

Caversham Preparatory School

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures (including children in the EYFS)

Immediate Risk

If a pupil is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, call the police on 999.

Anybody can make a referral in these circumstances.

If a referral is made by someone other than the DSL, the DSL should be informed of the referral as soon as possible.

The referrer does not require parental consent for referrals to statutory agencies.

Important Contact Details

The Proprietors have appointed **Mrs Caroline Kidao**, as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Ms Danielle Falconer is the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

The Nominated Safeguarding Governor is **Mr Andrew Lawson**.

Proprietors: **Jacqueline and Ian Lawson 01193767434**

If you have a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL. If she is not available then speak to the DDSL. The DSL or deputy DSL will always be on site during school hours to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

Caversham Preparatory School	16 Peppard Road Caversham Reading RG4 8JZ Tel: 0118 947 8684 Web: www.cavershamschool.com
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Name: Mrs Caroline Kidao Tel: 01189478684 Email: carolinekidao@cavershamschool.com
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL)	Name: Ms Dani Falconer Tel: 0118 947 8684 Email: daniellefalconer@cavershamschool.com
Nominated Safeguarding Governor	Name: Mr Andrew Lawson Tel: 01189478684 Email: andrewlawson@cavershamschool.com
All referrals for	Reading Children's Single Point of Access

safeguarding issues, including those related to radicalisation should be made to Reading's Children's Single Point of Access in the first instance (CSPoA)	Online referral tool: www.reading.gov.uk/childrensreferralform Tel. 0118 937 3641 (Office Hours-9am to 5pm Mon-Fri) Tel. 01344 786 543 (Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team). Email: ChildrensSinglePointofAccess@reading.gov.uk Guidance on the referral procedure: http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/7382/Childrens-Single-Point-of-Access-guidance/pdf/CSPA Guidance.pdf
The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)	DBS barring, PO Box 3963, Royal Wootton Bassett, SN4 4HH Tel. 03000 200 190
For PREVENT matters, as stated above, all referrals should be made to the DSL in the first instance, but other contact details are:	Non-Emergency Police Number: 101 The Department for Education (DfE) dedicated telephone helpline and mailbox for non-emergency advice: Tel. 0207 340 7264 E-mail: counterextremism@education.gsi.gov.uk Advice from Reading CSPOA is: If you have a Prevent related concern and want some guidance Email: preventreferrals@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk .
Female Genital Mutilation	Local Police Number (for reporting an act of FGM) 101
In relation to Looked After Children	Advice and support are available from the Reading Looked After Children Support Team Tel. 0118 937 3770 Other sources of guidance can be found in KCSIE 2025

National Bullying Helpline	Tel: 0845 22 55 787
UK Safer Internet Centre helpline for School Staff	Tel: 0844 381 4772 Email: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
Internet Watch Foundation hotline for reporting criminal content	www.iwf.org.uk
The Lucy Faithfull Foundation (LFF)	Tel: 0800 1000 900 Email: help@stopitnow.org.uk www.parentsprotect.co.uk
Educate Against Hate	http://educateagainsthate.com

NSPCC 24/7 Helpline	Tel: 0808 800 5000 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk Text line 88858
NSPCC Child Line	Tel: 0800 1111
NSPCC Whistleblowing	Tel: 0800 028 0285 (8am - 8pm) Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
Local authority documents, e.g. thresholds, referral forms and related guidance can be found:	In the Principal's Study locked drawer beside the desk

Definitions and terminology

'Children' includes everyone under the age of 18 years

'EYFS' Early Years Foundation Stage

'DSL' refers to the school's named Designated Safeguarding Lead

'DDSL' refers to the school's named Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Reading

'CSPoA' Children's Single Point of Access

'LADO' refers to the local authority Designated Officer (the person appointed to deal with allegations against adults)

'KCSIE' Keeping Children Safe in Education

Policy Statement

The Proprietors of Caversham Preparatory School are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of, and acting in the best interests of all children, staff, and visitors to the school. They expect all staff, volunteers and other third parties to share this commitment. The Proprietors assure that there are appropriate policies and procedures in place for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote our children's welfare. **This policy follows the statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#).**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.

Staff are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play.

To fulfil this responsibility effectively, Caversham Preparatory School takes a child-centred approach. This means that we consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances.

If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

Working Together to Safeguard Children

The Proprietors of Caversham Preparatory School understand our pivotal role as part of a multi-

agency system of safeguarding, including the school itself, and our safeguarding partners including:

- the local authority (Reading Borough Council via Brighter Futures for Children)
- the integrated care board (NHS Berkshire Integrated Care Board)
- the local police (Thames Valley Police)

Caversham Preparatory School will work with the local authority children's social care as needed, including coordinated early help, and provision of support to children under child protection plans. We allow access as required for the local authority children's social care as required. The school adheres to the government statutory guidance – **[Keeping children safe in education 2025.pdf](#)**, **[Working Together to Safeguarding](#)**

Children (2023) and Working Together to Improve Education (2024). This guidance should be read alongside departmental advice [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners.](#)

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all teaching, non-teaching, pastoral, support, peripatetic, contract and ancillary staff, agency/supply staff, volunteers, and any other adults working at the school. It also covers when children are out of school, on school buses, school trips and Outward Bound. All references in this document to 'staff' or 'members of staff' should be interpreted as relating to the aforementioned, unless otherwise stated. The terms 'the school' or 'we' refers to Caversham Preparatory School, where it appears in this documentation. Contact information sheets detailing this information and the identities of the DSL and DDSL are prominently displayed around the school.

At times the words 'victim,' 'perpetrators,' and 'alleged perpetrators' are used. Not everyone who has been subject to abuse considers themselves as a victim or to be described in this way. We should be conscious of this when managing an incident and be prepared to use any term with which the child is most comfortable. We should think carefully of terminology as some cases of abusive behaviour will have been harmful to the perpetrator as well.

The **Holiday Club** is run by the School and does not hire any external staff or agencies to help to run the Holiday Club. **We do not hire the school buildings out to third parties.**

Professional Expectations

We place a high priority on identifying concerns early and provide help for children, to prevent concerns from escalating. Our staff are aware that everyone should safeguard children's well-being and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties. These standards also apply to trainees, inductees, and Early Career Teachers (ECTs), and we adhere to these standards with rigour, applying our school disciplinary procedures, where appropriate, in cases of misconduct. All members of staff and volunteers are required to read our Staff Code of Conduct and The Teachers' Standards 2014.

Child Protection Procedures for Dealing with Concerns about a Child(ren)

Staff must maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.

Reporting Concerns

If we are at all worried or something has been said to us, or within our hearing, or is told to us by another child, member of staff or parent, we must inform the DSL/DDSL at once. They will record our concern(s) and begin an investigation, which may include contacting the CSPoA. Staff should complete a Concern Form using the language used by the child/ren as much as is practically possible. Staff should include as much detail as possible. This form is then passed onto the DSL. The DSL will then consider the appropriate course of action in accordance with Reading CSPOA referral threshold guidelines. Such action may include early help or a referral to children's social care. The school can use a range of arrangements, depending on the information available and the risk of harm posed to the child. The school will always work cooperatively with external agencies.

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, a referral to children's Social Care (and, if appropriate, the Police) must be made immediately by the DSL, who will follow the local authority's referral process. If the DSL is not available, then there should be no delay in The DDSL making a referral.

Early Help

Early Help Assessment

The DSL/DDSL will lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Further guidance on effective assessment of the need for early help can be found in **Working Together to Safeguard Children**. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to local authority children's social care for assessment for statutory services if the child's situation does not improve or is getting worse.

All school staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for any child who:

- has special educational needs
- has a statutory education, health and care plan
- has a mental health need
- has an ongoing or chronic physical illness
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- is involved in the court system: criminal or family court
- frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- has received multiple suspensions, and is at risk of being excluded from school

- is misusing drugs or alcohol
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, and/ or exploitation
- is at risk of so called 'honour'-based abuse including Female Genital Mutilation and/or Forced Marriage
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child such as drug/alcohol misuse/addiction, unmanaged mental health problems and/or domestic abuse has returned home to their family from 'looked after' care
- is newly adopted or being cared for permanently by a family member other than their biological parents
- has a parent/significant other going through the criminal court system or serving a custodial sentence in prison
- is showing early signs of abuse, exploitation, and/or neglect
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited; online or offline is showing emerging signs of becoming gaming /gambling addicted
- is a privately fostered child
- has already identified as being LGBTQ+ or is beginning/perceived to identify as LGBTQ+
- is gender questioning

This is not an exhaustive list. There may be many other factors or situations that could mean that a child or their family will benefit from early help. **More information can be found in Annex B of KCSIE.**

Making a referral

All Staff should be aware of how to make a referral to Reading CSPoA statutory assessments and the role they will be expected to play in such assessments. The relevant contact information is set out at the front of this policy. Reading CSPoA request referrals are made via their secure web form www.reading.gov.uk/childrensreferralform

- Confirmation of the referral and details of the decision as to what course of action will be taken should be received from the local authority within one working day. If this is not received, the DSL (or the person that made the referral) should contact children's social care again
- Where the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL (or the person making the referral) will press for re-consideration by children's social care services to ensure their concerns are addressed and the pupil's situation improves. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.
- We will contribute to any assessment as required, providing information about the child and family.
- We will send a suitably senior member of staff to contribute to any strategy discussion.

Statutory children's social care assessments and services

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to local authority children's social care and if appropriate the police, is made immediately. **Referrals should follow the local referral process.** Local authority children's social care assessments should consider where children are being harmed in

contexts outside of the home so it is important that we provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm. The online tool [Report child abuse to your local council](#) directs to the relevant local authority children's social care contact details. As our school straddles Reading, West Reading and South Oxon, it is important to check the child's home post code before making the referral.

Children in Need

A Child in Need is defined under **the Children Act (1989)** 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.

Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding

and promoting their welfare. A child who is deemed to be a Child in Need will have been assessed by Children's Social Care under section 17 of the Children Act (1989). The child will have a Child in Need Plan which should be shared by the allocated Social Worker with the school. The school will attend and participate in Child in Need Review meetings, as arranged by the local authority.

Children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes harm. However, harm is often defined as ill treatment or impairment of health and development which may include impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate have a duty to make enquires under section 47 of the Children Act (1989) if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Such enquiries enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote

the child's welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment, including all forms of abuse, neglect, female genital mutilation or other so-called honour-based abuse, and extra-familial threats like radicalisation and sexual/criminal/financial exploitation. Should an investigation occur, then the school's involvement and any action may be determined on the advice given by the investigating agency. If the child is made subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP), following social care's assessment under s47 and an Initial Child Protection Case Conference, their CPP will be shared by the allocated Social Worker with the school. The school will attend and participate in regular meetings (known as Core Groups), as arranged by the local authority.

Reading Local Procedures require us to consider the severity of the ill-treatment which may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, the extent of premeditation, and the presence or degree of threat, coercion, sadism and bizarre or unusual elements.

