other agencies.

Name: Mrs Jackie McDermott (Prep School)

Tel no: 0114 267 0407

Name: Mr Phil King (Senior School)

Tel no: 0114 229 6606

Designated Safeguarding Deputy (DSD): a teacher or support worker who works with and covers for the DSL role above.

Name: Mrs Sarah Lambert (Prep School)

Tel no: 0114 267 2068

Name: Mr Christopher Burch (Prep School)

Tel no: 0114 267 0407

Name: Mr Ryan Becks (Senior School)

Tel no: 0114 266 8408

Name: Mrs Helen Parsons (Senior School)

Tel no: 0114 266 8408

Name: Ms Jessica Warren (Senior School)

Tel no: 0114 266 8408

Name: Mr Howard Parker (Senior School)

Tel no: 0114 266 8408

Learning Support Coordinator (SENCo): provides advice, liaison & support for staff & agencies working with pupils with special education needs & disabilities and their families

Name: Mrs Lisa Marsh (Senior School & P4 Prep)

Tel no: 0114 266 8408

Name: Mrs Annie Hinchliffe (Prep School)

Tel no: 0114 267 0407

Deputy Head (Academic): supports pupils to reach their full potential by addressing their achievement, homework and some safeguarding issues

Name: Mr Ryan Becks (Senior School)

Tel no: 0114 266 8408

Name: Mrs Sarah Lambert (Prep School)

Tel no: 0114 267 0407

Looked After Children (LAC) Designated Teacher: promotes the educational achievement of 'looked after' children & young people by helping staff understand issues affecting how they learn and achieve

Name: Mr Phil King (Senior School)

Tel no: 0114 229 6606

Name: Mrs Jackie McDermott (Prep School)

Tel no: 0114 267 0407

E-Safety Coordinator: develops and maintains an e-safe culture within a setting

Name: Mr Phil King (Senior School)

Tel no: 0114 229 6606

Name: Mrs Jackie McDermott (Prep School)

Tel no: 0114 267 0407

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Lead: develops and maintains policies & staff awareness of CSE, the Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership responsibilities and the Sexual Exploitation Service key priorities

Name: Mr Phil King (Senior School)

Tel no: 0114 229 6606

Name: Mrs Jackie McDermott (Prep School)

Tel no: 0114 267 0407

Your Safeguarding Children Team also links with the:

Safeguarding Governor: helps the Governing Body to have safeguarding policies & procedures in place, ensures they are followed and addresses general safeguarding issues that staff and parents raise

Name: Mrs Anne Hetherington

Tel no: 0114 266 8408

Chair of Governors: addresses allegations of abuse made against the Head (and other members of staff when the Head is not available), liaises with the Local Authority; and works with the Head to ensure safe recruitment practices

Name: Mr Paul Houghton

Tel no: 0114 266 8408

1 Summary Guidance

Disclosures

If a child discloses to you or you suspect abuse of any kind:

- Report any disclosure immediately to a DSL or, in their absence, a DSD.
- Do not question a child should you suspect abuse, but refer your suspicion to the DSL or DSD immediately.
- Make a clear record of what the child has said to you and give this to the DSL or DSD.
- Do not ask leading questions and do not promise confidentiality to the child.
- Ensure that the child is safe.
- Do tell the child that you must speak to the DSL or a DSD.
- Be guided by the DSL or DSD as to what you should do next: do not investigate yourself.
- Do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends, family or anyone else unless otherwise directed by the DSL or DSD
- Be aware that you may contact local children's services and/or the police directly, preferably informing the DSL of the action you have taken.

Remember: It is important for all staff to understand that some children may find it hard to tell someone they are being abused: they may not be ready or know how to do so. Hence the School provides a wide range of avenues for children to speak out with confidence that support will be available and action will be taken, including: tutors, trusted adults for LGBTQ+ pupils, class teachers, counsellors, senior pastoral staff, and medical staff.

In all cases of disclosure:

Reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe so that no victim will be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment; no victim will ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Concerns about colleagues or other adults in the school:

- Report an allegation immediately to the Head (Whole School) or in his absence the Chair of Governors without informing the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- Report a low-level concern to the Head (Whole School) without informing the person relating to whom the concern applies.
- Should you believe that there may be a conflict of interest on the part of the Head (Whole School), refer the matter to the Chair of Governors and/or the local children's services (0114 273 4855).
- Be aware that should the need arise you may contact local children's services and/or the police directly.

Concerns about the Head (Whole School):

- Report this immediately to the Chair of Governors (chairofgovernors@birksdaleschool.org.uk) without informing the Head (Whole School).
- Be aware that should the need arise you may contact local children's services and/or the police directly.

2 Policy Statement and Principles

In accordance with legislative arrangements:

[Keeping children safe in education 2024](#)

‘Keeping children safe in education Statutory guidance for schools and colleges’,

‘Working together to safeguard children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children’ (July 2018),

‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners’ (March 2015),

‘Preventing Extremist and Radicalisation’ (Sept 2015),

‘The Serious Crime Act’ (2015)

Birkdale School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children’s welfare and prevent concerns from escalating.

Safeguarding applies to all children and staff, encompassing many aspects of school life.

Child Protection applies to those children who are having, or are at risk from, experience of abuse.

The policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school.

There are nine main elements to our policy:

- Ensuring we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. Following the procedures established in the Central Register following the latest advice at <https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check>. Furthermore, carrying out the annual 'Disqualification by Association' declaration.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse, be it physical, sexual, sexual exploitation, grooming, emotional or neglect, or extremism, radicalisation, or issues around FGM within their family setting.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with their agreed child protection plan.
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop. We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:
 - Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
 - Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
 - Ensure that the school correctly records all safeguarding matters and reports to the necessary supporting agencies/authorities
 - Include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

In accordance with legislative arrangements [Keeping children safe in education 2024](#) and ‘Working together to safeguard children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children’ (July 2018), and following the procedures set out by the Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership Birkdale School takes account of guidance issued by the Department for Education to:

- Ensure we have a designated teacher for safeguarding/child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role. The designated lead will supply all staff with

updates and training (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings) as necessary, at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge. All staff annually complete Educare Courses to supplement this.

- Ensure every member of staff, volunteer and governor knows the name of the designated teacher responsible for safeguarding and child protection and their role.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated teacher responsible for safeguarding and child protection.
- All school staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years. In the first instance, staff should discuss early help requirements with the designated safeguarding lead. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment.
- Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register, under investigation/supervision of the Sheffield Safeguarding Partners or receiving support through the Sheffield Multi-Service Agency (MAST) or Family Intervention Service (FIS).
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely; separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations.
- Develop and then follow procedures as set out by the Local Area Designated Officer Sheffield Safeguarding Partners where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Ensure safe recruitment practices always follow the procedures established in the Central Register following the latest advice: <https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check>.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum.
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The school behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Staff members working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the best interests of the child.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as social services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, education welfare service and educational psychology service.
- If staff members have any concerns about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger) they will need to decide what action to take. Where possible, there should be a conversation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to agree a course of action, although any staff member can make a referral to children's social care.
- Other options could include referral to specialist services or early help services and should be made in accordance with the referral threshold set by the Local Safeguarding Partnership.

Ensuring that, where a pupil on the child protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

3 How Birkdale School Safeguards Children

Birkdale School recognises that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

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

The School adopts a child-centred, zero-tolerance approach to safeguarding meaning that all children will be fully supported and all reports of concerns fully investigated. Our business is to know everyone as an individual and to provide a secure and caring environment, so that every pupil can learn in safety and grow up and live in a safe environment. We expect the school values of Respect, Integrity, Humility, Compassion and Courage to be shown by everyone so that every pupil can develop their full potential and feel positive about themselves as an individual. All pupils should care for and support each other. All members of staff have a duty to model good conduct to pupils, to protect pupils from abuse and bullying and to promote their well-being. All staff will reassure victims that they are being taken seriously, no victim will ever be given the impression they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment nor will they ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

This duty extends to preventing pupils from becoming radicalised and holding extremist views. The school recognises that it has a duty to children in need to support and help them often through working with external agencies such as the relevant Multi-Agency Assessment Team (MAST) and through the Early Help Assessment and the Threshold of Need procedures. The school recognises that it has a duty to children at risk of harm to protect them through working with external agencies such as the Children's Social Care Office, through a referral process, or the police.

We do this by:

- Creating and maintaining a safe learning environment for children and young people; where children are listened to and issues about safeguarding are always addressed
- Identifying child welfare concerns and taking action to address them, in partnership with other organisations where appropriate
- Implementing safeguarding policies and procedures that reflect Sheffield Safeguarding Partnerships and national guidance
- Assessing and offering early help to children & young people with additional needs
- Sharing information with a child or young person, their family and other agencies as appropriate
- Informing parents and carers of any referral made, unless it may cause harm to someone to do so
- Reporting any allegations of abuse of children and young people by staff, carers or volunteers
- **Only** communicating with other agencies using phones & other media provided by their setting

Birkdale School protects children at risk of harm by:

Identifying a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) from the senior leadership team & at least one Designated Safeguarding Deputy (DSD) and **specifying this role in their job description**

Ensuring the DSL, DSDs and Safeguarding Governor are given appropriate training and resources to carry out their role.

Supporting, training & regularly briefing all staff about safeguarding children issues, ensuring that all Staff are competent and feel supported to do their safeguarding duties.

Identifying suspected abuse and making **timely** referrals to the police or Social Care.

Understanding, attending and contributing effectively to multi-agency working through Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups & Child in Need meetings.

Keeping detailed and accurate secure written records of referrals and concerns.

The DSL, DSDs and Head are the main points of contact for anyone wishing to obtain information about a child or young person from the school.

Birkdale Operates on a 'need to know' basis and it is **only** the DSL, DSDs or the Head who can decide **what** and **whom** to share information with inside and outside the setting.

No sensitive information about a child, young person or their family should be passed to other staff or agencies without the agreement of the DSL, DSD or Head.

All education staff, at every level, play a vital role in supporting their pupils. They are often members of the local community & volunteers at local groups that support children, young people and their families.

Although the school is formally shut during holidays, many staff continue to work on residential trips & outings or by attending meetings about student welfare. It is vital that Social Care and other agencies communicate with settings about any changes of support or other circumstances relating to their pupils throughout the year.

All communication about children, young people and their families is done only using secure means of communication.

Safer Recruitment

The School adheres to the Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP) Recruitment Policy and guidance (available on the [SCSP website](#) and from the School on request) and safer recruitment procedures. Procedures are in accordance with the Independent School Standards Regulations and include ensuring that at least one member of any recruitment panel involved in all stages of the recruitment process has undertaken the appropriate training in Safer Recruitment, and carrying out all required checks on the suitability of all staff and volunteers to work with children and young people in accordance with the guidance and regulations. Appropriate supervision arrangements are put in place if staff start work before their DBS disclosure has been obtained, and in all cases a Barred List Check and Prohibition Order check (if applicable) will have been undertaken. Relevant staff are also asked to confirm that they do not meet the criteria for disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 and the 2018 Regulations.

Birkdale's commitment to Safeguarding is made clear in advertisements for jobs and in information for potential applicants. Birkdale requires job applicants to fill in an application form and the school always seeks references using a reference form which requires answers to specific questions about Safeguarding. All members of the teaching and non-teaching staff at the school, including part-time staff, temporary and supply staff, and visiting staff, such as musicians and sports coaches, are checked with the DBS before starting work.

As part of its due diligence the school will carry out an online search of shortlisted candidates to help identify any incidents or issues that have happened and which are publicly available online – these may then be explored at interview with the applicant.

The School obtains assurance that appropriate child protection checks are carried out and procedures apply to any staff or volunteer of another organisation who work with the School's pupils on another site (for example, in a separate institution).

The School carries out the mandated checks on the suitability of all people who serve on our School Governing Board in accordance with the guidance and regulations and in accordance with SCSP policy. The required checks on Governors are carried out centrally by the HR department.

All Governors, volunteer helpers, contractors working regularly during term-time, such as contract catering staff, and adult members of the families of members of staff who live on site are also checked unless they are only in school sporadically and are supervised. These checks would normally consist of an enhanced DBS check with barred list information although some supervised volunteers, who are not engaged in regulated activity, may not require such a check. If members of staff from another organisation supervise the school's pupils on a site away from the school Birkdale will seek assurance from the other organisation that all such staff have been checked for suitability.

Where the School ceases to use the services of any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) or the person resigns or otherwise ceases to provide his or her services because it is considered that the person may be unsuitable to work with children, a referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in accordance with the procedural guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-barring-referrals-to-the-dbs> (contact: PO Box 181, Darlington, DL1 9FA. Tel: 01325 953795, email dbsdispatch@dbs.gsi.gov.uk). In cases involving teaching staff, the School will also decide whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

All visitors are assessed by the Deputy Head to determine whether they may radicalise our pupils and to prevent such access and staff will submit a 'Visitor Application Form' for approval in advance of a visitor coming to the school. Assessment of a visitor would be done by seeking references and by searching for available information about them. If they are speaking to the school community, the school would seek to ascertain the content of any speech in advance. The member of staff who has invited the visitor will ensure that they are supervised whilst on school premises. Our policies are reviewed by the Governors annually. The school's Staff Recruitment Policy is available from the school in electronic or printed form upon request.