Sometimes a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm, such as a violent assault. However, more often it is a compilation of significant events, both acute and longstanding, which can change or damage a child's physical and psychological development. Some children have a family and/or social circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For them it is the corrosiveness of long-term neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse that causes impairment and harm.

Record keeping

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. This will also help if/when responding to any complaints about the way a case has been handled by the school. Information should be kept confidential and stored securely in the Child Protection File in the Head's Study. Records **should** include:

- names, dates, times
- names of people present or witnesses
- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern documenting what was said by inverted commas
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, and
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the DSL/DDSL.

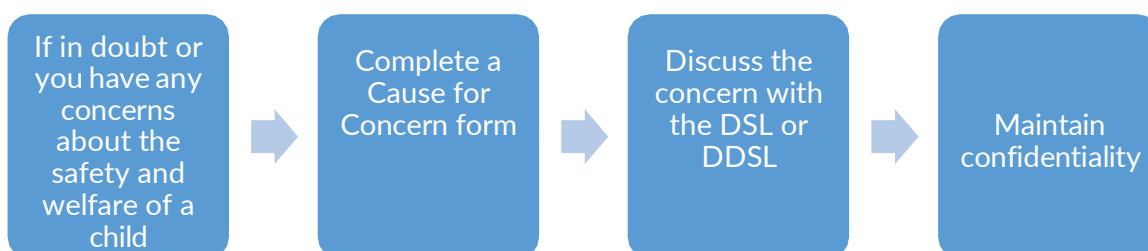
It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address safeguarding risks, prevent issues escalating and to promote children's welfare. Examples of poor practice include:

- failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse and neglect
- poor record keeping
- failing to listen to the views of the child
- failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve
- not sharing information with the right people within and between agencies
- sharing information too slowly, and
- a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action.
- protection conference and work together to safeguard any child from harm in the future.

Children who have a Social Worker

Children may need a Social Worker (local authority children's services) due to safeguarding or welfare needs, due to abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation and/or complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and positive mental health. The Local Authority should share with the school the fact a child has a Social Worker and is subject to a Child in Need (s17) or Child Protection (s47) Plan. However, it is more than likely that the school will have been involved in any assessment leading to the child being made subject to a statutory plan.

The DSL/DDSL must attend all plan reviews. Where children have an allocated Social Worker, this should inform school decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services). Any new information or safeguarding concern that the school has about any child on a statutory plan must and will be shared with the child's allocated Social Worker.



Responding to a report

If a child tells a member of staff that they know about or have been a victim of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation the member of staff should:

- Listen carefully and allow the child to speak freely and remain calm
- Not interrupt the child or be afraid of silences. Recognise that there are many barriers to a child making a disclosure.
- Never promise confidentiality.
- Provide reassuring nods and words such as, "I am so sorry this has happened", "You are doing the right thing in talking to me".
- Avoid saying things like, "I wish you had told me about this earlier" or "I cannot believe what I am hearing".
- Not question the child about what they are saying extensively, as partner agencies will lead any investigation.
- Seek a context around what the child has said.

The above must always be sought prior to any referral being made to partner agencies. Depending on who obtained the initial disclosure i.e. if a member of teaching staff receives a disclosure or has a concern, the DSL/DDSL should then also speak to the child, either to corroborate the child's account or to gain further context, prior to making the referral. Whilst any member of staff can, and should know how to make a referral, our policy is that any referral will be done by the DSL or DDSL if at all possible.

All staff involved should limit their questioning to the minimum necessary for clarification using *What, When, How and Where*. Do *not* use questions beginning with *Why* as this can apportion feelings of guilt within a child. Avoid asking the child leading questions by saying encouraging statements like "go on, you're doing well". Staff should summarise for the child what they have said as the conversation continues or at the end, to ensure that they have heard and understood the information accurately, mirroring back to the child their own words and descriptions, occasionally stopping to check.

- If the child discloses abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation, it is appropriate to ask whether any other adults/children were present and observed/involved in what happened.
- At an appropriate time in the conversation, tell the child that the matter will be passed on to those that need to keep them safe, in confidence, always using language that is appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child, allowing for their individual need.
- Take the child directly to the DSL/DDSL, or if not immediately available, ensure that the child is supervised until emotionally stable. If the child has disclosed abuse and also spoken about physical pain and/ or physical discomfort, medical intervention must happen immediately whilst the DSL/DDSL makes a referral. No photos must ever be taken of injuries (see below)
- If the child has expressed any suicidal ideation when they disclosed their abuse, they must be 100% supervised by appropriate staff until support can be put in place, and referrals made. If to follow normal processes i.e. informing the child's parents/carers of their ideation and asking them to collect their child, would heighten risk to the child/other, then the child must be supervised until such time that statutory agencies have made their initial decisions.

If a disclosure of abuse has been made by the child, staff should immediately discuss the concerns **verbally** with the DSL, DDSL or Headteacher prior to writing up the record **so that immediate action can be considered**. If the DSL is not available then this should not delay appropriate action being taken and staff should speak to the DDSL, or, failing that, Jacqueline Lawson, the Safeguarding Governor. Andrew Lawson should be made aware of any referral that is made to Social Care or the Police, but staff must not delay if they are unavailable before making the referral. Staff should understand the difficulties children may have in approaching them and the need to build trusted relationships. All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, neglected and/or exploited, and/or they may not be able to recognise their experiences as harmful. Staff should be aware that the first approach/disclosure from a child may not be the only incident that has happened. It is appropriate to ask the child whether something like this has happened to them before.

Recording

All safeguarding-related documents must be kept in a secure location (the Principal's Study) with restricted access. Staff must make a written record of any conversation with the child as soon as possible, using a 'Cause for Concern Form'. Staff recording disclosures must use the specific words that the child used when they disclosed (e.g. if referring to parts of their body), indicating these words by using "speech marks/inverted commas". The Safeguarding team are responsible for making decisions on next steps and actions following any disclosure or reported concern. All discussions and decisions made, including **the reasons/rationale for those decisions being made/and for others not being made**), must be recorded in writing by the DSL/DDSL throughout the child's safeguarding record.

Records must include, but not be limited to:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern and/or disclosure

- details of how the concern/disclosure was initially followed up i.e. note of the immediate action (s) taken, decisions reached and school interventions (including referrals to agencies)
- confirmation that all those with parental responsibility for the child have directly been informed of the concern/disclosure (unless to do so would heighten risk at that time to the child/others)
- the outcome in terms of whether the unmet need was met/harm addressed and/or reduced (this may occur later).

Photos/videos

Staff must never take photos/videos of children's injuries. On very rare occasions, Social Care or the

Police (only) will direct the school to take a photo/video of a child's injury and send it to them securely for their assessment of risk. The school must record on their systems who has asked this to be done, the rationale for the request, noting their role and contact. Any photo/video subsequently taken by staff on an agency's request must have a witness present. It may be more appropriate to confiscate any devices to preserve any evidence and hand them to the police for inspection not promising confidentiality at this initial stage as it is very likely a concern will have to be shared further (for example, with the DSL or local authority children's social care) to discuss next steps.

Initial Response

The initial response to a report from a child is incredibly important. How we respond can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims to report or come forward. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school should not be downplayed and should be treated equally seriously. Children can show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to. In some cases, the victim may not make a direct report. For example, a friend may make a report, or a member of staff may overhear a conversation that suggests a child has been harmed or a child's own behaviour might indicate that something is wrong. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.

Best Practice in Managing a Report

- manage a report with two members of staff present, one preferably the DSL or DDSL.
- not to view or forward illegal images of a child.
- only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it.
- explain what the next steps will be and who the report will be passed to recognising that a child is likely to disclose to someone they trust.. It is important that the person to whom the child discloses recognises that the child has placed them in a position of trust. They should be supportive and respectful of the child recognising that an initial disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported, rather

than representative of a singular incident and that trauma can impact memory and so children may not be able to recall all details or timeline of abuse.

- keep in mind that certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation
- listen carefully to the child, reflecting back, using the child's language, being non-judgmental, being clear about how the report will be progressed, not asking leading questions and only prompting the child where necessary with open questions – where, when, what, etc. It is important to note that whilst leading questions should be avoided, staff can ask children if they have been harmed and what the nature of that harm was considering the best way to make a record of the report.
- wait until the end of the report and immediately write up a thorough summary. This allows the staff member to devote their full attention to the child and to listen to what they are saying. It may be appropriate to make notes during the report (especially if a second member of staff is present). However, if making notes, staff should be conscious of the need to remain engaged with the child distracted by the note taking.
- the notes should not reflect the personal opinion of the note taker. We should be aware that notes of such reports could become part of a statutory assessment by local authority children's social care and/or part of a criminal investigation, and informing the DSL/ DDSL, as soon as practically possible, if the DSL or DDSL is not involved in the initial report.

Confidentiality

Adults may have access to confidential information about children with whom they work in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances they may have access to, or be given, highly sensitive or private information about the child and family. These details must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when it is in the interests of the child to do so. Such information must not be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the child concerned. If in any doubt about whether to keep information confidential, the adult should seek guidance from the DSL. Any actions should be in line with locally agreed information sharing protocols. The school will cooperate with police and children's social care to ensure that all relevant information is shared for the purposes of child protection. While staff need to be aware of the need to listen to and support children, they must also understand the importance of not promising to provide or agree confidentiality with a child; neither will they request this of a child under any circumstances. The victim may ask the school not to tell anyone. There are no easy or definitive answers when a victim makes this request. If the victim does not give consent to share information, staff may still lawfully share it, if there is another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies. For example, the public task basis may apply, where the overall purpose is to perform a public interest task or exercise official authority, and has a clear basis in law. The DSL should consider:

- parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)
- if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care, and rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes.

- where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of referring to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice approach, in these cases.

Ultimately, the DSL/DDSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children. If the DSL/DDSL decide to go ahead and make a referral to local authority children's social care and/or a report to the police against the victim's wishes, this should be handled extremely carefully, and specialist support should be offered.

Anonymity

Where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system, schools should be aware of anonymity, witness support, and the criminal process in general so they can offer support and act appropriately. Relevant information can be found in: **CPS: Safeguarding Children as Victims and Witnesses**. As a matter of effective safeguarding practice, staff should do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. Amongst other things, this will mean carefully considering, based on the nature of the report, which staff should know about the report and any support that will be put in place for the children involved. We should also consider the potential impact of social media spreading rumours and exposing victims' identities.

Risk Assessment

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

- the victim, especially their protection and support
- whether there may have been other victims
- the alleged perpetrator(s)
- all the other children and staff at the school
- any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harms
- the time and location of the incident, and any action required to make the location safer.

Risk assessments should be recorded (paper or electronic) and should be kept under review. At all times, the school must be actively considering the risks posed to all our pupils and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe. The school risk assessment is not intended to replace the detailed assessments of expert professionals.