Useful links and resources:

Working Together to Safeguard Children, DfE 2018
Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE 2024

Related policies & procedures on the Safeguarding Sheffield Children website, schools & other education settings section:

A Good Practice Guide to Safeguarding Children and Young People in Education, Sept 16

4 Early Help

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. A child in need is defined as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development; or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled.

Effective early help relies upon local agencies working together to identify children and families who would benefit from early help, to undertake an assessment of the need for early help, such as the Early Help Assessment (EHA), and to provide targeted early help services to improve the outcomes for the child and prevent needs escalating to a point where intervention from children's services would be needed.

Inter-agency assessments should take place when a child and family would benefit from coordinated support from more than one agency (e.g. education, health, housing, police). The assessment should be undertaken by a lead professional who should provide support to the child and family and coordinate the delivery of support services. The lead professional could be a teacher, family support worker, health visitor or GP and the decision about who should be the lead professional should be informed by the child and their family. Examples of support services include family and parenting programmes, assistance with health issues and help for problems relating to drugs and alcohol.

For early help assessment to be effective:

- the assessment should be undertaken with the agreement of the child and their parents and should involve the child and the family as well as the professionals working with them.
- professionals should be able to discuss concerns they may have about a child and family with a social worker in the local authority.

If consent is not given for an early help assessment, the designated safeguarding team should consider how the needs of the child might be met. If at any time it is considered that the child may be a child in need or that the child has suffered significant harm or is likely to do so, a referral to the local authority's children's service should be made immediately.

Staff should discuss emerging problems and early help requirements with the designated safeguarding team. If early help is appropriate, the designated safeguarding team will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead professional as appropriate.

Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to local authority's children's service for assessment for statutory services if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.

The designated safeguarding team is responsible for maintaining effective records of all such cases.

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

- is disabled and has specific additional needs;
- lives in an environment where domestic abuse may be taking place or has taken place; note that children will sometimes blame themselves when they hear or see violent words or actions in the home; just hearing a violent quarrel will seriously unsettle many children; staff should therefore be aware of the specific impact of domestic abuse on children and how it might affect them;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse or adult mental health problems;

- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan);
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of being drawn into antisocial or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- has returned home to their family from care;
- Is at risk of honour-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage;
- is a privately fostered child, and
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day, or
- has experienced multiple suspensions or is at risk of being permanently excluded from school.

5 Types of abuse, neglect and exploitation and possible indicators

Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. If staff are unsure, they should always speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy).

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

All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life.

Children can also abuse their peers online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content.

All staff, but especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk.

ABUSE:

a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. Child-on-child abuse is dealt with in the section 5 following. Abuse related to the Prevent agenda is covered in section 6 following.

PHYSICAL ABUSE:

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

EMOTIONAL ABUSE:

the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of

emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

SEXUAL ABUSE:

involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education (see paragraph 29, KCSIE 2023).

NEGLECT:

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

An abused child is likely to show one or more signs of stress and distress including:

- a lack of concentration and a fall-off in school performance;
- aggressive or hostile behaviour;
- moodiness, depression, irritability, listlessness, fearfulness, tiredness, temper tantrums, short concentration span, acting withdrawn or crying at minor occurrences;
- difficulties in relationships with peers;
- regression to more immature forms of behaviour, e.g. thumb sucking;
- self-harming or suicidal behaviour;
- low self-esteem;
- wariness, insecurity, running away or truancy - children who persistently run away from home may be escaping from sexual physical abuse;
- disturbed sleep;
- general personality changes such as unacceptable behaviour or severe attention seeking behaviour;
- a sudden change in school performance.

Particular forms of parental behaviour that could raise or reinforce concerns are:

- implausible explanations of injuries;
- unwillingness to seek appropriate medical treatment for injuries;
- injured child kept away from school until injuries have healed without adequate reason;
- a high level of expressed hostility to the child;
- grossly unrealistic assumptions about child development;

- general dislike of child-like behaviour;
- inappropriate labelling of a child's behaviour as bad or naughty;
- leaving children unsupervised when they are too young to be left unattended.

Further indicators of the various types of abuse may be found in Appendix A.

6 Child-on-Child Abuse

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer abuse). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse; causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery (YPSI));
- upskirting, a criminal offence, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
- 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).

All staff receive clear training and induction as to the school's policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse.

Children or young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs themselves, e.g.:

- Significant disruption in their own lives
- Exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse
- Educational under-achievement
- Involved in crime

Birkdale School recognises that:

It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, many of which are listed below, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Stopping physical, sexual or emotional harm and ensuring immediate safety is the first priority of any education setting. Emotional bullying can sometimes be more damaging than physical harm and should be taken equally seriously.

School staff will discuss all concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy, who will assess and make judgements about each specific case and will use the guidance set out by the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub to assist them.

What is child-on-child abuse (previously referred to as peer-on-peer abuse)?

Child-on-child abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional, financial, and/or coercive control exercised between children and young people; this includes intimate and non-intimate relationships. This may include online abuse. As with many forms of abuse, it rarely takes place in isolation.

Types of child-on-child abuse:

When thinking about child-on-child abuse the following types of abuse should be considered, as there is not one key definition:

1. Child-on-child abuse often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and victim. This can present itself in a number of ways; it may be in a controlling relationship or 'friendship' group.
2. Child-on-child abuse should be considered if:
 - there is a power difference between the children and young people concerned
 - the perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more children
 - there are concerns about the intention of the alleged perpetrator.

Recognising signs that may indicate child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse can impact children and young people in many ways. The child or young person may think that it is a part of normal friendships or relationships.

As a consequence of child-on-child abuse a child or young person may exhibit the following, but it is important to understand that how abuse affects a young person will vary. A child or young person may;

- not attend school
- truant from lessons
- be withdrawn
- be experiencing a breakdown of family relationships
- be anxious
- be aggressive or argumentative
- self-harm
- become involved in alcohol or substance misuse.

These factors rarely occur in isolation. Where a child exhibits any behaviour that is out of character or abnormal for their age, staff should always consider whether an underlying concern is contributing to their behaviour.

An assessment of an incident between peers should be completed and consider:

- Chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved
- Difference in their power or authority in relation to age, race, gender, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability
- All alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident
- Whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation
- What was the degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery
- The effect on the victim
- Any attempts to ensure the behaviour and incident is kept a secret
- The child or young person's motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred

- Whether this was a one-off incident, or longer in duration

What to do when you suspect child-on-child abuse

If you suspect a child is in immediate danger, you must report your concerns to your Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). They will make a referral to children's social care and/or the police. If the DSL is not available you must not delay in reporting the abuse yourself, but you must inform the DSL as soon as possible.

- Always take complaints seriously
- Never ask a student for a written statement, it can interfere with a criminal investigation
- Do not attempt to investigate yourself
- Do not discuss the matter with anyone other than the DSL or a member of the DSL team and/or children's social care and/or the police
- Assess needs of victim and perpetrator
- Consider referral to Police or Social Care
- Contribute to multi-agency assessments
- Convene a risk management meeting
- Record all incidents and all action taken

If you suspect a child is at risk of or experiencing child-on-child abuse or that child is abusing their peers, you should discuss your concerns with your DSL so that a course of action can be decided.

A decision should be made on whether to:

- report to social care and/or the police
- undertake an early help assessment
- manage internally with or without external agency support.

When dealing with child-on-child abuse it is important that the victim's welfare is of paramount importance, in addition it is important to recognise that support may be required for the perpetrator and suitable interventions may be essential. The school will complete the risk assessment framework explained at:

https://www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org/assets/1/peer_abuse_risk_assessment_sept_21.pdf

Procedures to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse

Birkdale School actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of child-on-child abuse by:

- Educating all Governors, Senior Leadership Team, staff and volunteers, pupils and parents about this issue. This will include training all Governors, Senior Leadership Team, staff and volunteers on the nature, prevalence and effect of child-on-child abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it.
- This includes (a) Contextual Safeguarding; (b) The identification and classification of specific behaviours; and (c) The importance of taking seriously all forms of child-on-child abuse (no matter how low level they may appear) and ensuring that no form of child-on-child abuse is ever dismissed as banter or teasing.
- Educating children about the nature and prevalence of child-on-child abuse via PSHE and the wider curriculum. To educate on the importance of ensuring children understand the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them rather than criminalise them. The following resource is helpful:
<https://www.farrer.co.uk/globalassets/clients-and-sectors/safeguarding/addressing-child-on-child-abuse.pdf>

[d-abuse.pdf](#)

- Pupils are frequently told what to do if they witness or experience such abuse, the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it, including vulnerability of those who inflict such abuse.
- They are regularly informed about the School's approach to such issues, including its zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of child-on-child abuse.
- The NSPCC helpline 'Report abuse in education' 0800 163 663 or help@nspcc.org.uk, is available for students, staff and parents.
- Engaging parents on this issue by:
 - (a) Talking about it with parents, both in groups and one to one;
 - (b) Encouraging parents to hold the School to account on this issue.
- Ensuring that all child-on-child abuse issues are fed back to the school's safeguarding DSL so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify pupils who may be in need of additional support. This is done by way of Pastoral Committee meetings at which all concerns about pupils (including child-on-child abuse issues) are discussed;
- Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside the classroom);
- Working with Governors, Senior Leadership Team, all staff and volunteers, pupils and parents to address equality issues, to promote positive values, and to encourage a culture of acceptance and respect amongst all members of the school community;
- Creating conditions in which our pupils can aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships;
- Creating a culture in which our pupils feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgmental environment, and have them listened to. This is achieved through the discussions at the School Council and Equality and Diversity Committee meetings.
- Responding to cases of child-on-child abuse promptly and appropriately.

Further details on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur online. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

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

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal). They are never acceptable.

Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk and evidence shows that girls, children with SEND and LGBTQ+ children are at greater risk.

It is essential that all pupils are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A pupil should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a pupil ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- challenging inappropriate behaviours;
- making it clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;

- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as ‘banter’, ‘part of growing up’, or ‘just having a laugh’ or ‘boys being boys’; and
- challenging 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.

Sexual violence

- It is important that staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:
- **Rape:** A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: they intentionally penetrate the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with their 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: they intentionally penetrate 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: they intentionally touch another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent

A person (A) commits an offence if: they intentionally cause 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).

What is consent? 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, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if they agree by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

- A child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
- The age of consent is 16;
- Sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

Although sexual activity between two people both aged 13 to 15 may be technically unlawful, in practice the legal system typically deals with any instances brought to its attention on a case by case basis. Any harassment, coercion or violence is likely to be met with unsympathetically.

Sexual harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child’s dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;

- sexual “jokes” or taunting;
- upskirting or other forms of covert making of images;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes (considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.

It may include:

- non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or videos. Taking and sharing nude photographs of U18s is a criminal offence;
- sharing of unwanted explicit content
- sexualised online bullying;
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; and
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats

THE RESPONSE TO A REPORT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE OR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The initial response to a report from a child is incredibly important. How the school responds to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment to report or come forward.

It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

If members of staff have a concern about a child or a child makes a report to them, **they should follow the referral process set out in this policy**. As is always the case, if staff are in any doubt as to what to do, they should speak to a member of the safeguarding team.

The DSL and/or DSDs will follow the guidance in KCSIE and also use the document ‘Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools: advice for governing bodies, proprietor, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads’, updated September 2021 when investigating reports from pupils or staff.

The NSPCC helpline ‘Report abuse in education’ can be accessed on 0800 163 663 or by email: help@nspcc.org.uk

London Grid for Learning ‘Undressed’ guidance: <https://www.lgfl.net/default.aspx>

At this school, Relationships and Sex Education and PSHE teach students about respectful, positive, safe and healthy relationships and consent.

7 Prevent, Extremism, and Radicalisation

The school is fully committed to supporting the Prevent agenda and so has due regard to ‘the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism’ in line with the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and Prevent Duty guidance.

The DSL has received training about the Prevent Duty and tackling extremism and other members of staff normally complete an online general awareness training module on Prevent that includes information on when it is appropriate to make a referral to Channel on a schedule to be determined in consultation with the local children’s services.

The internet is increasingly used as a means to radicalise children. The school’s ICT filtering systems are sufficient to keep pupils safe when accessing the internet at school. The effectiveness of the filters is tested regularly by the Head of ICT systems and the effectiveness is regularly reviewed by governors.

Staff should suspend any professional disbelief that instances of radicalisation ‘could not happen at Birkdale’ and should refer any concerns to the DSL.

We use the curriculum to ensure that children and young people understand how people with extreme views share these with others, especially using the internet.

Where staff are concerned that children and young people are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalised, they should report these concerns via the safeguarding channels and discuss with the DSL or a DSD.

The School is committed to ensuring that our pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that aims to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Teaching the School’s core values alongside the fundamental British Values supports quality teaching and learning, whilst making a positive contribution to the development of a fair, just and civil society

Visiting speakers will be vetted so that the School can be satisfied that the information provided by speakers will be aligned to the ethos and values of the School and to British values.

Any concerns in relation to possible radicalisation will be discussed with a pupil’s parents unless there is a specific reason to believe that to do so would put the pupil at risk.