Action following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

Important considerations will include:

- the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Victims should be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. This will however need to be balanced with the school's duty and responsibilities to protect other children the nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether Harmful Sexual Behaviour has been displayed
- the ages and/or developmental stages of the children involved
- any power imbalance between the children. For example, is/are the alleged perpetrator(s) significantly older, more mature, confident and well-known social standing? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?
- is the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse (sexual abuse can be accompanied by other forms of abuse and a sustained pattern may not just be of a sexual nature)
- that sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place between children
- the importance of understanding intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, or school staff
- a possible wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.
- the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) and considerations regarding shared classes, sharing school premises and school transport, should be considered immediately.

Options to manage the report

It is important to consider when to inform the alleged perpetrator(s). Where a report is going to be made to local authority children's social care and/or the police, then, as a general rule, the DSL should speak to the local authority children's social care and the police and discuss next steps and how the alleged perpetrator(s) will be informed of the allegations. This should not and should not stop the school taking immediate action to safeguard our children, where required.

When to call the police

A person whom there are grounds to suspect of an offence must be cautioned before questioned about an offence or asked further questions if the answers they provide the grounds for suspicion, or when put to them the suspect's answers or silence, (i.e. failure or refusal to answer or answer satisfactorily) may be given in evidence to a court in a prosecution. A Police Officer must not caution a juvenile or a vulnerable person unless the appropriate adult is present. If a child or a vulnerable person is cautioned in the absence of the appropriate adult, the caution must be repeated in the appropriate adult's presence. Where a report has been made to the police, the school will consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, in particular, the alleged perpetrator(s) and their parents or carers. They should also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity. At this stage, the school will generally

inform parents or carers unless there are compelling reasons not to, for example, if informing a parent or carer is likely to put a child at additional risk. Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator(s), it will be important for the DSL/DDSL to work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the school takes do not jeopardise the police investigation.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and addressed. If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL/DDSL should consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation needs help and/or may have been abused by someone else and this was a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to local authority children's social care may be appropriate. If a report is deliberately invented or malicious, the school will consider whether disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per our behaviour policy.

Making referrals to statutory agencies

If a child is thought to be at risk of harm or is likely to be at risk of harm, a referral must be made immediately to Children's Social Care, and/or to the Police if a criminal act is thought to have occurred.

The school does not require parental consent for referrals to be made to statutory agencies. Consent to do this will and must not be obtained from the parents if to gain consent would put the child's safety at risk (for example in situations where physical/sexual abuse by a parent/family member has been clearly disclosed by a child) or to do so could jeopardise any investigation by partner agencies. The school should ask whether and when the referral can be shared with the child's parents/carers of the child when making such a referral where seeking consent is a safeguarding element of the situation. When a child is not considered at risk of harm but still has unmet needs a referral should be made to Children's Social Care via the local authority process. The school does not require parental consent for referrals to be made to statutory agencies. However, it is best practice that these concerns should be discussed with the parents and any subsequent referral made with the parent's knowledge.

Passing on safeguarding records when a child leaves the school

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation. KSCIE (20234) emphasises the need for fuller pastoral information to be passed on about pupils for whom there has been a safeguarding concern, as a lack of information about their circumstances can impact on the child's safety, welfare, and educational outcomes. When a child leaves the school, it is the responsibility of the DSL to ensure that a copy of their safeguarding records is transferred securely and confidentially to the new school. Records should be transferred within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term (**KCSIE 2025**). Before

transferring data, the DSL will arrange a telephone call with the DSL or Headteacher in the receiving school to ensure that the child has started their school as planned/informed. Following their conversation, and only once that confirmation has been received, the DSL will arrange for the secure transfer of documentation.

No sensitive data/information must be passed onto the child's pending new school, **including verbally**, until they are formally on roll and in their new school. Confirmation of the receipt of the documentation must be retained with safeguarding records. A safeguarding record must be transferred separately from the main pupil file. Whilst data protection legislation places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure this is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child being placed at risk of harm. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. The DSL should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school in advance of a child leaving, for example, information that would allow the new school to continue supporting victims of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation and have time to arrange for appropriate support in place for when the child arrives. This should be done with parent's knowledge, unless to do so would heighten any risk to the child (if this is the case, then Social Care are likely to already be involved and the school must seek (and record) their advice about what information should be shared.

Contextual Safeguarding

Safeguarding children describes the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes **contextual safeguarding**, specifically any wider environmental factors present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Social care practitioners, child protection systems, and wider safeguarding partnerships need to engage with individuals and sectors who have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with,

these are a critical part of safeguarding practices. Contextual Safeguarding expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse *beyond their front doors*. This also includes the risk of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation occurring in or outside of school.

All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. If a referral is made by someone other than the DSL, the DSL should be informed of the referral as soon as possible. Staff should not assume a colleague, or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. They should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for the effective identification, assessment, and allocation of appropriate service provision, whether this

is when problems first emerge, or where a child is already known to children's social care (such as a child in need or a child with a protection plan). **Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers** supports staff to make decisions about sharing information. DPA and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

A child centred and co-ordinated approach to safeguarding

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

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- referring concerns or allegations about a child to the Local Authority promptly.
- ensuring the vulnerability of SEND Children is part of our standard duty of care.
- safe recruitment and appropriate behaviour of staff and volunteers (**Safer Recruitment Policy, Staff Code of Conduct Policy, Whistleblowing Policy**).
- keeping safe online (**E-Safety Policy** and **Acceptable IT Use and Online Policy** and **Acceptable Use Policies for Pupils and Parents**)
- teaching children about safeguarding (including on-line safety) (**Online Safety Policy**).
- ensuring children's health and safety (**see Health & Safety Policy**).
- using only reasonable force to safeguard children (**as defined in KCSIE 2025**) and our (**Reasonable Force Policy**.)
- meeting the needs of children with medical conditions (**Managing Medical Conditions Policy**)
- providing timely first aid (**First Aid Policy**).
- safeguarding on Educational Visits (**Educational Visits Policy**)
- writing appropriate **Risk Assessments (Risk assessments Policy)**.
- having due regard of Prevent Guidance and Prevent Training (**Prevent Policy**).
- having due regard to issues which may be specific to our local area or population, and school security (**contextual safeguarding**).
- being aware of and protecting our children from all forms of abuse and neglect.
- protecting our children from bullying and Child-on-Child Abuse (**Anti-Bullying Policy** and **Behaviour Policy**)
- protect our children from harassment and discrimination of all kinds.

All staff have the following responsibilities:

- Contribute to providing a safe environment in which all children can learn and flourish.
- Know what to do if a child tells you that they are being abused, neglected, and/or exploited and/or if they are experiencing sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.
- Identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children's welfare, and prevent concerns from escalating.
- Be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help.
- Expect to support social workers and other agencies following any referral.
- Know about Online Safety (including the filtering and monitoring systems that are in use).
- Know what to do if they are concerned about the behaviour or conduct of an adult in the school.
- Manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality.
- Be aware of the process for making a referral to Children's Social Care and understand the role they might be expected to play in statutory assessments.
- Be aware of the process for making a referral to the Police and understand the role they may be expected to play in any criminal investigation.
- Be aware of the process of making a referral to Prevent and understand the role they may be expected to play in any enquiries.

Any staff member who has any concerns about a child's welfare should follow our procedures:

- Refer any safeguarding concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Deputy DSL.
- The DSL/DDSL will provide support to staff to carry out their safeguarding duties and will liaise closely with other services such as our local authority children's social care.
- The DSL and DDSL are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the response to safeguarding concerns.

We will ensure that arrangements are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by:

- following the Reading Children's Single Point of Access in the first instance.
- keeping up to date with Statutory Legislation.
- providing a safe, healthy learning environment.
- providing children with opportunities to discuss issues and report problems affecting their safety and welfare.
- ensuring safe recruitment practices in accordance with our [Safer Recruitment Policy](#).
- ensuring robust procedures for identification and referral where there are welfare or child protection concerns.
- raising awareness amongst staff of safeguarding and child protection issues and ensuring staff are equipped to deal with concerns.
- ensuring staff receive appropriate training and are kept informed of all relevant updates in relation to safeguarding.

- teaching children to how to keep themselves safe, including online, and ensuring they know who to approach for help.
- having safeguarding as a standing item on all board level meetings and ensure any recommendations from such meetings are reported to staff in a timely manner.

Vulnerabilities or Children to be known to be at greater risk of harm

Whilst all children should be protected from abuse, neglect and/or exploitation, it is important that staff recognise that some groups of children are potentially at greater risk of harm (including online harm). For example, this vulnerable group includes, but is not limited to:

- Children Missing Education
- Children with Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Issues
- Children who need a Social Worker
- Children with SEN, and/or Disabilities
- Children who are (or are perceived to be) LGBT+ and those who are gender questioning
- Young carers and those who are/have been looked after in care
- Those with a parent in prison/ going through criminal proceedings
- Those living in homes characterised by domestic abuse and/or parental acrimony including those involved in the court system.

Children with additional needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or Health Issues

Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. They are statistically more vulnerable to child abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation including child on child abuse. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood, and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these challenges and/or reporting their concerns to a trusted adult.
- these children are more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children. The potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions is disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
- cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content, then repeating the content/behaviours in school or the consequences of doing so.

We are fully aware of our responsibility, which is also in line with our school ethos to provide a safe learning environment for children to live, learn and play to ensure that no child is left behind and all children flourish in our care. The Proprietors ensure our child protection policy reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when

recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation in this group of children. Caversham Preparatory School considers extra pastoral support and attention for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place. Further information can be found at: [SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years, and Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions](#) and from specialist organisations such as: councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk, Mencap, NSPCC - Safeguarding children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health

Where children have suffered abuse, neglect, bullying/cyberbullying and/or exploitation, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. All staff should also be aware that deteriorating emotional wellbeing and escalation of mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that there is a safeguarding concern. Their experiences can also have been historic and emerge in later years in their mental health. **Only appropriately trained health professionals must 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. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, through following this policy and speaking to the DSL. Parents/carers must be contacted when signs/indicators of deteriorating/emerging mental health are first displayed (unless to do so would heighten the risk of harm for the child, in which case Social Care will be contacted for advice). The DoE has published guidance on **Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools**.

The Proprietors ensure that we have clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems. Mrs Kidao, SENCO is our Mental Health Lead. The Department for Health has published, '[Every interaction matters](#)' a pre-recorded webinar which provides staff with a simple framework for promoting wellbeing, resilience, and mental health. This sits alongside our [Wellbeing for education recovery](#) program content, which covers issues such as bereavement, loss, anxiety, stress and trauma. The [Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges](#) guidance sets out how schools can help prevent mental health problems by promoting resilience as part of an integrated, whole school approach to social and emotional wellbeing, which is tailored to the needs of our pupils.