Staff should be alert to changes in children’s behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection.

Prevent is supported by Channel which is a voluntary, confidential programme which provides support to individuals who are vulnerable to being drawn into any form of terrorism.

Further details about Channel are provided in the statutory guidance for Channel partners: [Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting people susceptible to radicalisation](#)

Definitions:

- **Extremism** is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.
- **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- **Terrorism** is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing political, religious or ideological cause.

Indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation

Identity Crisis - Distance from cultural/ religious heritage and uncomfortable with their place in the society around them

Personal Crisis – Family tensions; sense of isolation; adolescence; low self-esteem; disassociating from existing friendship group and becoming involved with a new and different group of friends; searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging

Personal Circumstances – Migration; local community tensions; events affecting country or region of origin; alienation from UK values; having a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy

Unmet Aspirations – Perceptions of injustice; feeling of failure; rejection of civic life

Criminality – Experiences of imprisonment; poor resettlement/reintegration, previous involvement with criminal groups

Access to extremism / extremist influences

Questions to ask include:

- Is there reason to believe that the child/young person associates with those known to be involved in extremism - either because they associate directly with known individuals or because they frequent key locations where these individuals are known to operate? (e.g. the child/young person is the partner, spouse, friend or family member of someone believed to be linked with extremist activity)
- Does the child/young person frequent, or is there evidence to suggest that they are accessing the internet for the purpose of extremist activity? (e.g. Use of closed network groups, access to or distribution of extremist material, contact associates covertly via Skype/email etc.)
- Is there evidence of extremist ideological, political or religious influence on the child/young person from within or outside UK?
- Has there been a significant shift in the child/young person's behaviour or outward appearance that suggests a new social/political or religious influence?
- Has the child/young person come into conflict with family over religious beliefs/lifestyle/dress choices?
- Has the child/young person travelled for extended periods of time to international locations known to be associated with extremism?
- Does the child/young person have experience of poverty, disadvantage, discrimination or social exclusion?
- Does the child/young person display a lack of affinity or understanding for others, or social isolation from peer groups?
- Does the child/young person demonstrate identity conflict and confusion normally associated with youth development?
- Does the child/young person demonstrate a simplistic or flawed understanding of religion or politics?

- Is there evidence that a significant adult or other in the child/young person's life has extremist view or sympathies?

More critical risk factors could include:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters
- Articulating support for extremist causes or leaders
- Accessing extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element
- Possessing extremist literature
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues
- Joining extremist organisations, making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school
- Intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- Graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes
- Attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- Verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views
- Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour, secretive behaviour

The DSL may refer a pupil to the Prevent Single Point of Contact 0114 273 4934.

Further advice and support about extremism may be found on the Sheffield Safeguarding Children website in the policies and procedures section ([Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership](#) which includes contact telephone numbers).

8 E-Safety & Teaching Online Safety at School

Our pupils receive age-appropriate training in online safety through specific curriculum content within the syllabus, making use of available support and resources e.g. Childnet, Thinkuknow and Crucial Crew. The pupils sign an age-appropriate 'acceptable user agreement', staff also sign a technology agreement.

The School upholds its responsibilities to teach online safety through the DoE principles outlined in the June 2019 document [Teaching online safety in schools - GOV.UK](#) and the framework, 'Education for a Connected World' [Education for a Connected World – 2020 edition](#)

Filtering and Monitoring

The school has rigorous filtering and monitoring systems in place to prevent pupils accessing unsuitable materials online. All staff are trained at induction to understand the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring. It is the responsibility of the DSL and Network Manager to regularly review the effectiveness of the filtering and monitoring systems. Where content slips through these systems concerns are reported to the technology support team who will respond immediately and report to the senior leadership and DSL. The DSL will regularly report to governors on the efficacy of the school's filtering and monitoring systems.

Mobile and Smart Technology (see also Section 16)

Birkdale School restricts pupils' use of mobile phones and other smart technology. In the Senior School S1-S5 pupils are not allowed to carry their phones around school whilst Sixth Form students may only use their phones in their common rooms or under the direction of a teacher. All Senior School pupils are allocated a Chromebook on joining the school and this is restricted to prevent pupils accessing inappropriate material online. All pupils, from P1 upwards, have a unique username and password that must not be shared with other pupils. This is subject to 'live checks' to monitor aspects such as 'search engine' activity.

The school is especially alert to the problem of cyber-bullying.

What is cyber-bullying?

Cyber-bullying happens 'online' through electronic information technology with a widespread audience and numerous devices to communicate through.

Cyber-bullying can leave children and young people feeling scared, upset, isolated and very vulnerable, particularly as the bullying can happen whilst in their own home.

There are a number of different methods of cyber-bullying, but the main ones are:

- Electronic communication such as messages, texts, emails, photographs, video-messaging, sexting via mobile phones, computers, smart-phones, tablets etc. to individuals or groups
- Communication that is threatening, upsetting or offensive and may include racist, sexist, or homophobic content
- Making humiliating and abusive phone calls on mobiles or landlines
- Sending inappropriate communication that can be shared with others through social networking and gaming sites
- Communicating with friends of the victim and other people to try to make them become part of the bullying
- Setting up 'profiles' on social networking sites to make fun of a child or young person
- Creating a false identity to impersonate someone and send inappropriate communications in their name
- Use chat rooms and gaming sites to abuse other players, use threats, lock victims out of games,

spread false rumours, and encourage others to engage in harmful online challenges

- Sending viruses or hacking programs that can destroy the victim's computer or delete personal information from their hard drive
- Posting intimate, sensitive and personal information, about someone without their permission or knowledge

The above methods can also be used by adults to 'groom' vulnerable children and young people in order to sexually exploit them.

These people pretend to be someone else online in order to be-friend a child or young person, find out sensitive information or obtain intimate photographs of them, and then threaten to expose this information to their family or friends.

Information Security and Access Management

Birkdale School safeguards its systems, staff and learners by ensuring it has effective security protection procedures in place to guard against cyber-attacks. These procedures are regularly reviewed by the DSL and Network Manager.

The purpose of internet use in educational settings is to raise educational standards and promote achievement, support the professional work of staff & enhance the settings' management of information, communication and administration systems between staff, pupils and parents or carers.

Therefore, safeguarding children and young people online can involve a range of potential issues such as cyberbullying, extremist behaviour, grooming, child sexual exploitation and sexting.

This highlights the need to educate children, young people, their parents, carers and staff about the benefits and risks of using this environment and provide safeguards & awareness for users to safely control their online experiences.

The staff undergo 'Online Safety Training' through the Educare programme.

Useful web links/resources:

Risk assessing

https://www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org/assets/1/online_safety_risk_assessment_sept_21.pdf

Update advice for schools regarding nude and semi-nude images (Updated March 2024)

[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK](#)

Also:

Thinkuknow

Childline - Bullying

Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Department for Education

9 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Birkdale School welcomes pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and will do all that is reasonable to ensure that the School's curriculum, ethos, culture, policies, procedures and premises are made accessible to everyone. See the School's policy on special educational needs and learning difficulties and disability policy.

Additional barriers can exist when detecting the abuse or neglect of pupils with a special educational need or disability creating additional safeguarding challenges for those involved in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of this group of children.

The School is mindful in particular that:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the pupil's special educational need or disability without further exploration;
- pupils with a special education need or disability can be disproportionately impacted by bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and
- there may be communication barriers which are difficult to overcome to identify whether action under this policy is required.

We recognise that, statistically, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities or certain health conditions are most vulnerable to abuse and can face additional safeguarding challenges. School staff who deal with children with complex and multiple disabilities and/or emotional and behavioural problems should be particularly sensitive to indicators of abuse, including child-on-child or child-on-child abuse.

The School has pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or challenging behaviours. The School will support staff to decide appropriate strategies that will reduce anxiety for the individual child and raise self-esteem as part of an overall behaviour support plan agreed with parents/carers.

As part of the PSHE curriculum staff will teach young people personal safety skills in an age-appropriate manner. Pupils will be taught on how to keep themselves safe, peer pressure and appropriate relationships.

The School has pupils who may have learning difficulties and we are aware that they are vulnerable to abuse because they may be unable to express themselves to others. Instead, such pupils may exhibit changes in behaviours or signs and indicators of abuse recognised by staff with a good knowledge of the child.

Where necessary, the School will provide additional training to staff in the use of alternate communication systems. Supervision by senior managers will be vigilant to create a protective ethos around the pupil.

We promote high standards of practice, including ensuring that children with disabilities know how to raise concerns, and have access to a range of adults with whom they can communicate.

10 Children Missing Education

Birkdale School recognises the statutory guidance Children Missing Education (September 2016). The School recognises the key principles that enable local authorities in England to implement their legal duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to identify, as far as it is possible to do so, children missing education (CME).

Risks

A child missing from education is not in itself a child protection matter, and there may be an innocent explanation for this. However, regular school attendance is an important safeguard and unexplained and/or persistent absences can be an early indicator of problems, risk and vulnerability. This may present as:

- Prolonged or repeated absenteeism;
- Truancy after registration and/or going missing from school;
- Leaving the school roll with no particular place to go.

The School will endeavour to deal with pupil absence in three ways:

- By preventing poor school attendance and truancy;
- By acting once absence has occurred to establish children's safety and try to get them back to school;
- By taking action to trace children whose whereabouts are not known.

'Missing' children can be vulnerable; it is essential that all services work together to identify and re-engage children back into appropriate education provision as quickly as possible. It is important to establish the reasons for the child being missing at the earliest possible stage.

Actions

Birkdale School monitors attendance closely and addresses poor or irregular attendance. Parents are contacted at registration if their child's absence is unexplained. Where there are on-going concerns, the Deputy Head will arrange a meeting with the parents/carers. The school recognises that it is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.

In the more general circumstances of a child going missing who is not known to any other agencies, the Head should inform the Pupil Tracking Officer and Education Welfare Officer of any child who has not attended for 10 consecutive school days without provision of reasonable explanation. When a child has left the school, the Deputy Head will complete a 'Missing from Education' form and send it to the LEA, if the school has not received a request from a new school by 11 days.

All schools are required to notify the local authority within five days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. Schools will need to provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil.

The School will notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register at a non-standard transition point under any of the fifteen grounds set out in the regulations, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.

In line with the duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, the expectation is that the school will use the local authority systems and will have in place procedures designed to carry out reasonable enquiries. The type of procedures may include the appropriate person checking with relatives, neighbours, landlords – private or social housing providers – and other local stakeholders who are involved. They should also record that they have completed these procedures. If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral (see Making a Referral following the Identification of Child Safety and Welfare Concerns Procedure) should be made to children's social care (and the police if appropriate).

We will inform the Pupil Tracking Officer and the child's social worker immediately a child subject to a Child Protection Plan is missing.

In the following circumstances a referral to Children's Services and / or the police should always be made promptly:

- The child may be the victim of a crime;
- The child is subject of a Child Protection Plan;
- The child is the subject of Section 47 enquiries;
- The child is looked after;
- There is a known person posing a risk to children in the household or in contact with the household;
- There is a history of the family moving frequently;
- There are serious issues of attendance.

11 Disclosures

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive.

If a pupil talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, **the staff member will need to let the pupil know that they must pass the information on** – staff are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which they tell the pupil this is a matter for professional judgement. If they jump in immediately the pupil may think that they do not want to listen, if left until the very end of the conversation, the pupil may feel that they have been misled into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

In some cases a disclosure may be indirect, e.g. through a friend of a pupil. Such disclosures should be taken just as seriously as direct disclosures: the DSL should be informed immediately so that the pupil who is the subject of the disclosure may be seen immediately and kept safe.

If a pupil discloses to a member of staff some form of abuse (other than an allegation against a member of staff which is dealt with in the next section of this policy), the member of staff concerned should adhere to the following procedure, noting the summary guidance earlier in this policy.

If someone is worried about a pupil/student at Birkdale School, the concern:

- Must be passed on orally to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy (DSL/D) (in person or by phone) straight away.
- Should then be written down, given to the DSL/D & kept in the pupil/student's safeguarding file.
- The DSL/D may do quick checks within school and with other agencies. These checks should not delay referral of a pupil/student who is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
- **Please note: parents may be informed ONLY if permission to do so is given by the local authority and/or police.**

How a member of staff or volunteer must respond to a disclosure:

- Yours is a listening role, do not interrupt the child if he or she is freely recalling significant events.
- Remain calm and do not overreact – the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting their listener.
- You may give reassuring nods or words of comfort – e.g. 'I'm so sorry about this', 'I want to help', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'.
- Do not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. This may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused.
- Do not be afraid of silences – staff must remember how hard this must be for the pupil.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' or 'I can't believe what I'm hearing' may be the staff member's way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong.
- Do not attempt to investigate the matter under discussion.
- If questions are needed to clarify understanding, they should be framed in an open manner in order to not lead the child in any way.
- You must report orally to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or in his/her absence to a DSD immediately, speaking or communicating with no other person.