Working with Parents and Carers

We work in partnership with parent/carer(s). To facilitate effective communication the school where reasonably possible will hold **more than one emergency contact** number for all our pupils. Parent/carer(s) will normally be kept informed, as appropriate, of any action to be taken under these procedures. However, parent/carer(s) will not be contacted, nor will the referral be discussed, where it is felt that to do so would place

the child at an increased risk of harm, and/or where children's social care or the LADO have advised as such. Ultimately the best interests of the child/young person are of primary consideration. In all cases, the school will be guided by the Reading Local Safeguarding Children Board (CSPOA) threshold guidelines. Our staff are aware that they may be asked to support social workers to take decisions about individual children. While in our school, our DSL plays a pivotal role; however, in their absence or the absence of the DDSL it is everyone's responsibility to take appropriate action in accordance with CSPOA child protection procedures.

What We Need to Know

- All EYFS Staff will have a termly Supervision Meeting (Supervision Policy).
- Staff will teach age-appropriate safeguarding including from our Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy and PSHE and RSE Curriculums.
- All staff should be aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it.
- All staff should be aware of the process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.
- Should know what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited, and/or neglected.
- Should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality.
- Should know never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.
- Should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- Should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, and/or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. Children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or are being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child.

National documents to support the above:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (2014)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (February 2023)
- Working Together to Improve Attendance (2025)
- Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales (December 2023)
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act (July 2018)
- What do to if you are worried a child is being abused – Advice for practitioners (departmental advice) (March 2015)
- Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (2025)

KCSIE acknowledges the following as specific child safeguarding issues

- abduction and community safety incidents
- abuse, neglect and exploitation
- association with organised crime groups
- at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- being a young carer
- bullying including cyberbullying
- child criminal exploitation and sexual exploitation
- disabled or has certain health conditions and/or has specific additional needs
- domestic violence
- drugs and alcohol abuse
- fabricated or induced illness
- faith abuse
- forced marriage
- gangs and youth violence
- gender-based violence / violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- has special educational needs (whether/not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- hate crimes
- homelessness
- in the court system
- involved in county lines
- involved in cybercrime
- is in a family with drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- mental health
- missing education
- missing from home, education or care
- modern slavery
- permanently excluded from school
- physical abuse
- preventing radicalisation
- private fostering
- relationship abuse
- serious violence
- sexting
- sextortion
- sexual exploitation or violence
- sexual harassment between children in schools
- so called 'honour' based violence (HBV) such as Female Genital Mutilation FGM
- Forced Marriage
- trafficking

- upskirting
- with family members in prison

Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

Abuse includes both acts of harm, and failures to prevent harm. It can occur in various settings, including online. All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of our school, inside and outside of home, and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. Staff should be aware that safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and may not be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap. All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist 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.

Types of abuse, neglect, and exploitation

Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation are all forms of maltreatment of a child. All children get scratches, bruises, bumps and cuts from time to time in the normal course of childhood activities. Therefore, it is sometimes difficult to tell the difference between injuries suffered as part of a quite normal childhood and those caused by physical abuse. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. 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.

The diagnosis of child abuse requires a professional assessment. The list given below is not intended to be a comprehensive tool for recognising child abuse, but such signs may indicate a problem. Further and more age specific examples can be found on the NSPCC website (www.nspcc.org.uk). Reading Safeguarding Children Board can also

provide advice on the signs of abuse and the DfE advice **“What to do if you're worried a child is being abused” (2015)** provides advice in identifying child abuse.

Physical abuse: may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, rubbing chilli peppers into genitalia or eyes, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may also involve when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. This can be more difficult to see or determine but must be treated as abuse. Often the child has injuries that they cannot explain or explains unconvincingly. They may have untreated or inadequately treated injuries or injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs, back, abdomen. You may observe bruising which looks like hand or finger marks or caused by an implement; cigarette burns; human bites; scarring from scalds and burns. These children may become sad, withdrawn or depressed. They may be constantly tired due to sleep deprivation or trouble sleeping. They may show fear of certain adults; or behave aggressively or be disruptive. They may display a lack of confidence, timidity and/or low self-esteem. They may use of drugs or alcohol to dull the pain or display respiratory problems from drowning, suffocation or poisoning.

Emotional Abuse: is 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; 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. It 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 or serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Faith Abuse: is linked to faith or belief is where concerns for a child's welfare have been identified, and could be caused by a belief in witchcraft, spirit or demonic possession; ritual or satanic abuse; or when practices linked to faith or belief are harmful to a child. Belief in concepts of:

- spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs)
- the evil eye or djinns (traditionally in some Islamic faith) and dakini (in the Hindu faith)
- use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

This is not an exhaustive list and there will be other examples where children have been harmed when adults think that their actions have brought bad fortune, such as telephoning a wrong number to allow malevolent spirits to enter the home. Reasons for

the child being identified as 'different' with a disobedient or independent nature, bed wetting, nightmares or illness. Attempts to exorcise the child may include but are not limited to beating, burning, starving, cutting or stabbing and/or isolation. Children with a disability may also be viewed as different, and various degrees of disability have previously been interpreted as 'possession', from a stammer to epilepsy, autism, or a life limiting illness.

Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG): is the term given to all forms of violence and abuse experienced disproportionately by women and girls because of their gender, including rape, domestic violence, forced marriage, so called 'honour' based violence, FGM, and sexual harassment. VAWG is linked to women and girls' inequality and is neither acceptable nor inevitable. At school we encourage the development of mutually respectful relationships and provide positive approaches to promote girl's/women's agency in our culture and curriculum.

Hate Abuse including Hate Crimes: hate is a powerful mechanism for a wide range of criminal activities, such as: physical assault; verbal abuse; criminal damage to property or possessions; harassment; sexual assault; hate mail; online abuse; displaying or circulating discriminatory literature or posters; graffiti. Children can deliberately hurt and/or harass other children by sending them hate mail including by email, text, social media, drawing rude or offensive pictures about them, distributing upsetting slogans or literature or drawing on other children's possessions with abusive language.

Sexual Abuse or Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB): Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is 'harmful sexual behaviour' (HSB). HSB can occur online and/or face-to-face and can also occur simultaneously between the two. HSB should be considered in a child protection context. When considering HSB, both ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature. HSB involves forcing or enticing a child 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, oral sex, anal sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Children with **SEND** are potentially more vulnerable to HSB. Sexual violence and sexual harassment can happen anywhere, and all staff working in the school are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here', assume that it is happening, and act accordingly. Staff should also consider the importance of understanding intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents involving sexual harassment and/or violence.

Behavioural signs of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation

For example, (but not limited to) they may:

- behave aggressively to self/others or be disruptive, act out, demand attention and require more discipline than other children
- become angry or disinterested socially, and/or show little creativity/motivation
- seem frightened of certain adults or child (child on child abuse)
- present as sad, withdrawn, and/ or depressed
- have trouble sleeping/sleep for longer periods than the norm for them
- exhibit inappropriate/advanced sexual knowledge for their age
- exhibit sexualised behaviour in their play or interactions with other children
- refuse to undress/change for gym/PE, and/or refuse to participate in physical activities
- develop dysfunctional eating
- self-harm and/or express suicidal ideation
- have changes in their attendance, refuse to attend school, go missing whilst in school, or run away from home/go missing in the community
- lack confidence or have low self-esteem; or show raised confidence/bravado
- use drugs and/or alcohol as a coping strategy for anxiety/ new use of drugs/alcohol
- have unexplained gifts, money, and/or other items
- spend increasing time online, and become socially isolated
- have a new group of friends (potentially older)
- be seen to leave school with unknown peers/adults

Signs of sexual abuse include but is not limited to:

- Difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- Pain/itching/bleeding/bruising/discharge to the genital area/anus or mouth
- Urinary infections
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Persistent sore throats
- Eating disorders
- Persistent stomach ache
- Self-mutilation
- Refuses to change for gym or participate in physical activities
- Exhibits an inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age
- Exhibits sexualised behaviour in their play or with other children
- Lack of child relationships, sleep disturbances, acute anxiety/fear
- School refusal, running away from home
- Pregnancy

Support and Sanctions for the alleged perpetrator(s) and children and who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)

This can be a difficult balancing act. The school needs to safeguard the victim (and the wider pupil body) and also provide the alleged perpetrator(s) with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate, and implement any disciplinary sanctions. Taking disciplinary action and still providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions. They can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary. Any child will likely experience stress as a result of being the subject of allegations and/or negative reactions by their peers to the allegations against them. We must consider the proportionality of our response. The alleged perpetrator(s) may potentially have unmet needs as well as potentially posing a risk of harm to other children. HSB in young children may be (and often is) a symptom of either their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices and or materials. Advice should be taken, as appropriate, from children's social care, specialist sexual violence services, and the police. Advice on behaviour in schools is clear that teachers can sanction pupils whose conduct falls below the standard which could be reasonably expected of them. If the perpetrator(s) is to be excluded or permanently excluded from school, the decision must be lawful, reasonable and fair, and as per our policy. School can be a significant protective factor for children who have displayed HSB, and continued access to school, with a comprehensive safeguarding management plan in place, is an important factor to consider before final decisions are made. It is important that if an alleged perpetrator does move to another school (for any reason), that the new school is made aware of any ongoing support needs and where appropriate, potential risks to other children and staff. The DSL should take responsibility to ensure this happens as well as transferring the child protection file. We will in most instances, engage with both the victim's and the parents or carers of the alleged perpetrator(s) when there has been a report of sexual violence (this might not be necessary or proportionate in the case of sexual harassment and should be considered on a case-by-case basis). The exception to this rule is if there is a reason to believe informing a parent or carer will put a child at additional risk. We should carefully consider what information we provide to the respective parents or carers about the other child involved and when we do so. In some cases, local authority children's social care and/or the police will have a very clear view and it will be important for us to work with relevant agencies to ensure a consistent approach is taken to information sharing.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and/or development. Neglect may also 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); or ensure access to appropriate medical care/treatment and/or assessments. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. Signs of possible neglect include, but are not limited to, the child being

underweight or very small for their age, or their weight deteriorates. Similarly, the child appears overweight for their age; are poorly clothed, with inadequate protection from the weather; are often absent from school for no apparent reason; or persistently arrive late: or are regularly left alone, or in charge of younger brothers or sisters.

Domestic abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. Domestic abuse includes intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse, child to parent 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 can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). Domestic violence and abuse may be *a single incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality*. The abuse can encompass but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, detrimental, and long-term impact on a child's health, wellbeing, development, and ability to learn. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Even where the child is not a direct target, the harm can be caused to the children by emotional abuse and/or neglect. Often this is because a victim's ability to parent effectively and protect their children is diminished through a preoccupation about their own survival. Any abusive relationship at home will have a significant impact on their children. We will be alert to the possibility of domestic violence and allow an opportunity for the abused partner to disclose. We will treat any disclosure sensitively and refer the matter to children's social care services where there are concerns about a child's welfare. The **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** provides guidance and support.