- Make a note of the discussion, as soon as is reasonably practicable (but within 24 hours) to pass on to the designated senior person. The note should record the time, date, place and people who were present as well as what was said. Remember, your note of the discussion may need to be used in any subsequent court proceedings. These notes should use the pupil's words and be included in the details of the concern section of the report and uploaded as an attachment to any online recording system. It will also include the **time, date and place of the disclosure**. It should be factual and differentiate between fact/ opinion/ interpretation. The more detail the better. The original notes must be passed to the DSL or DSD for secure filing.
- Whilst you may express sympathy and empathy and comment on the difficulty that the child may have had in speaking out, do not say that you believe the child.

Your response will include:

- Do tell the pupil what happens next: who will be told.
- Keep the pupil in a place of safety. Do not leave them alone.
- If the pupil is in need of medical attention, take them to a matron.
- Do not ask the pupil to reveal any part of their body not normally clothed even if they offer to do so.
- Do not discuss the disclosure with any person other than the DSL or a DSD.
- Do not discuss the matter with the parents of the child: it is a matter for the DSL or a DSD guided by external agencies whether or not it is appropriate for parents to be informed.
- Do not attempt to resolve the matter in part or whole yourself: this is entirely a matter for the DSL and his/her team and external agencies.
- Remember you are not the police or Social Services: simply listen, record and report.
- Do seek support from the DSL or a DSD: receiving a disclosure may be stressful and disturbing.

Your responsibility in terms of referring concerns ends at this point, but you may have a future role in terms of supporting or monitoring the child, contributing to an assessment or implementing child protection plans.

Actions by the DSL or DSDs

If the child & family need early support from other agencies, the DSL or DSD will:

With consent, complete an Early Help Assessment (EHA) form part 1 (for single issue) or Family Common Assessment (FCAF) (for multiple issues) & send securely to MAST to discuss at a Team around the Family (TAF) or Early Help Gateway (EHG) Meeting to coordinate support. (All documents available via the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub)

If there are complex needs or if the support given has not had a positive outcome the DSL or DSD will:

- Complete an FCAF/MyPlan/Education, Health & Care Plan with the parents, carers & any practitioners who are already involved
- Obtain consent to share this information with the required services (using an interpreter if the family do not speak/understand English well)
- Send the information securely to Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST) to discuss at the Multi-Agency Complex Case Panel (MACCP)
- Attend the MACCP to discuss the assessment and what services are available to offer support

The DSL/D will refer a child or young person that is 'suffering or likely to suffer significant harm':

- immediately to the social worker (or their manager) if one is allocated to the child

- If no allocated social worker, immediately to Sheffield Safeguarding Hub, tel. 2734855

Please note that you may inform parents ONLY if given permission to do so by the local authority and/or police.

The Sheffield Safeguarding Hub:

- will collect information from involved agencies and decide what further action is required
- does not take calls ‘for information only’ – record such information on the setting’s system
- DSL/Ds must follow up their referral in writing on a Multi-Agency Confirmation Form (MACF) within 24 hours, and send via the AnyComms system
- The Hub must acknowledge receipt of the MACF within 72 hours and feedback on the outcome.

Transparency

Birkdale prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the school. Copies of this policy, together with our other policies relating to issues of child protection (Anti-bullying, Interaction with Pupils – Model Code of Conduct for Staff Missing Pupils, Managing Images of Children), are on our website and we hope that parents and guardians will always feel able to take up any issues or worries that they may have with the school. We will never ignore an allegation of child abuse and will always investigate any concerns thoroughly.

Making a referral: checklist for DSL/DSD:

Please note that Parental Consent is not required and that you may inform parents ONLY if given permission to do so by the local authority and/or police.

- Ensure you have all of the pupil/student's education & safeguarding information with you
- Call from a place where you will not be interrupted or overheard inappropriately
- Describe the incident or the concern and provide information about:

The child/young person:

- Name, address, date of birth
- Presentation, hygiene, home environment
- Academic ability and achievement
- Attendance, punctuality, how long on roll
- Behaviour, response to rules & boundaries
- Relationships, bullying, discrimination
- Child/young person's view about their home life
- Health issues, learning difficulties/needs

The family:

- Who has parental responsibility for the pupil?
- Who do they live with?
- If anyone involved has any special needs
- Who accompanies the pupil to school events?
- Other significant friends or relatives
- Parenting concerns such as domestic abuse, mental health, substance misuse
- Care, safety, guidance, protection, emotional support
- Family history, functioning
- Environmental issues, housing, finance, unemployment, social & community integration

Early Intervention:

- What support are you currently offering?
- Have you tried other support and did it work?
- Other services involved with the child/family
- Previous education settings attended
- Previous/current assessments

12 Responsibilities: the DSL and DSDs

Currently named:

Mrs J. McDermott Deputy Head of Birkdale Prep School (including the role of practitioner to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children within the EYFS setting) Based at Clarke House. Ext: 503
Mr. P. King Deputy Head of Birkdale Senior School. Based at Senior School. His office is located on the first floor of the Oakholme building. Ext: 606 Direct line: 0114 229 6606

The designated safeguarding leads liaise with the local authority and will work with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. There is always cover for this role.

The Role of Online Safety Coordinator is included with the job description of the DSL.

If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to children's social care immediately. Anybody can make a referral.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead undergoes updated advanced child protection training every two years. They also receive regular updates through e-mails, the web-links and their Safeguarding Portal. The Head and all staff members should undergo child protection training which is updated regularly (usually every 3 years, and from Sept 2018 every year, and as part of the Induction Process for new staff), in line with advice from the Sheffield SCB.

This training will include all elements of the safeguarding policy, indicators of abuse, procedures for reporting including 'whistleblowing', the role of the Safeguarding lead and other significant staff, plus important contact details. Furthermore, Induction training also includes Staff Code of Conduct, the Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Part 1 of KCSIE, and 'Educare Safeguarding Training and Refresher Updates'.

- The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead is critical to the effective operation of child protection procedures within the school. On a day-to-day basis, they will be the main point of contact both for staff within the school and for outside agencies seeking contact with the school on child protection matters.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead needs to ensure their own knowledge of child protection matters is up to date through regular attendance at authority and inter-agency training events.
- They should also develop and maintain effective working relationships with their counterparts in other agencies. Within the school they will have a key role in developing staff understanding of child protection, their roles in relation to child protection and the procedures to be followed in cases of serious concern.
- They need to keep their deputy fully informed of developments. They will also be responsible for overseeing the planning of appropriate curricular provision designed to help children become good parents and to protect themselves from the risk of abuse. They will also be responsible for managing risk from drug-related incidents in school.

In cases of alleged or suspected abuse, they have the following responsibilities:

- to listen to and record staff concerns, seeking further information from other staff if necessary;
- to have in place an appropriate and secure record system for child protection information, which takes account of the requirements of data protection;
- to observe the child;
- if necessary, to seek advice from the Sheffield Safeguarding Partners within 24 hours and/or from the person designated as a point of reference in the local inter agency guidelines.

NB Seeking advice from another agency will not be considered by them as a referral, and they cannot be expected to act as a result of such a phone call;

- to arrive at a judgement as to whether there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that the

child is at risk of abuse.

- If the Designated Safeguarding Lead concludes that further referral is inappropriate at this time, they should discuss the concerns with the Head of Prep/Head to:
- consider what action the school needs to take to provide further support for the child in question;
- where appropriate, put in place logging arrangements to ensure that additional relevant information is gathered; and
- decide how best to advise the parents of the identified concerns.
- together they should record, sign and date brief details of the concern and the decision made within the school child protection log.
- If there is evidence of the need to protect the child the Designated Safeguarding Lead should:
 - discuss the concerns with the Head of Prep/Head (unless the Head of Prep/Head is directly implicated in the concerns in which case contact should be made with the authority's nominated LADO, or in the case of an independent school, the Chair of Governors, or of the relevant governors' subcommittee) to consider whether immediate action is necessary to protect the child (e.g. can the child be allowed to return home that lunchtime/ afternoon?) and what action the school itself should take to provide further support for the child;
 - explain to the child (or ensure that another member of staff, in whom the child has confidence, explains) what actions the school is going to take, and, as far as is known, what is likely to happen as a result; make a child protection referral in accordance with local arrangements, initially by telephone, to be followed up by a written referral copied to the authority designated LADO, or, in the case of an independent school, to the chair of the relevant governors' subcommittee. **NB The responsibility for making a formal child protection referral rests with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, not with the Head of Prep/Head.**

Following on from the initial referral, it is the Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer's responsibility, with others to:

- prepare and oversee the implementation of a school support plan for the child or young person. As part of that plan, consideration should be given to which staff (including any temporary or supply staff) require information and how much information they require, bearing in mind both issues of confidentiality and the need for the child to be adequately supported;
- co-ordinate the preparation of reports on the child in response to requests from other agencies. (Even where the meeting will be attended by a school representative, a report should be prepared for inclusion in the conference papers;)
- attend (or arrange for a more suitable nominee to attend) case conferences; core group meetings and Children's Hearings as required, and see that school contributions to a child protection plan are implemented.

The DSL meets with the Safeguarding Governor at least three times a year to go through the Safeguarding Policy updates, training plans and caseload trends.

Other responsibilities of the DSL and DSDs to be incorporated into job descriptions as appropriate:

- The DSL and DSDs will be responsible to the Head and to the governors for the effective discharge of the safeguarding responsibilities of the DST; they will liaise with the Head and governors as required and at least on a termly basis.
- The DSL and DSDs will act immediately when it becomes aware of any disclosure or allegation or a child at risk, liaising directly with the three safeguarding partners: the local authority and local

children's services; the chief officer of police for the area; and the Integrated Care Boards for the area, as guided by *Working Together*. Where the School is named as a relevant agency the DSL will note and abide by the statutory duties required.

- The DSL is responsible for ensuring that suitable and up-to-date safeguarding training is provided for themselves, the senior leadership, governors, staff including those working in EYFS and boarding, HR personnel, pupils, parents, contractors and visitors and that suitable confidential records are kept of this training as set down in above.
- The DSL and DSDs will promote an environment within which the vulnerable children are protected, including when appropriate ensuring that staff are aware of, and are provided with the means to support, the specific needs of particular children, including children with a social worker; a culture of high aspirations for these children will be maintained. This may mean sharing information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children are experiencing or have experienced, with teachers and the school leadership team.
- The DSL and DSDs will provide guidance and support for staff in all areas relating to safeguarding, including information about and the management of: disclosures of abuse; allegations against staff; reports of extremism, instances of child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment and child sexual violence; examples of bullying which may be regarded as a safeguarding matter, i.e. when they are sufficiently serious as to cause or threaten significant harm; online safety; and children in need of support and early intervention.
- The DSL and DSDs will ensure that suitable measures are in place to provide pupils with effective education for safeguarding themselves including when online including when they are online at home or away from school.
- Online safety training for which the DSL takes overall responsibility should cover the 4 areas of risk: content, contact, conduct and commerce and include awareness of the dangers of online challenges, misinformation and hoaxes.
- The DSL will ensure that suitable measures are in place to filter and monitor the use of the Internet at School, to alert the DSL to any problematic use, and to provide guidance on the use of 'smart' systems including 3G/4G/5G technology.
- The DSL will liaise with pastoral staff to promote an environment in which pupils feel safe and able to speak to adults about their concerns.
- The DSL will consider and provide suitable mechanisms through which both pupils and parents may be involved in supporting the school in its approach to safeguarding.
- The DSL will provide continuing support to a pupil about whom there has been concerns and who leaves the school by ensuring that appropriate information is provided or copied as guided by local children's services under confidential and secure cover to the child's new setting and ensuring the School medical records and safeguarding files are forwarded as a matter of priority.
- The DSL will notify children's social care if a child with a child protection plan is absent for more than two days without explanation (or sooner if required by the social worker)
- The School will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents unless otherwise guided by local children's services and/or the police. This must be handled sensitively, and a member of the DST will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure. This may be delegated to another member of the Pastoral Staff, depending on the severity of the concern.

- However, if the School believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and if necessary the police.
- Pupils and their parents have access to a complaints procedure in relation to issues affecting their welfare.
- Where at risk children leave the School, the DSL will ensure that their child protection files are securely transferred to their new school as soon as possible and that the relevant local agencies are notified of the child's departure.
- The DSL and the DSDs will be aware of updated guidance in the latest edition of KCSIE, including: on appropriate adults, forced marriages, county lines, Operation Encompass which provides emotional and practical help to children e.g. in cases of Domestic Abuse, and obtaining further resources on Child Sexual Abuse.
- The DSL will be mindful of the Statutory guidance PACE Code C 2019 – Appropriate adult. [PACE Code C 2019 \(accessible\) - GOV.UK](#)

13 Other Responsibilities

The Safeguarding Governor and the Governing Body

In recognition of Section 175, Education Act 2002 & The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 which require governing bodies of all schools to make arrangements to safeguard & promote the welfare of children.

The Governing body of Birkdale School have a senior board level lead to take leadership responsibility for their safeguarding arrangements (Working Together to Safeguard Children, DfE 2020). As a governing body they ensure that the school complies with all necessary duties under all legislation & ensure that the school policies, procedures & training are effective & compliant. The Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership requires that Safeguarding Governors attend Governors Safeguarding Training.

The following applies:

The governors will monitor and challenge appropriately the DSL and team and the senior leadership of the school to ensure that the safeguarding policy is effectively implemented, using as appropriate: visits to the School; discussions with staff and with pupils; staff, pupil and parental questionnaires and surveys; scrutiny of records relating to safeguarding, bullying and behaviour, and early help and interventions.