Child on Child Abuse

Child-on-Child Abuse is any form of bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based, and discriminatory bullying. We have a **zero-tolerance** for child-on-child abuse, both in person and online. Behaviour such as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" should not be dismissed as being normal between children as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children. It may include:

Child on Child Sexual Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children, sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse' or physical abuse; sexual violence; sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse. It may cause 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 or sexting; upskirting; sextortion; and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. It could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation as a way of initiating a person into a group, including an online element. Taking part in planned aggression, or

pressuring/inciting others to aggress others (and/or videoing such incidents); sharing or encouraging others to share or receive pornography without their consent, to or self-generate the above. These categories of abuse rarely take place in isolation and often indicate wider safeguarding concerns. For example, while children who abuse may have power over those who they are abusing, they may be simultaneously powerless to others. Staff should be aware that there may be multiple perpetrators and/or victims and not consider that only one child abuses another in isolation.

Child-on-Child Abuse (Bullying)

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, normally repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional (isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their group). The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, cause them to self-harm. We have a school [Anti-Bullying Policy](#) and **zero-tolerance** to bullying.

Factors which may indicate that behaviour is abusive and/or exploitative include:

- where it is repeated over time and/or where the perpetrator(s) intended to cause harm
- where there is an element of coercion or pre-planning
- where there is an imbalance of power, for example, as a result of age, size, social status or wealth.

This list is not exhaustive, and staff should always use their professional judgment and discuss any concerns with the DSL, who in turn should seek guidance from the LADO where needed.

Signs of child-on-child abuse can include, but are not limited to:

- unexplained, persistent and/or prolonged absence from school
- disengaging from classes, or struggling to carry out school related tasks to the standard staff would ordinarily expect from the individual child i.e. a change
- physical injuries (often with inconsistent accounts)
- having difficulties with their mental health and/or emotional wellbeing
- becoming withdrawn, shy, experiencing headaches, stomach aches, anxiety, panic attacks, suffering from nightmares or lack of sleep or sleeping too much
- changes in appearance and/or starting to act in a way that is not appropriate for the child's age including sexualised behaviours
- changes in social groups and/or avoidance of certain areas of school or community

This list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of these signs does not necessarily indicate child-on-child abuse and/or sexually coerced exploitation.

**Some children are particularly susceptible/vulnerable to abusing/exploiting others or being abused/
exploited by another child. Research suggests that:**

- Child on child abuse is more prevalent amongst children aged 10 and older.
- Children who have witnessed or experienced abuse, exploitation or violence themselves; suffered from the loss of a close family member or friend (recent or historical); or experienced considerable disruption in their own lives.
- Children with protected characteristics, especially those with SEN/D and those who identify as LGBTQ+ or gender questioning/transitioning are particularly vulnerable to both abuse, and/or exploitation, and child on child abuse, often in the form of bullying (both direct and online).

Prevalence of child on child abuse

Research suggests that child on child abuse are the most common forms of abuse affecting children in the UK and **has increased in the last 5 years**, with many incidents in schools *nationally* occurring on site. Staff should therefore assume that child on child abuse is occurring in our school; be vigilant at all times, and act accordingly.

Mixed, Unclear or Unstable (MUU) Ideology

Incel stands for 'involuntary celibate' and is a term adopted by individuals in the incel community to describe themselves.

- It promotes an extremist ideology, and presents a risk of radicalisation.
- Women and girls are stereotyped, objectified and dehumanised - they are seen as genetically inferior and incels will discuss misogynistic or sexist views about them.

Signs, symbols, acronyms and phrases

You may see these in the form of graffiti, doodles in books, badges or stickers.

SWP: Supreme White Power

CHAD: a man who is sexually attractive to women (an alpha)

Red Pill: a reference to the film The Matrix. To have 'taken the red pill' means to have realised the 'truth' about women and society.

ORION: Our Race is Our Nation

88: stands for Heil Hitler, where each 8 represents the letter H (being the eighth letter of the alphabet)

18: as above, but where the 1 (A) and the 8 (H) represent Adolf Hitler's initials

Protected Characteristics

Child on child abuse is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, special educational needs and/or disability, or because a child is looked after, is adopted, or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. All incidents of child-on-child abuse, both physical, verbal, and emotional, on the basis of protected characteristics is taken extremely seriously

Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, gender questioning/transitioning

This section will be reviewed pending the outcome of the gender questioning children UK government guidance consultation, and final gender questioning UK government guidance

documents being published. The revised guidance on gender questioning children was due to be published summer 2025, but has not yet done so.

Children of all genders and sexual orientations can both perpetrate and be the victim of abuse. A child being lesbian, gay, or bisexual (or other) is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, they can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are. Our school is an inclusive environment where all children belong, and all children are encouraged to seek support when, and if, they require this. The Cass Review, December 2024, identified that caution is necessary for children questioning their gender as there remain many unknowns about the impact of social transition and children may well have wider vulnerabilities, including having complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases additional diagnoses of autism and/or attention deficit hyperactivity. When supporting a gender questioning child, the school will take a cautious approach and consider the broad range of their needs, in partnership with the child's parents (other than where involving parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child), including any clinical advice that is available and how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying. Should a parent/carer approach the school about their child gender questioning, they will be initially supported by signposting them to their local General Practitioner (GP). If a child approaches staff to talk about their gender, they will be supported to talk to their parents/carers about how they are feeling, and the school will, where needed, do so on the child's behalf/with the child.

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence between Children (SH and SV)

Child-on-child abuse can also include two specific forms: Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence. They exist on a continuum and may overlap. They can occur online and face-to-face (both physically and verbally). Victims find the experience stressful and distressing. This will (may) adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school.

Sexual Harassment refers to 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature'.

Sexual Harassment 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 physical behaviour: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes. We must consider if/when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence
- displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- upskirting (this is a criminal offence)

- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos.
- taking and sharing nude photographs of those aged under 18 is a criminal offence.
- sharing of unwanted explicit content
- sexualised online bullying
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats
- coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts online

Sexual harassment creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence. Staff should be aware it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and more likely to be perpetrated by boys. Any response to sexual harassment and/or sexual violence should fall within, the school's wider approach to child-on-child abuse whether the concerns of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of the school premises, and/or online. Staff should be aware of **searching, screening and confiscation advice (for schools)** and **UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people**.

Staff must NEVER view or forward illegal images of a child. Should they receive such, then they should notify the DSL immediately. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to confiscate any devices to preserve any evidence and hand them to the police for inspection and subsequent removal.

Sexual Violence includes sexual offences which fall under the Sexual Offences Act (2003):

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. Sexual assault covers a wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.

Consent

Consent is having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs.

- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity
- the age of consent is 16
- sexual intercourse (oral, anal, vaginal) without consent is rape

Upskirting

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, 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, and/ or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, or sexual orientation can be a victim or perpetrator.

Handling incidents involving Sexual Harassment or Sexual Violence

All staff must be trained to manage a report or SH and/or SV. Local authority policies will dictate exactly how reports should be managed. However, effective safeguarding practice includes:

- managing reports with two members of staff present, preferably one being the DSL/DDSL (if possible).
- careful management and handling of reports that include an online element.

Whilst making notes staff must be aware that such reports could become part of a statutory assessment by local authority children's social care and/or part of a criminal investigation by the Police.

There are four likely scenarios that the school may need to manage: in each case all concerns, discussions, decisions, and reasons for decisions, including why certain decisions have not been made must be recorded (written or electronic).

Internally: For one-off incidents of sexual harassment (dependant on what has occurred , and whether there have been any previous incidents)), the school may take the view that the children concerned are not in need of early help nor that referrals need to be made to statutory services and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising our Behaviour Policy and by providing pastoral support. Whatever the response, it should be underpinned by the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.

Those requiring Early Help: We may decide that the children involved do not require referral to statutory services but may benefit from early help. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB) and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

Those where Social Care will need to be informed and involved: Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, but a criminal offence may not have been committed, we must make a referral to local Children's Social Care. We will inform parents/carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing a parent/carer is going to put the child at additional risk). Any such decision should be made with the support of children's Social Care. If a referral is made, Social Care will then make enquiries to determine whether any of the children involved need protection or other services. We must not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a Social Care investigation before protecting the victim and other children in the school.

Those where a criminal offence is likely to have occurred and the Police will be needed:

The DSL will lead the school's response to any incident where there is evidence that a criminal offence has occurred or is likely to occur. Referrals to the Police will often be a natural progression of making a referral to Social Care and will generally run in parallel. It is important for the DSL to explain to any child involved that the law is in place to protect all children rather than criminalise them, and this should be explained in a way that avoids alarming or distressing them. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, or upskirting, the starting point is that this must be passed on to the Police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator(s) is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the Police remains. The child will need to have an 'Appropriate Adult' present when Police are communicating with a vulnerable child as part of any criminal investigation under PACE.

The 'Appropriate Adult', in the case of a child must be: the parent, guardian, if the juvenile is in the care of a local authority, or voluntary organisation, a person representing that authority or organisation, a Social Worker of a local authority failing these, some other responsible adult aged 18 or over who is not:

- a Police Officer
- employed by the Police
- under the direction or control of the chief officer of a Police force
- a person who provides services under contractual arrangements (but without being employed by the chief officer of a Police force), to assist that force in relation to the discharge of its functions.

Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - PACE Code C 2019. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pace-code-c-2019/pace-code-c-2019-accessible> At this stage, we will generally inform parents/carers unless there are compelling reasons not to, e.g. if informing a parent or carer is likely to put a child at additional risk. In circumstances where parents or carers have not been informed, it will be especially important that the school is supporting the child in any decision they take. This should be with the support of children's Social Care and any appropriate specialist agencies. The school must record all their actions clearly and advice taken from external agencies. Please refer to KCSIE 2025 for information regarding bail conditions.

Voice of the child

Ultimately, the DSL will need to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children. If the DSL/DDSL decide make a referral to local authority children's social care and/or a report to the Police against the victim's wishes, this should be handled extremely carefully. There are no easy or definitive answers when a victim makes a request for anonymity. Appropriate specialist support should be offered. This will mean carefully considering, based on the nature of the report, which staff should know about the report and any support that will be put in place for the children involved.

Our approach to Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence:

- not to accept or tolerate sexual violence and sexual harassment, or upskirting
- not downplay/consider these types of behaviours are 'banter,' or an 'inevitable part of growing up'
- not hold the view that 'boys will be boys', knowing that to do so may normalise inappropriate behaviours, creating an unsafe culture where children feel less able to come forward with concerns
- encourage early intervention to avoid potential escalation
- challenge inappropriate physical behaviour (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras, and lifting skirts
- challenge inappropriate verbal behaviour, such as making sexist comments, innuendo, or taunting
- align to our Behaviour Policy with regards to imposing sanctions for inappropriate behaviour, including sexual harassment and/or sexual violence
- embed training and education on these issues within a strong pastoral system
- adopt a planned *and sequenced* RSE programme across the whole curriculum including age-appropriate content around: consent, gender roles, stereotyping, equality, healthy relationships, and power imbalances in relationships
- develop and encourage forums that enable children to talk about issues openly
- have clear and accessible systems in place for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously
- act in the best interests of all children involved, reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment
- manage any disclosure, either from the child who has suffered abuse or from other children, giving the victim(s) as much control as is possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed. These will be balanced with the school's duty and to protect us and other children
- carry out a risk and needs assessment for children affected by sexual violence or sexual harassment, including both the victim and alleged perpetrator-this may be informed by risk assessments completed/advice by external services
- engage with both the victim's and the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers when there has been a report of sexual violence. The exception to this rule is if there is a reason to believe informing a parent or carer will put a child at additional risk.

The risk assessment for a report of SH or SV must consider for each child involved, whatever their role, victim/perpetrator

- their individual needs, their protection, and support
- all the other children who have not been directly involved but whom may be at potentially at risk from future harms
- the time and location of the incident, and any action required to make the location safer

Next steps

Whilst the school establishes the facts and starts the process of liaising with Children's Social Care and the Police, the alleged perpetrator(s) should be removed from any classes they share with the victim. Consideration will be given to suspending the pupil at this point if for operational reasons, i.e. the children cannot be separated/the risk is too high for either the victim, the perpetrator or other children. We should also carefully consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) a reasonable distance apart on school premises (including during any before or after school-based activities) and on transport to and from the school, where appropriate. These actions are in the best interests of all children involved and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator(s).

Disciplinary action i.e. sanctions, in line with the School Behaviour Policy may be appropriate, including:

(a) to ensure that the perpetrator takes responsibility for the seriousness of his/her behaviour

(b) to demonstrate to the perpetrator and others that abuse will never be tolerated

(c) to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the victim and other children in the school.

Permanent exclusion will only be considered as a last resort and only where necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the victim(s) and other children in the school.

Provide on-going support to victim(s) including

(a) ensuring their immediate safety

(b) responding promptly and appropriately to the abuse

(c) assessing and addressing any unmet needs

(d) following the procedures set out in this Safeguarding Policy (including where the child needs early help or statutory intervention)

(e) monitoring the child's wellbeing closely and ensuring that s/he receives on-going support from all relevant staff members within the school

(f) engaging with the child's parents and any external agencies to ensure that the child's needs are met in the long-term

(g) considering the lessons that can be learnt from the abuse and put in place measures to reduce the risk of such abuse recurring. This may include, for example: work around gender and equalities; school safety; security and supervision; raising awareness for staff, pupils and parents about a particular form of abuse; training for staff on handling certain types of incidents or abuse.

Safeguarding other children

Consideration should be given to supporting children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape and assault by penetration. Witnessing such an event will be traumatic and support may be required. Following any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, it is likely that some children will take 'sides'. Social media is very likely to play a central role in the fall out from any incident or alleged incident. There is the potential for contact between victim and alleged perpetrator(s) and a very high likelihood that friends from either side could harass the victim or alleged perpetrator(s) online and/or become victims of harassment themselves. School transport is a potentially vulnerable place for a victim or alleged perpetrator(s) following any incident

or alleged incident. As part of our risk assessment, we should consider any additional potential support needs to keep all of their children safe.

Training

Staff are trained on the nature, prevalence, and effect of child-on-child abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it. The school actively seeks to prevent all forms of child-on-child abuse by educating pupils and staff; challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse; encouraging a culture of tolerance and respect amongst all members of the school community; responding to all cases of child-on-child abuse and cases of bullying or cyber-bullying promptly, fairly and appropriately. Children are educated about the nature and prevalence of child-on-child abuse via PSHE and RSE; they are told what to do if they witness or are victims of such abuse, the effect that it can have on the victims and the possible reasons for it, including vulnerability of the perpetrator. They are regularly informed about the school's zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of bullying and child on child abuse.

Resources

The **HSB toolkit**; The Lucy Faithfull Foundation; the Lucy Faithfull Foundation's 'Shore Space'. <https://shorespace.org.uk/> which offers a confidential chat service supporting young people concerned about their own or someone else's sexual thoughts and behaviours..The **Anti-Bullying Alliance** has developed **guidance** and **training** about **Sexual and Sexist bullying. Childnet's cyberbullying guidance**. Information on confidentiality and information sharing **Safeguarding Practitioners Information Sharing AdviceNow**.The **Anti-Bullying Alliance** has developed **guidance** and **training** about **Sexual and Sexist bullying. Childnet's cyberbullying guidance**. Information on confidentiality and information sharing **Safeguarding Practitioners Information Sharing Advice**

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), and County Lines

CCE and CSE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in criminal or sexual activity. It may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CCE and CSE can affect both male and female children and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation. Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim. Whilst the age of the child may be a contributing factor for an imbalance of power, there are a range of other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation including, sexual identity, learning difficulties, communication ability, physical strength,

status, and access to economic or other resources. Some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where children:

- appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions
- associate with other children involved in exploitation
- suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- misuse alcohol and other drugs
- go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- regularly misses school or education or does not take part in education

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology. 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. Both boys and girls being criminally exploited may also be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse where an individual and/or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate, exploit and/ or deceive a child into sexual activity. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet. CSE can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence, both to the child and/or someone they know. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual as they may not realise that they are being exploited/harmed, and as well as being directly physical, can also be facilitated and/or take place online or a combination. CSE may happen without the child's immediate knowledge for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. 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. Some children do not realise they are being exploited and may believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship. For more information, see **Child Sexual Exploitation: Guide for Practitioners** and **Annex B of KCSIE**.

Sexually Coercive Exploitation (SCE, sometimes referred to as 'Sextortion')

Increasingly children are being sexually coerced and exploited for money. The offender (known, posing as known, or unknown children/adults) will demand the victim child self-generate nudes and send them to them. The perpetrator will blackmail the victim by threatening to share these online, and occasionally offline, with the wider

community i.e. family, friends, staff and/or media unless they send money to them. Young males in particular have been targeted, and some have taken their lives due to this particular form of exploitation. For this reason, the school will hold an 'open door' and supportive approach in regard to children sending nudes/semi nudes, rather than seeking to criminalising them. This is not the same as condoning or accepting the sharing of images/videos as the norm. The school is mindful that much of this behaviour is illegal and will follow their statutory duties where appropriate, including reporting matters on a case-by-case basis to the Police and Social Care. Find more information and advice about SCE from the Internet Watch Foundation [here](#).

Sharing of nudes/semi nudes imagery/videos (previously referred to as Youth Produced Sexual Imagery and/or 'Sexting')

Whilst many professionals refer to the issue as 'sexting', there is no clear definition of 'sexting'. This policy only covers the sharing of sexual imagery by children. Possessing, creating, sharing and distributing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal. It also presents a range of risks which need careful management. **LGFL 'Undressed'** provides advice about how to teach children about being tricked into getting undressed online without scaring them or explaining the motives of sex offenders.

Disclosure

All staff (including non-teaching staff) should be aware of how to recognise and refer any disclosure of incidents involving the sharing of nudes/semi nudes, imagery/videos. This will be covered within staff training. Any direct disclosure by a child should be taken very seriously. A child who discloses they are the subject of sexual imagery is likely to be embarrassed and worried about the consequences. It is likely that disclosure in school is a last resort, and they may have already tried to resolve the issue themselves.

Handling incidents

All incidents involving the sharing of nudes/semi-nude imagery/videos should be responded to:

- The incident should be referred to the DSL as soon as possible.
- The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff.
- The DSL will follow the procedures and guidance set out in this [guidance](#).
- There should be interviews with the children involved to gather further information (if appropriate, seek advice from the LADO/external agency).
- Parents/carers should be informed unless it is believed that involving parents/carers would put the child at greater risk of harm or jeopardise any Police/Social Care investigation.
- At any point in the process, if there is a concern that a child has been significantly harmed or is at risk of significant harm, a referral must be made to Children's Social Care and/or the Police immediately. The parents/carers must be informed, unless to do so may heighten any risk to the child/others

County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel

is required. Children are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money across the country; working in cannabis factories; shoplifting; or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others. Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation, as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or carry a knife for a sense of protection from others. As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to. County lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the network. A child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines

- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs
- are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection
- are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a 'trap house or cuckooing' or hotel room where there is drug activity
- owe a 'debt bond' to their exploiters either fabricated or real to control the child
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals/groups associated with criminal networks or gangs. More information can be found in KCSIE (2025), in the Home Office's '[Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#)' and its '[Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance](#)' and the [Home Office and The Children's Society County Lines Toolkit For Professionals](#)

So-called 'honour'-based abuse including female genital mutilation and forced marriage (HBA)

HBA encompasses incidents/crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of a family or community. It often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers. Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon **teachers**, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary

sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should **not** examine pupils, but the same definition of what is meant by 'to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out' is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. Further information can be found at: [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information](#). Teachers **must** personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. The teacher should still consider and discuss any such case with the DSL/DDSL and involve local authority children's social care as appropriate.

Breast Flattening

Breast flattening, also known as breast ironing, is the pounding and massaging of a pubescent girl's breasts, using hard or heated objects, to try to make them stop developing or disappear. It is typically carried out by the girl's mother, who will say she is trying to protect the girl from sexual harassment and rape to prevent early pregnancy that would tarnish the family name, or to allow the girl to pursue education, rather than be forced into early marriage. If staff have a concern regarding a child who might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the DSL/DDSL. As appropriate, the DSL/DDSL will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with the police and local authority children's social care.

Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. Some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices to coerce a person into marriage. The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) has created: Multi-agency practice guidelines: [The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) Staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fmufcdo.gov.uk.

In addition, since **February 2023** it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages. **See Annex B of KCSIE for further details.**

Serious Violence

All staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. The likelihood of involvement in serious violence may be increased by factors 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.

A full list of risk factors can be found in the Home Office's [Serious Violence Strategy](#)

Child abduction and community safety incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. It 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), we discuss with our children how to keep safe and build confidence when warning about 'stranger danger.' Further information is at: www.actionagainstabduction.org and www.clevernevergoes.org.

Grooming

Grooming is the process by which an individual prepares a child for abuse and/or exploitation. The

motivation can be sexual, or increasingly financially related, Sexually Coercive Exploitation. Children can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know, or someone pretending to be someone they know. Groomers may be of any gender identity or sexual orientation. They can be of any age, including another young person. They can be a significant adult, including staff. They may be in the country where the child lives, or if online exploitation, could be resident anywhere in the world. Many children do not understand that they are being/have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse and/or exploitation. The signs that a child is being groomed are not always obvious. Groomers will go to great lengths not to be identified. Children being groomed may be very secretive. They:

- may be in a relationship with an older child offline/online, or perceive themselves to be with an older child
- go to unusual places to meet friends; not disclose who they are meeting; or give false accounts of who they are meeting
- have new things such as clothes or mobile phones that they can't or won't explain
- have increasing or new access to drugs and alcohol
- go missing from home or school; or are increasingly likely to be absent from school without adequate explanation
- display behavioural changes; these can be both negative and positive
- have sexual health issues
- express suicidal ideation and/or self-harm, including dysfunctional eating and/or excessive exercise
- express indicators that they are anxious and/or depressed
- have low self-esteem, or occasionally high self-esteem in earlier stages of grooming
- steal items or money/sell theirs or others' items for money

In older children, signs of grooming can easily be mistaken for 'normal' teenage behaviour.