A designated member of the governing body (SG) will be assigned to liaise on all safeguarding matters with the DSL and the leadership of the School and local children's and other services;

The Safeguarding Governor will meet regularly with the DSL and DSDs to ensure that all documentation is updated and that the school systems are robust. They will also present the policy and notebook to a Full Governing Body and make a report regarding safeguarding matters.

The governors shall receive an annual safeguarding audit from the DSL and team.

The governors will review the safeguarding policy and its implementation at least annually.

Should there be an allegation against the Head, the Chair of Governors will immediately contact the designated officer for the local authority and if appropriate will liaise with the DSG in managing the allegation.

The governors will ensure that they receive suitable and regular safeguarding training from the senior leadership, DST and external sources.

This training will include (in accordance with the latest edition of KCSIE): updated guidance on forced marriages, county lines, Operation Encompass which provides emotional and practical help to children e.g. in cases of Domestic Abuse, and obtaining further resources on Child Sexual Abuse.

The Chair of Governors will be responsible for liaising with the relevant external agencies in the event of there being a safeguarding allegation against the Head.

The governors will ensure that relevant staff have due regard to the relevant data protection principles which allow them to share or withhold as appropriate personal information, as provided for in the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018: practitioners may share safeguarding personal information without consent where this will enhance the safeguarding of a child; where serious harm is possible, again this is a good reason for withholding information.

Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. In cases of doubt, legal advice should be sought.

Senior Leadership and Head

The senior leadership will include the designated safeguarding leads.

The senior leadership must monitor and challenge the DSL and team in an appropriate manner to ensure that it discharges its duties effectively.

At least once each term, the Head will meet with the DSL and team as a whole.

The senior leadership shall receive an annual safeguarding audit from the DSL.

The senior leadership shall ensure that all members of the safeguarding team are effectively trained and that this training is up-to-date.

The senior leadership should ensure that the DSL and DSDs and members of staff generally understand and act appropriately with regard to pupils with particular vulnerabilities and sensitivities and needs, and those with SEND and EAL and those who are looked after or who are being supported by local agencies.

The senior leadership must ensure that IT systems and their use in the school are subject to appropriate filtering and monitoring.

The Head will be responsible for liaising with the relevant external agencies in the event of their being a safeguarding allegation against a member of staff.

The Head must have an overview and also understand how to deal with, record and if necessary report low-level concerns as well as allegations.

The Head and senior leadership will be aware of updated guidance in the latest edition of KCSIE, including: on forced marriages, county lines, Operation Encompass which provides emotional and practical help to children e.g. in cases of Domestic Abuse, and obtaining further resources on Child Sexual Abuse.

Staff

Members of staff should have a suitable understanding of KCSIE and of this safeguarding policy, of the types and signs of abuse.

Members of staff should have a suitable understanding of the management of disclosures, allegations and other safeguarding concerns.

Members of staff must understand that if there is a risk of immediate harm to a child, they should act immediately. Delay is unacceptable.

Members of staff should follow the guidelines set down for listening to children, avoiding leading questions or avowals of belief in what is being disclosed by the child.

Members of staff must never promise confidentiality to a pupil when this may compromise their safety or well-being.

All staff must be aware that the school has a professional as well as legal responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

Although they should understand that the DSL and DSDs are there to provide guidance and act on behalf of the child and the School, members of staff should be aware that anyone may make a referral to children's services or the police.

Members of staff should never contact parents themselves: this is a matter for the DSL or for the police and/or local agencies.

Members of staff should not assume that another colleague or professional will take action on a safeguarding matter and should contact the DSL or appropriate external agency.

If members of staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, speaking to the DSL or a member of the DST.

Members of staff may use the school's whistleblowing procedures noted in this policy to draw attention in good faith to any perceived failing with regard to safeguarding practice either in individual cases or concerning more general circumstances.

Every member of staff should play their part in providing a safe and listening environment for pupils.

The School's Staff Code of Conduct sets out our expectations of staff and is read and agreed by all staff members, with particular regard to safeguarding matters including staff/pupil relationships and the use of social media, but also taking note of the following requirements:

- treating all pupils with respect
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- involving pupils in decisions that affect them
- encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils
- being a good listener
- being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- reading, understanding and putting into practice, the school's child protection policy, staff code of conduct and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, physical contact, sexual exploitation, extremism, e-safety and information-sharing
- asking the pupil's permission before initiating physical contact, such as assisting with physical support during PE, Music or Drama or administering first aid
- maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between pupils and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse, (contextual safeguarding).
- applying the use of reasonable force only as a last resort and in compliance with School and the local authority's Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures
- referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the DSL, or, if necessary, directly to police or children's social care
- abiding by the guidance provided on the use of cameras and mobile technology in the EYFS: only school equipment may be used and with the written permission of the Head of EYFS who will take note of any restrictions regarding individual children.

All School staff will be aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual.

This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that pupil is over the age of consent.

It is also viewed as a gross abuse of trust if there is a relationship between a member of staff and pupil over the age of 18.

Any member of staff leading a trip or visit outside of School should liaise with the person responsible for educational visits and the DSL and DSDs to ensure that all appropriate safeguards are in place.

All staff must follow the guidance provided on the use of cameras and mobile technology, noting that images of pupils and children in EYFS should only be taken on school equipment.

Pupils

Pupils should work with the School to ensure that all may enjoy a safe and productive environment.

Pupils should have the confidence to report any concerns, either about themselves or others, to a member of staff or other trusted adult including for LGBTQ+ pupils.

Pupils should not put themselves at risk online or in the public arena, following the guidance provided through PSHE and through other elements of the educational process in the School.

The School is committed to ensuring that pupils are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe and how to complain. All pupils know that we have a Designated Safeguarding Lead with responsibility for child protection and know who this is.

We inform pupils to whom they might talk, both in and out of School, of their right to be listened to and heard, and of what steps can be taken to protect them from harm. They are taught to understand that the law is there to protect them.

The School is committed to ensuring there are opportunities in the curriculum, for example through the PSHE curriculum and by providing an age-related, comprehensive curriculum, for pupils to be taught about aspects of safeguarding in order to develop the knowledge and skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse, including online safety. We do this by:

- emphasising the importance of preventative education regarding sexual violence harassment;
- developing healthy relationships and awareness of domestic violence, bullying, child sexual exploitation, sexual orientation, gender-based violence, hate, relationship abuse, faith abuse and other forms of abuse;
- recognising and managing risks (including online) such as cyberbullying, online grooming for sexual exploitation and radicalisation, and running away;
- enabling pupils to become safe and responsible users of new technologies and the impact of new technologies on sexual behaviour for example, upskirting, sexting and accessing pornography;
- enabling pupils to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes consistent with the promotion of the **Fundamental British Values** of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith;
- recognising how pressure from others can affect their behaviour, including the risks of radicalisation to extremist behaviour;
- ensuring pupils have the opportunity to discuss controversial issues and develop tolerance and respect for others;
- raising awareness of child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, so-called 'honour-based' abuse, female genital mutilation and forced marriage;
- making available appropriate local and online advice.

Additional aspects of safeguarding included in the curriculum are risks associated with:

- substance misuse
- online challenges, misinformation and hoaxes
- knives, gangs and serious violence
- mental health
- water, fire, roads and railways

Parents

Parents must understand that, whilst the School will endeavour to involve them in matters relating to their children, the School may not, without proper authority to do so, relate the details or even fact

of a disclosure to them: this will be the case when to do so may undermine the safety or well-being of a child: guidance is always sought from local children's services and/or the police on such occasions.

Parents are expected to support the safeguarding work of the School including with regard to keeping children safe online including from cyberbullying, online challenges, misinformation, and hoaxes.

Parents should follow any guidance given regarding the use of cameras and mobile technology when in the School or attending an event at the School.

14 Staff Training

The named Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) will attend **advanced safeguarding** training every two years and is expected to remain updated from the Sheffield Safeguarding Partners Updates Service.

Training in safeguarding and child protection, is updated in accordance with the requirements of the local safeguarding authority for the head and all staff, and all part-time and voluntary staff who work with children are to be made aware of the arrangements. This training will include all elements of the safeguarding policy, indicators of abuse, procedures for reporting including 'whistle-blowing', the role of the Safeguarding lead and other significant staff, plus important contact details. All staff are trained in how to report and how to manage a report, either to the DSL, or directly to the Safeguarding Partnership.

All staff annually read the latest version of KCSIE, Part 1 and Annex B, and sign to confirm that they have read and understood the contents.

All staff are also required to complete online Safeguarding courses which are assessed to demonstrate understanding of safeguarding. Safeguarding training is also given to new Governors and volunteers. Update training is given to everyone at least annually.

There are regular updates and reminders throughout the year.

Induction and training

Every new member of staff, including part-timers, temporary, visiting and contract staff working in school, receives basic training on their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and bullying, including an understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to internet filtering and monitoring systems, and on the procedures for recording and referring any concerns to the DSL or Head as part of the induction process.

In particular, this induction training will provide new staff with the school Safeguarding Policy, the staff Code of Conduct (staff behaviour policy which includes information on the use of social media by staff), KCSIE (September 2023), with specific reference to Part 1 and Annex B, the pupil behaviour policy, the anti-bullying policy, the Relationship and Sex Education policy, the Children Missing from Education policy (see section 10 of this policy), the Online Safety policy and acceptable use of IT document, and the whistle-blowing procedures. In addition, all new staff will be made aware of the identity and contact details for the DSL and DSDs.

New staff are required to sign to say that they have received the copy of KCSIE and understood its contents and all staff are led through updates to KCSIE during staff INSET.

All staff will be trained to manage a report of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment (permissible not to be included in policy but should be done in practice).

All governors will receive induction training, which will include all the required elements for staff, on appointment and also regular updates and specialised training to help them fulfil their roles and responsibilities with regard to safeguarding. The safeguarding governor will receive additional training to support their focused responsibilities.

All Senior School Prefects and Learning Mentors are given leadership training that includes making sure that the younger pupils are kept safe, and on the appropriate action that they should take if they discover that a pupil is being bullied or abused.

During training and through the staff code of conduct advice is provided on Interaction with Pupils:

In general, pupils should be encouraged to discuss with their parents or guardians issues that are troubling them.

Staff need to ensure that their behaviour does not inadvertently lay them open to allegations of

abuse. They need to treat all pupils with respect and try, as far as possible, not to be alone with a child or young person.

Where this is not possible, for example, in an instrumental music lesson, or sports coaching lesson, it is good practice to ensure that others are within earshot. Where possible, a gap or barrier should be maintained between teacher and child at all times.

Any physical contact should be the minimum required for care, instruction or restraint. Staff should avoid taking one pupil on his/her own in a car.

Communication with Pupils

Staff should not give their personal mobile phone numbers to pupils, nor should they communicate with them by text message or personal email. If they need to speak to a pupil by telephone, they should use one of the school's telephones.

The group leader on all trips and visits involving an overnight stay should take a school mobile phone with him/her and may ask the pupils for their mobile numbers before allowing them out in small, unsupervised groups.

The school mobile should be used for any contact with pupils that may be necessary. The group leader will delete any record of pupils' mobile phone numbers at the end of the trip or visit.

Physical Restraint

Any physical restraint is only permissible when a child is in imminent danger of inflicting an injury on himself/herself or on another, and then only as a last resort, when all efforts to diffuse the situation have failed. Another member of staff should, if possible, be present to act as a witness.

All incidents of the use of physical restraint should be recorded in writing and reported immediately to the Head. The Head and Safeguarding Lead will decide what to do next.

Sheffield Safeguarding 'Behaviour Guidelines'

Staff and volunteers should read these guidelines alongside their employer's code of conduct

DO NOT:

- Use your position to gain access to any information for your own advantage or another persons' detriment
- Intimidate, threaten, bully, coerce or undermine anyone
- Use racist, sexist, homophobic or other language or behaviour that is derogatory or oppressive to others
- Engage in any sexual activity (even consensual) with a student under 18 years or a 'vulnerable adult' who is attending your educational setting
- Play games or have physical contact with a student that is inappropriate
- Use disproportionate force when addressing student behaviour
- Jump to any personal conclusions about staff, volunteers or student's behaviour
- Investigate any allegations about the behaviour of staff and volunteers yourself
- Make suggestive remarks or gestures, tell jokes of a sexual nature or engage in inappropriate verbal banter with students
- Create any personal relationship with a student where one does not already exist
- Give any personal details about yourself or others to a student unless you have agreed this with a senior member of staff
- Befriend or communicate with a student via personal internet accounts, social networking, apps

or other electronic medium

- Rely on your good name or reputation to protect you when you behave inappropriately - it may not be enough

DO:

- Encourage discussion about safeguarding amongst staff, governors, students, mothers and fathers (or carers) and volunteers
- Report all health & safety issues without delay
- Keep students safe and protect them from physical, sexual and emotional harm & neglect
- Look after yourself
- Treat everyone with respect
- Be a positive role model and behave in a way that you wish others to follow
- Work with another appropriate adult in all planned activities whenever possible
- Risk-assess all situations when you are working alone with a student and make sure you are seen and/or heard by others
- Respect peoples' right to personal privacy
- Create an environment in which people feel comfortable in pointing out attitudes and behaviours they don't like
- Report and challenge all inappropriate and/or abusive activities, such as ridicule, threats, intimidation, bullying and discrimination
- Familiarise yourself with all aspects of your settings' code of conduct
- Report any gifts or money you are given as part of your role at work, and ensure they are not of significant value or intention
- Give gifts (never money) to students only as part of an agreed reward system
- Report all concerns and allegations of abuse to students or vulnerable adults, directly to your Designated Safeguarding Lead, Head Teacher or Senior Manager as appropriate

Remember: someone may misinterpret your actions, however well intentioned.