Signs of grooming and/or online abuse and/or exploitation

A child may be experiencing abuse and/or exploitation online if they:

- spend lots, much more, or much less time online, texting, gaming, or using social media
- are withdrawn, upset or outraged after using the internet or texting
- are secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone
- have lots of new phone numbers, texts or e-mail addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.
- have more than one phone

Signs of grooming manifested by sex offenders (paedophiles)

It is important to remember that not all sex offenders will exhibit the signs listed below and if an individual exhibits some or all of these signs, it does not mean that they are a sex offender:

- Overly affectionate behaviour with a child
- Affording special attention or preferential treatment to a child (ren)
- Gravitating towards a specific sex of pupil or year group
- Creating and/or spending excessive time alone with a child outside of the classroom/ school
- Frequently spending time with a child in private or isolated areas in the school
- Transporting a child to or from the school
- Making friends with a child's parents and visiting their home socially
- Offering to provide a particular child additional educational support
- Acting as a particular child's confidante
- Giving small gifts, money, toys, cards, letters to a child
- Using texts, telephone calls, e-mails, messaging apps, and/or social networking sites to inappropriately communicate with a child
- Flirtatious behaviour/ making suggestive remarks or comments of a sexual nature around a child
- Making inappropriate and/or suggestive remarks about a child(ren) to other staff

Modus operandi of grooming

- **Target vulnerable victim:** Perpetrators target victims who are vulnerable, isolated, insecure and/or have emotional needs. This may happen over several months/years or may happen very quickly.
- **Gain victim's trust:** Offenders may allow a child to do something (e.g. eat ice cream, stay up late, view pornography) which is not normally permitted to foster secrecy and intimacy.
- **Gain the trust of others:** Institutional offenders are often popular with children and parents, and often staff, successfully grooming not only the victim but also other members of the victim's family and the school community at large.

- **Filling a need/becoming more important to the child:** This can involve giving gifts, rewards, additional help/advice, favouritism, special attention and opportunities for special trips or outings.
- **Isolating the child:** encourage dependency and subtly undermine the victim's other relationships with friends or family. Making themselves the only/main point of contact in school for the child.
- **Sexualising the relationship:** This can involve playful touches, tickling and hugs. It may involve adult jokes and innuendo or talking as if adults, for example about marital problems or conflicts.
- **Maintaining control and secrecy:** Offenders may use their professional position to make a child believe that they have no choice but to submit to the offender.
- **Making threats:** Offenders may threaten the child/their family/their friends/their pet with harm if they tell/do not continue with the abuse.
- **Blackmailing:** Offenders may blackmail their victim, for example, by saying that they will share any intimate photos of the child with friends and family.
- **Creating opportunity:** Offenders will gradually seek to create the time and opportunity to allow the grooming process to occur, and the eventual abuse of the child (ren).

Signs of grooming for radicalisation

There is no single way of identifying whether a child may be susceptible to an extremist ideology and/or radicalisation. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home). Increasingly the preferred pathway for those wishing to radicalise others is by online methods. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may need help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be susceptible and at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the DSL making a Prevent referral.

Preventing radicalisation – The Prevent Duty

Radicalisation is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence. Note: This section remains under review, following the publication of a new definition of extremism on the 14 March 2024. Children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this is part of a schools' safeguarding approach. All schools have a duty under section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015), to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as **the Prevent Duty**. The DSL/DDSL should be aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral. The Prevent Duty should be seen as part of the schools' wider safeguarding obligations. Our senior leaders will familiarise themselves with the Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 141-210, which are specifically concerned with education and childcare.

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our Fundamental British 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.

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause. It is possible to protect children from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being drawn to terrorism. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may need help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include **making a Prevent referral.**

Channel

Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals are assessed and may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, to determine whether they are at risk of being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from the school may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual will be required to provide their consent before any support delivered through the programme is provided. In relation to Channel referrals. The DSL will consider seeking the consent of the pupil (or their parent/guardian) when determining what information can be shared. Whether or not consent is sought will be dependent on the circumstances of the case but may relate to issues such as the health of the individual, law enforcement or protection of the public. The DSL should consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school to continue supporting who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

A Whole School Approach to Safeguarding

The Proprietors ensure they facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding. This means involving everyone in the school, and ensuring that safeguarding, and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. Ultimately, all systems, processes and policies should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart. The school's safeguarding policies and procedures are written to be transparent, clear, and easy to understand for staff, pupils, parents, and carers. Systems are in place, well promoted, and easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report any form of abuse or neglect,

knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.

Our Child Protection Policies:

- reflect our approach to all the aspects of safeguarding children practised at Caversham Prep
- reflect our reporting systems
- describe procedures which are in accordance with government guidance
- refer to locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements with our safeguarding partners
- is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and updated if needed, so that it is kept up to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learnt;
- is available publicly on the school website and in hard copy, if requested.
- who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods.

The Proprietors will ensure that:

- an appropriate senior member of staff is appointed to the roles of DSL/DDSL. The Proprietors cannot be the DSL.
- child protection files are maintained according to the policy
- appropriate safer recruitment policies are in place, embedded and effective
- the school holds more than one emergency contact number for each pupil to make contact with a responsible adult when a child missing education and/or is identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

The Designated Safeguarding and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL and DDSL)

- takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). This is explicit in the post holder's job description.
- the Proprietors ensure that the DSL has the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post. The role carries a significant level of responsibility and the postholder should be given the additional time, funding, training, resources, and support needed to carry out the role effectively.
- we have appointed one DDSL who is trained to the same standard as the DSL.

There are 5 key elements to the DSL role. They will:

- manage referrals within the school
- manage referrals to external agencies
- work with others in other agencies, including our Safeguarding Partners
- keep their own knowledge up to date and train other staff in relation to safeguarding
- raise awareness of safeguarding within the school staff

Multi-agency working

The Proprietors will ensure that the school contributes to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance **Working Together to Safeguard Children**. Brighter Futures for Children as our safeguarding partner has set out in their published arrangements which

organisations and agencies they will be working with, and the expectations placed on any agencies/organisations by the arrangements. In the same way as other agencies, Caversham Preparatory School is under a statutory duty to co-operate with the published arrangements. The Proprietor and DSL/DDSL will make ourselves aware of and follow our local arrangements. The DSL/DDSL has been trained in the local criteria for action (the Threshold) and the local protocol for assessment to ensure that we reflect this in our own policies and procedures. We are also be prepared to supply information as requested by the safeguarding partners. We work with our local authority children's social care, police, the health services and other services to promote the welfare of our children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a coordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans.

Information sharing This policy adheres to the principles and advice in the UK government guidance [Information Sharing \(2024\)](#). **The Data Protection Act (2018) and GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.**

Teaching Pupils about Relationships, Sex, and Health Education

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

At Caversham Preparatory School we have changed our Curriculum (2025) to follow the new guidelines above. (See PSHE and RSE Curricula 2025). This includes Relationship, Health, and Online Safety lessons. Please see the RSE and Health Education Policy and Curriculum Maps. Children have weekly lessons in Relationships and Health and Wellbeing (including Mental Health). We do not teach Sex Education but do teach growing and changing, menstruation, human gestation and how a baby is born to Years 5 and 6. See our RSE Curriculum for Years 5 and 6.

Teaching Pupils about Safeguarding including how to keep safe online

The school is committed to proactively teaching children about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of our approach to offering a broad and balanced curriculum. Through ongoing work with the children, we aim to build resilience so that every child knows that we are a 'telling school', and that speaking up about any concern is valued and actively promoted. This includes raising a concern about themselves or about another child(ren). PSHE plays a crucial part in teaching children to recognise dangers and harmful situations as well as increases their awareness of preventative actions they can take to keep themselves safe, including online and e-safety. Safeguarding is taught regularly through assemblies, PSHE lessons, and posters around school. It is embedded into lessons where appropriate.

The senior leadership team ensure that teachers incorporate elements of safeguarding into their lesson objectives and schemes of work, so that safeguarding is seen as part of wider teaching and learning. Safeguarding is also as much about children's' emotional and mental well-being as it is about their physical wellbeing. We create a culture of care where children are tolerant and respectful of each other and accept individual differences. There is a strong approach to developing social and emotional skills in our school so that as children mature, they are able to reflect on their own and other's rights and responsibilities. Children and young people have confidence in our school and trust the adults who work with them. Staff are approachable and helpful. Pupils feel secure and well protected, which is reflected in their positive attitudes to school. We actively promote the view that children should feel able to raise any concerns that they may have.

Relationships education is compulsory in our school.

We recognize that we play a crucial role in preventative education, effective in the context of a whole-school approach that prepares pupils for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic, and sexual violence/harassment. Caversham Preparatory School has a clear set of values and standards, upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. These are underpinned by our Behaviour Policy and Pastoral Support System, as well RSHE lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum. Our programme is fully inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering the needs of children with SEND and disabilities and other vulnerabilities).

The programme tackles, at an age-appropriate stage, issues such as:

- healthy and respectful relationships
- boundaries and consent
- stereotyping, prejudice and equality
- body confidence and self-esteem
- how to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour

We use the: [Teaching about relationships, sex and health – GOV.UK](#) to support our curriculum

Safer recruitment

Our school prioritises embedding a culture of safer recruitment as part of our strategy for preventing harm to children. Statutory procedures for checking the suitability of staff and volunteers who work with children are always followed. We have a separate **Safer Recruitment Policy**.

Visiting professionals and speakers

Professionals: For visitors who are in school in a professional capacity, schools should check their photo ID, any professional badges/lanyards, and be assured that the visitor has had the appropriate DBS check (or the visitor's employers have confirmed in writing that their staff have appropriate checks; and what these are). Schools should not ask to see the certificate in these circumstances.

Speakers: Whilst external organisations and individuals (including parents) can provide a varied and useful range of information and resources that can help schools enrich children's education, careful consideration must be given to their suitability. Diligence must include an assessment of the education value, the age appropriateness of what is going to be delivered i.e. the content and approach, the ideology of the speaker, and whether relevant checks will be required. An online due diligence process should also be undertaken, and a discussion with the visiting speaker prior to any confirmation of booking. A record must be kept of the diligence and checks undertaken.

Whistleblowing and Procedures for Allegations Against Staff

The school aims to create and maintain an environment where staff feel supported in their safeguarding role and able to raise concerns, including about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime. The school has a separate **Whistleblowing Policy**. This is available on the school website, policies section. Please refer to the staff Whistleblowing Policy for more information.