Ask yourself: are my actions fair, reasonable, warranted, proportionate, measured, safe and applied equally?

15 Allegations of abuse against and low-level concerns relating to staff & volunteers

These procedures apply where an adult who works (paid or unpaid) with children or young people at Birkdale School has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children

Birkdale School has a duty of care to employees and should:

- Act to minimise the stress in this process

- Inform employees as soon as possible unless the police object
- Provide appropriate support
- Appoint a named person to keep the employee informed of the progress of the case
- Advise about contacting a trade union representative
- Give access to welfare counselling or medical advice if provided by the employer
- Maintain confidentiality
- Advise all parties about reporting restrictions preventing the publication of any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who has been accused by, or on behalf of, a pupil from the same school or college

Organisations or Individuals using the school premises

If the school receives an allegation or low-level concern about an individual or organisation using the school premises for the purposes of running activities for children it will follow its own established safeguarding policy and procedures including informing the LADO.

Allegations and Low-level Concerns

It is an allegation if the person 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 indicated 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.

The term 'low-level concern' does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that it does not meet the criteria above.

A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

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

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

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

We believe that low-level concerns should not be ignored or discounted; we seek to

- encourage an open and transparent culture;
- enable us to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early;
- minimise the risk of abuse;
- ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the institution;
- ensure that we learn lessons from allegations in all cases including those not proven or unsubstantiated.

All allegations and low-level concerns should be:

- Dealt with in the first instance by the Head (Whole School) who may contact the LADO to discuss how the School should proceed. If the Head (Whole School) is unavailable concerns should be dealt with by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) of the Senior School.
- If the Head (Whole School) contacts the LADO, the Chair of Governors should be notified and made aware of any allegations made against staff but will be anonymised.
- Where the allegation or low-level concern involves the Head (Whole School) or where there is a perceived conflict of interest, the Chair of Governors should be contacted first (chairofgovernors@birkdaleschool.org.uk) and they will liaise with the Safeguarding Governor over the course of action to be taken.
- Responded to quickly, fairly & consistently, protecting the child/young person, whilst supporting the person subject to the allegation

And, for allegations or for low-level concerns which may have more serious repercussions:

- There will be discussion with and referral to the LADO: in all cases of doubt the LADO will be contacted to discuss the low-level concern to ascertain whether or not it meets the local authority criteria for an allegation.

For all low-level concerns:

- Records of low-level concerns will be maintained by the Head and reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and responded to.
- Where a pattern of behaviour is identified, the school will decide on a course of action. This might be internal disciplinary procedures, or referral to the LADO if the harms threshold is met.
- The school will consider if any wider cultural issues in school that enabled the behaviour to occur and if appropriate policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of recurrence.
- The Safeguarding Governor will routinely meet the Head (Whole School) to discuss recently reported low-level concerns. These will be anonymised with a focus on identifying patterns of behaviour.

The Head (Whole School) should inform the LADO immediately of all allegations that may meet the criteria for allegations so they can consider the nature, content and context and agree a course of action (see process checklist below).

The Head will maintain a record of all allegations and low-level concerns.

Appendix B provides further details of the procedures involved and the actions to be taken.

16 Use of mobile technology

The School's policy on the use of mobile technology, including phones and cameras, in the School, is described in detail in the Online Safety Policy and within the 'Acceptable User Agreements' and is described as follows:

There is a School's acceptable use policy for pupils which sets out the expectations on pupils.

The School's approach to online safety is set out in the School's Online Safety Policy.

Pupils are reminded that inappropriate use of 3G, 4G and 5G technology on pupils' devices, in school or on a school activity, will result in disciplinary action being taken.

All staff should use mobile technology in accordance with the guidance set out in the staff code of conduct and acceptable use policy;

Parents of all pupils may bring mobile devices onto the premises but may only take photographs during events such as plays, concerts or sporting events for personal use and are told not to post on social media if there are other pupils in the picture.

Parents should be reminded that the publication of such images (including on personal social networking sites even where access to the image may be limited) may be unlawful.

17 EYFS Policy for the use of Cameras and Mobile Phones

To ensure the safety and welfare of the children in our care this policy outlines the protocols for the use of personal mobile phones, and cameras in the EYFS setting.

- Personal mobile phones, cameras and video recorders cannot be used when in the presence of children either on school premises or when on outings.
- All mobile phones must be stored securely within the setting during contact time with children. (This includes staff, visitors, parents, volunteers and students).
- No parent is permitted to use their mobile phone or use its camera facility whilst inside school buildings. School policy regarding this matter should be explained clearly to Parents by the EYFS manager.
- Mobile phones must not be used in any teaching area within the setting or within the bathroom area.
- In the case of a personal emergency staff should use the school telephone. It is the responsibility of all staff to make families aware of the school telephone numbers.
- Personal calls may be made in non-contact time but not within the teaching areas.
- Personal mobiles, cameras or video recorders should not be used to record classroom activities. ONLY school equipment should be used.
- Photographs and recordings can only be transferred to and stored on a school computer before printing.
- All telephone contact with Parents/Carers must be made on the school telephone and should be recorded.
- During group outings nominated staff will have access to the school mobile which can be used in an emergency or for contact purposes.
- In the case of school productions, Parents/Carers are permitted to take photographs of their own child in accordance with school protocols which strongly advise against the publication of any such photographs on Social networking sites.

18 Whistleblowing

What to do if you have a concern about an adult or adults within the school with regard to safeguarding or child protection:

There are four types of concern which you might have any of which may cause you to consider 'whistleblowing': it is essential that you follow the guidance below:

1. Where you have a well-defined child protection concern (**an allegation**) about an adult in the school, follow the guidance above.
 - Your concern should be referred directly to the Head (Whole School) without discussing the matter with any other person including the person about whom you have a concern.
 - However, if your concern is about the Head (Whole School), this should be referred directly to the Chair of Governors without discussing the matter with the Head (Whole School) or any other person.
2. Where you have a general worry, niggling doubt or **low-level concern** about an adult in the school, follow the guidance above.
 - Your concern should be referred directly to the Head (Whole School) without discussing the matter with any other person including the person about whom you have a concern.
 - However, if your concern is about the Head, this should be referred directly to the Chair of governors without discussing the matter with the Head (Whole School) or any other person.
3. Where you have a concern about the way with which the School is approaching a specific safeguarding case or matter.
 - This should be referred to the Head (Whole School) or to the Safeguarding Governor of the Chair of Governors.
4. Where you have a general concern about the way in which the School deals with safeguarding and child protection matters.
 - This should be referred to the Head (Whole School) or to the Safeguarding Governor of the Chair of Governors.

Although you should normally raise your concern internally as above, in each case you may:

- refer your concern directly to the local children's services 0114 273 4450; email: scsp@sheffield.gov.uk; and if you believe a crime has been committed the police
- contact the Independent Schools Inspectorate 0207 600 0100 or email concerns@isi.net
- contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline: 0800 028 0285

Other forms of whistleblowing not related to safeguarding are dealt with in the School's Whistleblowing Policy.

Useful resources:

- 'Whistleblowing to Ofsted about safeguarding in local authority children's services', Ofsted April 2014
- Public Concern at Work, tel. 020 7404 6609 or email: whistle@pcaw.org.uk
- Ofsted Whistleblowing Hotline tel. 0300 1233155, 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, or email: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk or write to WBHL, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD
- Sir Robert Francis's 'Freedom to Speak Up Review'
- 'Whistleblowing procedure for maintained schools', DFE 2014

19 Useful Contact Details

The Sheffield Safeguarding Partners and the Safeguarding Children and Independent Reviewing Service are based on Floor 3, Howden House, Union Street, S1 2SH. Their contact details are below.
Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP):

Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership is the statutory body responsible for overseeing safeguarding children arrangements in the city.

The Sheffield Safeguarding Hub can be contacted 24 hours a day at tel: **0114 273 4450**; email: sheffieldsafeguardinghub@sheffield.gov.uk

The areas of responsibility of the SCSP include:

- **Substance Misuse Manager: Mandy Craig, tel: 0114 205 8214 or email: Mandy.Craig@sheffield.gov.uk**
- **Licensing Manager: Julie Hague, tel: 0114 273 6753 or email: Julie.Hague@sheffield.gov.uk for advice about safeguarding children on licensed premises and taxi and hospitality services**
- **Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP): Diane Shahlavi, tel: 0114 205 3846 or email: cdop@sheffield.gov.uk**

Sheffield Safeguarding Children & Independent Reviewing Service:

Sheffield Safeguarding Children and Independent Reviewing Service is responsible for the reviews of children in care and those subject to child protection plans. It also employs the Early Years and Education Advisors and is responsible for safeguarding children training.

Our office hours are: 8.45am to 5.15pm Monday - Thursday and 8.45am to 4.45pm Friday, tel: **0114 273 4934**, email: child.protection@sheffield.gov.uk

The areas of responsibility of the service include:

- **Safeguarding Children Training: tel: 0114 273 4530; email: safeguardingchildretraining@sheffield.gov.uk**
- **Child Protection Enquiry Team (CPET): tel: 0114 273 4925**
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and Prevent:**
Hannah Appleyard, tel: **0114 273 4850**
To make a referral, download the [LADO referral form](#), complete & email securely to lado@sheffield.gcsx.gov.uk or fax to **0114 273 4628** or **0114 273 6239**
- **Safeguarding Children Advisors, Education:**
Emily Pickles and Nick Godfrey safeguardingchildrenadvisorseducation@sheffield.gov.uk
- **Safeguarding Children Advisor, Early Years:**
Val Linnett, tel.: **0114 273 5484** or email: val.linnett@sheffield.gov.uk
- **Child Protection Coordinators: tel.: 0114 273 5129 or 0114 273 4934**
For disagreements about whether a conference should be held about a child, the SSCB procedure should be followed.
- **Independent Reviewing Service: tel.: 0114 273 4994 for matters relating to the reviewing or**

monitoring of care plans for looked after children

Children's Social Care

For contact details for the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub, please follow this link: <https://www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org/scsp/safeguarding-information-and-resources/referring-a-safeguarding-concern-to-childrens-social-care>

For open cases, the contact details for the area teams in Children's Social Care are below:

North Children's Social Care: Sorby House, 42 Spital Hill, Sheffield, S4 7LG

Tel: **0114 203 9591** Fax: **0114 233 1042**

East Children's Social Care: Stadia Technology Park, Block D, 60 Shirland Lane, S9 3SP

Tel: **0114 203 7463** Fax: **0114 203 7510**

West Children's Social Care: Old Sharrow Junior School, South View Road, S7 1DB

Tel: **0114 273 4491** Fax: **0114 203 6370**

Children's Disabilities Service: Floor 6, North Wing, Moorfoot Building, S1 4PL

Tel.: **0114 273 5368**

Fostering and Adoption Services: Floor 7, Eastwing, Moorfoot Building, S1 4PL

Tel.: **0114 273 5075**

Safeguarding Children Advisory Service (practitioners only):

Mon – Fri, 09:00 - 17:00, tel.: **0114 205 3535**, or email: safeguardingchildrenadvice@sheffield.gov.uk

Multi-Agency Support Teams

Multi-Agency Support Teams and the agencies they work with aim to provide support to children, young people and their families, giving them help as early as possible, rather than entering crisis services at a late stage.

For more information about the support that MAST's can offer, follow this link for the Sheffield City Council website, [Community Support and Advice](#) page.

North MAST: Sorby House, 42 Spital Hill, S4 7LG

Tel: **0114 233 1189**; Fax: **0114 233 1042**; Email: northmast@sheffield.gov.uk

East MAST: First Floor, Shortbrook Primary School, Westfield Northway, S20 8FB

Tel: **0114 205 3635**; Fax: **0114 205 3639**; Email: eastmast@sheffield.gov.uk

West MAST: Old Sharrow Junior School, South View Road, S7 1DB

Tel: **0114 250 6865**; Fax: **0114 250 6713**; Email: westmast@sheffield.gov.uk

Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service

The Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service (SSES) is multi-agency team from Sheffield Futures, South Yorkshire Police, Barnardo's and Sheffield City Council, based at Star House.

The service is based on four principles:

- Prevention
- Protection
- Pursuit
- Prosecution

The needs and wishes of young people are at the centre of their work and the service is shaped by the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Advisory group, made of young people who have experience of sexual exploitation.

The service can be contacted by professionals or members of the public for advice on **0114 201 8645**.

20 Review and Development

Procedure

This document, together with the effectiveness of its procedures, will be reviewed annually by the Policy Committee and Governing Body and more frequently if events or legislation changes require.

Links with other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Staff Expectations and Code of Conduct
- Behaviour, Sanctions and Rewards Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Missing and Uncollected Pupil Policy
- Staff recruitment Selection and Disclosure Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Relationship and Sex Education Policy
- Safer Recruitment Guidelines: Part 3 DfE Statutory guidance for schools and colleges: Keeping children safe in education (September 2022)
- Staff Disciplinary Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy

Appendix A: Specific Forms of Abuse and Areas of Concern

Child Criminal exploitation (CCE)

CCE can occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

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

More information include definitions and indicators are included in Annex B of KCSIE 2023.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CSE can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. It can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity and may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media).

The above CCE indicators can also be indicators of CSE, as can:

- children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends; and
- children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant.

Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or maintain money other property; or obtain goods or services); and
- psychological, emotional or other abuse.

People are 'personally connected' when they are, or have been, married to each other or civil partners; or have agreed to marry or become civil partners. If the two people have been in an intimate relationship with each other, have shared parental responsibilities for the same child or they are relatives.

The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life.

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

Children who witness **domestic abuse** may amongst other indicators:

- become aggressive;
- display anti-social behaviour;
- demonstrate overnight incontinence (bed-wetting);
- suffer from depression or anxiety; and not do as well at school due to difficulties at home or disruption of moving to and from refuges.

Operation Encompass:

Operation Encompass is a national system operating in the majority of police forces across England. When the police have been called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the key adult (i.e. the DSL) at the School.

This ensure that the school has up to date information about the child's circumstances and can offer support to the child according to their needs.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline (24 hours, free and in confidence): 0808 2000 247

Operation Encompass: <https://www.operationencompass.org/>

County lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”.

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children’s homes and care homes.

Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

Further information on the signs of a child’s involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office. County Lines Toolkit For Professionals - The Children's Society in partnership with Victim Support and National Police Chiefs’ Council:

<https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/county-lines-toolkit>

Honour Based Abuse

(HBA) Honour-based abuse encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

Such abuse often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. Members of staff need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

If a member of staff has a concern regarding a child that may be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the DSL (or Deputy) who will activate safeguarding procedures. In the case of FGM, since 31 October 2015, there is a mandatory duty to report it to the police and inform the DSL.

Serious Violence

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

All staff should be aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery. Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office’s Preventing youth

violence and gang involvement and its Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance.

All staff should be aware of the indicators that children are at risk from or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include:

- increased absence from School;
- a change in friendships;
- relationships with older individuals or groups;
- a significant decline in performance;
- signs of self-harm;
- a significant change in wellbeing;
- signs of assault or unexplained injuries; or
- unexplained gifts or new possessions.

All staff should be aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence. These include:

- being male;
- having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from School;
- having experienced child maltreatment;
- having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

Any concerns about a child should be reported through the School safeguarding procedures and discussed with the designated safeguarding team.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM comprises all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or any other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Members of staff need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There is a range of potential indicators that a young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the young person. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. UK communities that are most at risk of FGM include Kenyan, Somali, Sudanese, Sierra Leonean, Egyptian, Nigerian and Eritrean. Non-African communities that practise FGM include Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdish, Indonesian and Pakistani. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject.

Suspensions may arise in a number of ways that a pupil is being prepared for FGM to take place abroad. These include knowing both that the family belongs to a community in which FGM is practised and is making preparations for the pupil to take a holiday, arranging vaccinations or planning absence from school. The pupil may also talk about a special procedure/ceremony that is going to take place.

Indicators that FGM may already have occurred include prolonged absence from school or other activities with noticeable behaviour change on return, possibly with bladder or menstrual problems. Some teachers have described how pupils find it difficult to sit still and look uncomfortable, or may complain about pain between their legs, or talk of something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about.

Further information about this topic may be found on pages 16-17 of the Government Publication 'Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation'.

Signs of sexual and emotional abuse related to FGM:

The persistent sexual or emotional maltreatment of a child: signs listed below taken from the publication 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015'. These may also be indications that a pupil has suffered FGM or may be at risk of FGM.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong;
- Parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder';
- Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child; and
- Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual abuse:

- Children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age;
- Children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you would not expect them to have;
- Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games; and
- Children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections or underage pregnancy.

Any member of staff who becomes concerned that a pupil may be at risk of FGM or who may have suffered FGM should report the matter to South Yorkshire Police by phoning 101 immediately. The police reporting duty is mandatory. The member of staff should also speak to the DSL.

Training about FGM and the responsibilities of the member of staff to report it is delivered to all staff as part of their induction training. It has also been delivered to staff who have been part of the school prior to 2015.

CSA centre of Expertise on Child Sexual abuse: <https://www.csacentre.org.uk/>

Mental Health

All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

The school will promote good mental health through:

- Educating all pupils about mental ill-health through assemblies, PHSE etc.
- Working with the whole family wherever possible
- Sharing information with all involved agencies

- Consulting involved adult mental health professionals & invite to all relevant multi-agency meetings
- Jointly assessing & planning with the family & involved services e.g. the Family Common Assessment Framework or Child in Need processes
- Ensuring identified children are supported as a 'young carer' where appropriate

The department has published advice and guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying, and Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools. In addition, Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among young people including its guidance Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges>

Its resources include social media, forming positive relationships, smoking and alcohol. See Rise Above for links to all materials and lesson plans.

Looked-After Children (LAC)

A 'Looked-After' Child is one who is subject to a care order (either an interim or a full care order), or who is voluntarily accommodated by the local authority. The most common reason for children to be looked after by the Local Authority is as a result of abuse and/or neglect.

Appropriate pastoral staff should have all the relevant information required about:

- The child's looked after legal status (i.e. they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with the parents' consent, or are under an interim or full care order)
- The levels of authority delegated to the carer by the local authority
- Details of the child's social worker
- The name of the Virtual College Head in the authority that looks after the child (a Virtual College Head is an officer employed by the local authority to promote the educational achievement of the child)

Any Looked-After Children (LAC) in the School are supported by a designated teacher, whose aim is to promote and support their educational progress.

A previously Looked-After Child remains potentially vulnerable, and, where relevant, all staff will be supported to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep him/her safe. In such a case the DSL and pastoral team would work closely with all agencies. The School recognises the need for prompt action to be taken when necessary to safeguard any LAC children, given their particular vulnerabilities.

Homelessness

There are many situations which are potentially harmful or concerns which may cause harm to children, and any evidence of any of these should be presented to the DST without delay.

Being or being at risk of becoming homeless present a real risk to a child's welfare. The DSLs are aware of the contact details and referral routes in the Local Housing authority so that they can raise concerns quickly where needed, together with a referral to Children's Social Care if a child is at risk of harm.

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness may include a family being asked to leave a property or other such as:

- Household debt
- Rent arrears
- Domestic abuse

- Anti-social behaviour

Child abduction

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers.

Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation.

As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to School on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. Many schools provide outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers or by local police staff.

It is important that lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers. Further information is available at: www.actionagainstabduction.org and www.clevernevergoes.org.

Children and the court system

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children 5-11-year olds and 12-17 year olds.

The guides explain each step of the process, support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained.

Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

Children with family members in prison

Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders, NICCO provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

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

Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in the Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance. Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modern-slavery-how-to-identify-and-support-victims>)

Cybercrime

Children with particular skill and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime.

If there are concerns about a child in this area, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), should consider referring into the **Cyber Choices** programme. This is a nationwide police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local

policing. It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

Note that **Cyber Choices** does not currently cover 'cyber-enabled' crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs on-line and child sexual abuse and exploitation, nor other areas of concern such as on-line bullying or general on-line safety.

Additional advice can be found at: Cyber Choices: Helping you choose the right and legal path (<https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/cyber-choices>) and National Cyber Security Centre (<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/>)

Children who run away or go missing

Children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. If a child goes missing or runs away this may be linked to abuse or neglect, which may include Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE). It may also indicate mental health problems, risk of travelling to conflict zones, substance abuse, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. See 'the right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage':

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-right-to-choose-government-guidance-on-forced-marriage>

Members of staff who suspect that a child has run away or gone missing should follow the Missing and Uncollected Pupil Policy.

Children who leave the school

If a child leaves Birkdale School the Head will notify the Local Authority if the Head believes that the child is being home educated, has ceased to attend school, is medically unfit to attend school, is in custody or if the child has been permanently excluded. The Head will inform the local authority if a pupil is failing to attend school regularly or who has been absent without permission for more than 10 school days. The Head will inform the local authority whenever children enter or leaves Birkdale School at times other than at the normal transition points (Year 7 and L6) or at times other than the start of the academic year. The DSL will ensure that any Child Protection files are transferred securely to a child's new school as soon as possible and that a confirmation of receipt is obtained.

Homestays

A number of overseas students join the Sixth Form at Birkdale each year through the educational agency ICON. These students are placed in homestay accommodation within Sheffield by ICON who also report this to Sheffield Safeguarding as a private fostering arrangement. If a member of staff becomes aware that a child is in a homestay arrangement they should notify the DSL who will report this to Sheffield Safeguarding as a private fostering arrangement. Overseas trips should usually be organised in such a way as to not require Birkdale pupils to engage in homestay arrangements abroad. It is not possible to use the DBS system to obtain information about adults overseas. If it is necessary to use homestay arrangements abroad then the trip organiser should consult with the DSL at an early stage. The DSL will explore the issue with the partner school or organisation abroad and decide whether the arrangements will be appropriate and sufficient to safeguard effectively every child who will take part in the exchange. If students from overseas are staying with UK host families then the host families should be DBS checked with the barred list check.

Children with SEND

Children who have been identified as having a Special Education Need or Disability may be particularly vulnerable to abuse. Staff should be alert to this and should consider the nature of the child's difficulties if allegations of abuse are made. Further details are set out in section 9.

LGBTQ+

Children who are or may be LGBTQIA+ may also be particularly vulnerable to abuse. Staff should be alert to this and should consider the nature of the child's difficulties if allegations of abuse are made.

Youth produced sexual imagery (YPSI)

YPSI sometimes known as sexting is defined as 'sending or posting sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the Internet'. The definition and possible legal and disciplinary consequences of sexting are explained as part of the PSHE curriculum. The school takes full account of 'Sexting in schools and colleges: Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people (UKCCIS)'. Pupils in S1-S5 are not allowed to keep mobile phones on their person during the school day. The school will search pupils and confiscate mobile phones and remove information from them as part of an investigation into sexting and as part of keeping children safe. However, great care will be taken over deciding whether to view imagery in line with the advice in 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation: HM Government 2018'. If an incident involving sexting or youth produced sexual imagery comes to the school's attention:

- The incident should be referred to the DSL as soon as possible
- The DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff
- There will be subsequent interviews with the young people involved (if appropriate)
- Parents will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm
- At any point in the process if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

Upskirting

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

Initiation rituals

There is no tradition of initiation rituals at Birkdale and no such rituals will be tolerated.

Banter

Staff should always be clear with pupils that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up. Such behaviour should not be dismissed as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "kids being kids".

Staff should always challenge behaviours such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing such behaviours risks normalising them. Training will be delivered to new staff as part of their induction to the school. Refresher training will be regularly delivered during INSET sessions to maintain awareness of all staff as to their responsibilities to tackle and report such behaviours.

Other specific safeguarding concerns

A list of some other specific safeguarding issues is given below; any member of staff who is concerned that a pupil may be affected by one of these issues should speak to the DSL immediately.

- bullying including cyberbullying
- drugs
- fabricated or induced illness
- faith abuse
- gangs and youth violence

- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG): see also child-on-child abuse in this policy for information on sexual harassment and sexual violence
- private fostering
- teenage relationship abuse
- trafficking

Appendix B: Policy on Procedures when a Member of Staff, Volunteer, Designated Safeguarding Lead or Head faces Allegations of Abuse

INTRODUCTION

Allegations that a member of staff has abused a pupil or pupils either inside the school premises or during a school trip or visit could be made by:

- Parents
- The abused pupil
- Other members of staff
- Other pupils
- The Police or Social Services
- A third party

An allegation of such seriousness would normally be made directly to the Head; but if another member of staff is told first, he/she will ensure that the Head is informed immediately.

If the Head is unavailable – or is involved - the Chair of Governors should be told at once.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) would provide advice and preside over the investigation of any allegation or suspicion of abuse directed against anyone working in the school.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): tel. 0114 273 4850

To make a referral, download the [LADO referral form](#), complete & email securely to lado@sheffield.gcsx.gov.uk **Do not investigate this matter yourself, get advice and support from the LADO.**

Considerations:

Apply procedures with common sense & judgement

- If the allegation is about physical contact, the strategy discussion should consider whether ‘reasonable force’ has been used
- All options to avoid suspension should be considered prior to taking that step
- If investigation by the police or children’s social care is unnecessary, the Head should consider further options with the LADO before proceeding further.
- Resignation/ceasing service provision should not prevent an allegation being followed up
- ‘Compromise agreements’ must never be used
- Referral to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) must be made if the criteria are met
- Cases in which an allegation was proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious should not be included in employer references
- A phased return and/or the provision of a mentor may be appropriate if staff have been away from work during investigation
- At the end of a case where the allegation is substantiated, the LADO should have a “learning the lessons” review with the Head etc. to identify any improvements that are required.

Definitions:

- **Substantiated:** sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- **Malicious:** sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation & a deliberate act to deceive
- **False:** sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Unsubstantiated:** insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation, therefore not implying guilt or innocence

Regulation of Teacher: misconduct

In cases of serious teacher misconduct where all the local complaints procedures have been completed, a referral may be made to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA), which is an executive agency of the Department for Education.

All substantiated cases of sexual misconduct and child protection concerns will be referred to the DBS and the TRA in accordance with the recommendations of IICSA (March 2022).

TRA is responsible for regulating the teaching profession in England. They investigate cases of serious teacher misconduct and decide whether to refer a case to a professional conduct panel. The panel then investigates whether a prohibition order should be issued.

Regulations

The Education Act 2011 gives responsibility, from 1 April 2012, to the Secretary of State for Education to regulate the teaching profession in England and to hold a list of teachers who have been prohibited from teaching.

The Teachers' Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012 (the Regulations) as amended by The Teachers' Disciplinary (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2014 provide information about the arrangements. TRA operates these on behalf of the Secretary of State.

They cover cases of serious misconduct. This is when a teacher's behaviour:

- is fundamentally incompatible with being a teacher
- could lead to them being prohibited from teaching
- The regulations don't cover the cases of less serious misconduct, incompetence or under-performance. A teacher's employer should deal with these cases.

Process checklist (initial actions):

Action required to secure the immediate safety or well-being of child/young person:

Does the child/young person need medical attention, to be removed from the scene of an incident, a member of staff to look after them until their mother, father or carer arrives?

Report incident/concern to Head or Chair of Governors immediately

Action required from Head or Chair of Governors:

Contact the LADO immediately if advice is needed, otherwise email the information via LADO request form using secure email or fax.

The LADO will determine the nature and scope of the investigation and consultation with the police/social care; responsibility for employment matters rests with employer but will form part of the advice given.

- After consultation with the LADO, inform the accused person, providing them with as much information as possible, unless the police and Children's Social Care are involved and need to agree what information to disclose
- Do the police need to be involved immediately, e.g. if there is an immediate risk to children or if an offence has been committed?
- Record dates/times of alleged incidents, details of those involved and any potential witnesses
- Gather & secure any already existing evidence, but do not take statements, this is a police

role

- Listen to the child/young person, encourage them to speak but do not lead or probe
- Verify that the alleged event(s) could have happened: e.g. was the member of staff on duty and present when the alleged incident took place? Are there witnesses?
- Consider whether suspension is needed or if an alternative arrangement can be made until the allegation is resolved
- Inform mothers, fathers or carers as soon as possible unless police/social care need to be involved or a strategy discussion is required
- Contact your Human Resources Service, especially if suspension or other action is being considered pending an investigation
- Decide what, if anything, you can tell other staff members, considering confidentiality, the views of the member of staff and their representative
- No details should be discussed with other people – all staff must observe confidentiality
- All parties should be advised about reporting restrictions preventing the publication of any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who has been accused by, or on behalf of, a pupil/student from the same school or college.

Further details:

ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS

If we are faced with an anonymous allegation of child abuse which names both a member of staff and a child, we will handle it in exactly the same way as if we knew the identity of the person making the allegation.

THE FIRST RESPONSE

We will respond promptly and sensitively to the legitimate concerns of the victim and his or her family.

We undertake to:

Take any allegation of abuse, involving a member of staff, very seriously,

Establish the facts before jumping to any conclusion,

Inform the member of staff concerned honestly of the allegation that has been made,

Inform the child's parents in confidence, inviting them to maintain confidentiality whilst the investigation takes place, unless the allegation involves the parents, in which case we will contact the Social Services before making contact.

THE NEXT STEP

Although a formal investigation is a matter for specialists, where the facts suggest that there may be reasonable grounds for suspecting actual abuse, or grooming of a child, or other criminal behaviour, we will always:

- Consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (contact telephone number 0114 2053535),
- Involve Sheffield Safeguarding,
- Invite the police to conduct the investigation,
- Consider suspending the member of staff (or volunteer) concerned.

SUPPORT FOR THE PUPIL

Our priority is to safeguard the young people in our care. We will give all the support that we can to a pupil who has been abused. The Head will consider how best to support and monitor the pupil concerned through any process of investigation, liaising closely with parents, guardians, Sheffield Safeguarding, or other agencies involved to identify the support strategies that will be appropriate.

SUSPENSION

Suspension of a member of staff is a neutral act and does not imply that any judgement has been reached about his or her conduct. Even so, it is a serious step, and we will take legal advice beforehand, and will normally only suspend a member of staff where:

- There is a serious risk of harm (or further harm) to the child, or
- The allegations are so serious as to constitute grounds for dismissal, if proven, or
- The police are investigating allegations of criminal misconduct.

We recognise fully that we have a duty of care towards all of our staff, and we will always:

- Keep an open mind until a conclusion has been reached.
- Interview a member of staff before suspending him or her.
- Keep him or her informed of the progress of the investigation. Any member of staff who is invited to a meeting whose outcome is likely to result in his or her suspension, is entitled to be accompanied by a friend or colleague.

ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSION

We will always consider whether an alternative to suspension might be appropriate.

Possibilities include:

- Sending the member of staff on leave,
- Giving him or her non-contact duties,
- Ensuring that a second adult is always present in the classroom when he or she teaches.

IF THE MEMBER OF STAFF RESIGNS

The resignation of a member of staff or volunteer mid-way through an investigation would not lead to the investigation being abandoned. Our policy is always to complete every investigation into allegations of child abuse. Referral to the DBS and TRA will always follow when allegations are substantiated.

COMPROMISE AGREEMENTS

The policy at Birkdale is to follow the guidance set out in “Keeping children safe in education” on the use of compromise agreements in cases of child abuse which is:

“If the accused person resigns, or ceases to provide their services, this should not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with this guidance.... If the accused person resigns or their services cease to be used and the criteria are met it will not be appropriate to reach a settlement/compromise agreement. A settlement/compromise agreement which prevents the school or college from making a DBS referral when the criteria are met would be likely to result in a criminal offence being committed as the school or college would not be complying with its legal duty to make the referral.”

LENGTH OF INVESTIGATORY PROCESS

We recognise that everyone’s interests are served by completing any investigatory process as swiftly as possible. Birkdale is a small community and we will aim to spend as little time as is compatible with fair and impartial processes on the investigatory process. We would expect almost every case to be completed within one month.

REFERRAL TO THE DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE

Like all schools, we have a statutory legal duty to refer an individual, where there is the risk that he or she may harm, or has caused harm to children, to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the TRA within one month of the individual’s dismissal or resignation because he or she has been considered unsuitable to work with children. Reports concerning members of staff or volunteers are normally made by the DSL. If the Head is involved, the report is made by the Chairman of Governors.

The school plays no part in the subsequent process of barring individuals from working with children and/or vulnerable adults. We also have a legal duty to respond to any requests for information that we receive from the DBS at any time.

If the dismissal has not reached the threshold for DBS referral then a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) will be considered.

RECORDING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

We will record all allegations of abuse, and our subsequent actions, including any disciplinary actions, on an individual's file unless the allegation is found to be malicious in which case any records will be removed from personnel records. A copy will be given to the individual and he or she will be told that the record will be retained until he or she reaches statutory retirement age, or for ten years, if that is longer.

HANDLING UNFOUNDED OR UNSUBSTANTIATED ALLEGATIONS

The Child

A child who has been the centre of unfounded or unsubstantiated allegations of child abuse needs professional help in dealing with the aftermath. We will liaise closely with Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership to set up a professional programme that best meets his or her needs, which may involve the Adolescent Mental Health Services and an Educational Psychologist. We shall be mindful of the possibility that the allegation of abuse was an act of displacement, masking abuse that is actually occurring within the child's own family and/or community. However much support the child may need in such circumstances, we need to be sensitive to the possibility that the aftermath of an unfounded allegation of abuse may result in the irretrievable breakdown of the relationship with the teacher. In such circumstances, we may conclude that it is in the child's best interests to move to another school. We would do our best to help him/her to achieve as smooth a transition as possible, working closely with the parents or guardians.

The Member of Staff

A member of staff could be left at the end of an unfounded or unsubstantiated allegation of child abuse with severely diminished self-esteem, feeling isolated and vulnerable, all too conscious that colleagues might shun him/her on the grounds of "no smoke without fire". If issues of professional competency are involved, and though acquitted of child abuse, disciplinary issues are raised, we recognise that he or she is likely to need both professional and emotional help. We will undertake to arrange a mentoring programme in such circumstances and assist in the provision of whatever other support, e.g. professional counselling, may be required and is reasonable. A short sabbatical or period of re-training may be appropriate.

ALLEGATION OF ABUSE OF A CHILD WHO IS NOT A PUPIL AT THE SCHOOL

If we were given information that suggested that a member of staff was abusing a child who was not a pupil at Birkdale, we would immediately pass such information to Sheffield Safeguarding to handle. We would then interview the member of staff and formally advise him/her of the allegations, making it clear that the school would not play any part in the investigatory process. He or she would be advised of the possibility of facing suspension, reassignment to other duties etc in exactly the same way as if the allegation had involved a school pupil. If the allegation subsequently proved to be unfounded, he or she would be given full support by the school in resuming his/her career.

ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING THE HEAD

The Chairman of Governors (chairofgovernors@birkdaleschool.org.uk) should be told at once of any allegation involving the Head. He will obtain legal advice before proceeding to the steps outlined above. The Head will normally be suspended for the duration of the investigatory process and asked to vacate his school residence, and the Deputy Head will be made acting Head until the conclusion of the investigation and resolution of the issue.

Appendix C: Safeguarding Guidance for Staff when using Remote Learning

Principles and General Guidance

- Whilst remote learning significantly changes the organisation of a school and the interaction of teachers and pupil, the duty, responsibility and approach to safeguarding remains the same.
- If you have any concerns about the health and safety of a child or young person at Birkdale School, you should share this information with an appropriate member of staff straight away.
- Do not worry about reporting small matters – we would rather that you tell us things which turn out to be small than miss a worrying situation.
- If you think that a child, a young person or an adult who cares for them has been or might be harmed, please talk to one of the people below immediately:

Senior School:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead – Phil King (prking@birkdaleschool.org.uk) Tel: 07808 588 337
- Designated Safeguarding Deputy – Ryan Becks (rdbecks@birkdaleschool.org.uk)
- Designated Safeguarding Deputy – Lisa Marsh (lemarsh@birkdaleschool.org.uk)
- Designated Safeguarding Deputy – Peter Harris (pchharris@birkdaleschool.org.uk)
- Designated Safeguarding Deputy - Helen Parsons (hparsons@birkdaleschool.org.uk)
- Designated Safeguarding Deputy – Jess Warren (jlwarren@birkdaleschool.org.uk)
- Designated Safeguarding Deputy – Howard Parker (hparker@birkdaleschool.org.uk)

Prep School:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead – Jackie McDermott (jmgmcdermott@birkdaleschool.org.uk)
- Designated Safeguarding Deputy - Chris Burch (cjburch@birkdaleschool.org.uk)
- Designated Safeguarding Deputy - Sarah Lambert (slambert@birkdaleschool.org.uk)

Creating a Safe Learning Environment

- All communication between pupils and teachers should be made through appropriate channels, in the vast majority of cases using either Google Classroom or school email. Staff should not use personal accounts or social media apps, like WhatsApp or Facebook, to communicate with pupils.
- No pupil information should be downloaded and kept on personal, staff devices after the completion of a lesson. Work produced by pupils should be saved on the school network or in Google Classroom.
- When engaged with remote learning, all participants are expected to conduct themselves as they would in school. Behaviour and language should be appropriate; respectful and polite at all times.
- When engaged with learning involving live interaction, pupils and teachers should:
 - Only communicate within the normal school day (8.45am-3.45pm).
 - Locate computers in public areas of the home i.e. not in bedrooms.
 - If involved with live, video interaction, pupils and teachers must wear appropriate clothing and be aware of what may be visible in the background.
- Lessons involving live interaction should not be recorded for any reason.
- Communication between a teacher and pupil on a 1:1 basis is generally not permitted. However, if this is unavoidable, staff must have the express permission of the Head and parent.

Reporting a Concern

If you become concerned about the well-being of a pupil or if a pupil makes a disclosure to you:

- You must report orally to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead** by telephone immediately on **07808 588 337**.
- Make a note of the discussion, as soon as is reasonably practicable (but within 24 hours) to pass on to the designated senior person. The note should record the time, date, place and people who were present as well as what was said. Remember, your note of the discussion may need to be used in any subsequent court proceedings.

- Do not give undertakings of absolute confidentiality.

Your responsibility in terms of referring concerns ends at this point, but you may have a future role in terms of supporting or monitoring the child, contributing to an assessment or implementing child protection plans. Depending on circumstances the DSL may seek advice from, or involve, other agencies including the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub.

Types of Abuse

All school staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another. School staff should be open to safeguarding concerns in any of the categories listed in the school safeguarding policy. However, given the nature of remote learning, staff should remind themselves, in particular, of the information in the following sections:

- **Child-on-child abuse**
- **E-safety and cyberbullying.**