Key Facts

- Staff are expected to report to the Principal any suspected wrong doing within our School
- Members of staff who raise genuine concerns under the Whistleblowing Policy will be supported, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- Staff must not suffer any detrimental treatment (including dismissal, disciplinary action, threats, or other unfavourable treatment) because of raising a genuine concern.
- Reports made maliciously or in bad faith may lead to disciplinary action.
- All adults have a responsibility to report any concerns about poor or unsafe behaviour.
- All staff are required to report to the Principal any concern or allegations about school practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put pupils at risk of abuse or other serious harm.
- If the report concerns the Principal, the member of staff must speak to the DDSL or direct to the LADO (because of familial links)

If a member of staff believes that best practice is not being adhered to or that practice may put a pupil(s) at risk, they should first attempt to resolve their concern at school level via the Principal. If the situation is not resolved, or the staff member is uncertain about whether something is within the scope of the Whistleblowing Policy, they should seek advice from Reading CSPOA.

If you have concerns about the Proprietors

Where a member of staff feels unable to raise an issue, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are open to them:

- general advice on whistleblowing can be found at [whistleblowing for employees](#) the [NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line](#) is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally, or have

concerns about the way a concern is being handled by the school. The email address is help@nspcc.org.uk

The Management of Safeguarding

This section follows Part 2 of KCSIE 2025 and sets out how the Proprietors and Governors manage safeguarding at Caversham Preparatory School.

It is the responsibility of the Proprietors to:

- Ensure that all staff having contact with children read Part One of KCSIE;
- Ensure that all staff working in the school but not necessarily having direct contact with children read Annex A of KCSIE
- Ensure that all staff follow the requirements of this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure;
- Ensure that mechanisms are in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities, as set out in Part One of KCSIE;
- Designate a senior board member to take leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements;
- Ensure that all safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority as part of the inter-agency procedures set up by the Safeguarding Partners;
- Ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare;
- Ensure that the school works in line with local inter-agency procedures;
- Ensure that the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is updated annually and made available via the school website;
- Provide a Staff Code of Conduct and It Policy (including Acceptable Use and Digital Safety);
- Ensure that all responsibilities regarding Children Absent from Education using the Children Missing Education Statutory [Guidance](#) (Sep 2016) and [the](#) Statutory Guidance on Working together to [Improve Attendance \(2025\)](#);
- Ensure that all schools follow the principles of the Prevent Duty, including the requirement to undertake an annual risk assessment
- Instruct the school to hold more than one emergency contact number for each child (and advise that these are reviewed regularly by schools);
- Ensure that the school hold names addresses, and telephone contacts for all those who have Parental Responsibility for a child on roll;
- Ensure that the school reports to their local authority the removal of a child from the school roll in line with statutory and local authority guidance;
- Ensure that the school monitors the attendance of all children, paying attention to those that have unexplained, persistent and/or prolonged absence,; goes missing form education;)
- Ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and

monitoring) at induction – this must be in line with advice from Safeguarding Partners;

- Recognise the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing concerns on a daily basis;
- Ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to keep children safe online and that the DfE filtering and monitoring standards are met; and consider the number of and age range of their children, those who are potentially at greater risk of harm and how often they access the IT system along with the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding
- Ensure that the school has the appropriate level of security protection procedures in place in order to safeguard their systems, staff and learners and review the effectiveness of these procedures periodically to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies.
- Ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety.

Legislation and the law

The Proprietors ensure that governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction (and renewed regularly) to equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in the school are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. The Proprietors are fully aware and ensure staff have due regard of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Responsibilities under Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA)

HRA sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to and contains the Articles and protocols of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) that apply in the UK. The Proprietors and Governors understand that under the HRA, it is unlawful for Caversham

Preparatory School to act in a way that is incompatible with the ECHR, in particular:

- Article 3: the right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment
- Article 8: the right to respect for private and family life including a duty to protect individuals' physical and psychological integrity
- Article 14 requires that all of the rights and freedoms set out in the Act must be protected and applied without discrimination
- Protocol 1, Article 2 protects the right to education.

In the context of safeguarding, the Proprietors and Governors understand that being subject to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of these rights, depending on the nature of the conduct and the circumstances.

Further information (including on absolute and qualified rights) can be found at **Human Rights | Equality and Human Rights Commission (equalityhumanrights.com)**

Responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010

Caversham Preparatory School has obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to not unlawfully discriminate against pupils (or staff) due to protected characteristics of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity status, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics). Whilst all of the above protections are important, in the context of safeguarding, this guidance, and the legal duties placed on schools in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, the Proprietors will carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils with regard to particular protected characteristics - including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race. Provisions within the Equality Act allow schools to take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils with a particular protected characteristic in order to meet their specific need, this includes the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people, including those with long-term conditions. For more information read our [Accessibility Policy and Plan](#) Guidance can be found at [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\). information Equality Act guidance | Equality and Human Rights Commission \(equalityhumanrights.com\).](#)

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is found in the Equality Act. It places a general duty on schools to have, due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation (and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act), to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

The duty applies to all protected characteristics and means that whenever significant decisions are being made or policies developed, specific consideration must be given to the equality implications of these such as, for example, the need to eliminate unlawful behaviours that relate to them, such as sexual violence and sexual harassment, misogyny/misandry and racism. This is one reason why good record-keeping and monitoring of all forms of abuse and harassment is essential.

For further information see [\(Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty: England | Equality and Human Rights Commission \(equalityhumanrights.com\).](#)

Responsibilities under Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

The Proprietors are aware that the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) placed duties on our school and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure. For more information read our [Data Protection Policy](#) and our [Data Retention Policy](#).

These acts do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

Online Safety

Technology

An effective whole school approach to online safety empowers us to protect and educate pupils, and staff in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate. The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable and ever evolving, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, and extremism are safeguarding harms.
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
- **conduct:** online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying, and
- **commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If the school feels that our pupils and/or staff are at risk, we will report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

Parents/Carers

The school uses parental communications to reinforce the importance of children being safe online. Parents are informed about what systems the school uses to filter and monitor online use. The school will update parents regularly about what their children are being asked to do online in school, including the sites they will be asked to access, and with whom they may be interacting with online. We ask them to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be clear who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online,

Remote education

In the event of the requirement for remote education, for example, during another Covid pandemic, Caversham Preparatory School will publish a safeguarding addendum.

Filtering and monitoring

The Proprietors do all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the school's IT system. As part of this process, the Proprietors ensure that the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place, and they regularly review their effectiveness. Our staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified. The Proprietors consider the number of and age range of their children; those who are potentially at greater risk of harm; and how often they access the IT system; along with the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks. The

appropriateness of our filtering and monitoring systems are informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty.

We follow the Department for Education's **filtering and monitoring standards** to:

- identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
- review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
- block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
- use the department's 'plan technology for your school service' to self-assess against the filtering and monitoring standards and receive personalised recommendations on how to meet them.

The Proprietors review the standards and discuss with IT staff and service providers what more needs to be done to support our school in meeting this standard. Additional guidance on "appropriate" filtering and monitoring can be found at:

- UK Safer Internet Centre: <https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/teachers-and-school-staff/appropriate-filtering-and-monitoring>. The UK Safer Internet Centre produced a series of webinars for teachers on behalf of the Department. These webinars were designed to inform and support schools with their filtering and monitoring responsibilities and can be accessed at Filtering and monitoring webinars available – UK Safer Internet Centre.
- South West Grid for Learning (swgfl.org.uk) has created a tool to check whether a school filtering provider is signed up to relevant lists. CSA content, Sexual Content, Terrorist content, Our Internet Connection Blocks Child Abuse, Terrorist Content and Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation.
- Support for schools when considering what to buy and how to buy it is available via the: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-buying-strategy> with specific advice on procurement here: buying for schools.
- The Department of Education has published **Generative AI: product safety expectations (2025)** to support schools to use generative artificial intelligence safely and explains how filtering and monitoring requirements apply to the use of generative AI in education and which schools can use to assess themselves against the filtering and monitoring standards and receive personalised recommendations on how to meet them.

Reviewing online safety

Technology, and risks and harms related to it, evolve, and change rapidly. The school carries out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks their children face. We use [360 safe website LGfL online safety audit](#)

Governance and Central Support

The Proprietors ensure online safety is a running and interrelated theme whilst devising and implementing our whole school approach to safeguarding and related policies and

procedures. Whilst it is essential that the Proprietors ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place, we must be careful that 'over blocking' does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught regarding online teaching and safeguarding.

The Proprietors will ensure the staff are:

- Aware of and understand the systems in place manage them effectively
- Know how to escalate concerns when identified.
- communicate with parents and carers to reinforce the Importance of children keeping our children safe online.
- share information with parents/carers

The Proprietors

- identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems. • review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
- block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
- have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs. • schools can use the department's 'plan technology for your school service' to self-assess against the filtering and monitoring standards and receive personalised recommendations on how to meet them.

The Proprietors review the standards and discuss with IT staff and service providers what more needs to be done to support our school in meeting this standard.

Our children are not allowed mobile phones at school but some may have access at home. This access means some children, could sexually harass their peers via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images: consensually, and non-consensually (often via chat groups), and view and share pornography and other harmful content. We will always work with parents to support them to address their child's online activity as needed. This is managed through lessons on online safety, PSHE lessons, discussion in class and assemblies as well as providing information for parents.

Andrew Lawson is responsible for ensuring our school has the appropriate level of security protection procedures in place in order to safeguard our systems, staff and learners. They review the effectiveness of our procedures annually to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies. We will follow the cybersecurity standards for schools and colleges advice (2025 developed to help schools improve their cyber resilience).

The Use of 'Reasonable Force' in School

Caversham Preparatory School has a Safer Handling Policy as there may be circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use 'reasonable force' to safeguard children.

The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom. The Government believes that the adoption of a 'no contact' policy for schools can leave staff unable to fully support and protect their pupils. The Proprietors have adopted a sensible policy, which allows and supports our staff to make appropriate physical contact. The decision on whether to use 'reasonable force' to control or restrain a child is down to the professional judgement of the staff concerned within the context of the law and should always depend on individual circumstances.

When using 'reasonable force' in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEND, mental health problems, or with medical conditions, the staff should in consider the risks very carefully recognising the additional vulnerability of these groups. They should also consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010, for example in relation to making reasonable adjustments and their Public Sector Equality Duty. By planning positive and proactive behaviour support, for instance through drawing up individual behaviour plans for more vulnerable children, and agreeing them with parents/carers, we can reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use 'reasonable force'.

Working Together to Safeguard Attendance 2025 is statutory guidance

Children Absent (Missing) From Education are those children who are:

Children of compulsory school age who are:

- Not on a school roll
- Not being educated other than at school
- Identified as having been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (4 weeks)

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important we respond to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, help prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

Children Missing Education is a statutory guidance for local authorities (LA) published by the DfE (Updated 2016), which places a duty on our LA, Reading Borough Council (via Brighter Futures for Children) to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age and not receiving a suitable education. These children are referred to as Children Missing Education. The

law requires all children between the ages of 5 and 18 to be in full time education or training. CME could also be a potential safeguarding issue. All staff should be aware that children who are absent from education for unexplainable, and/or prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. It is important that the school's response to unexplainable, prolonged and/or persistently absent children supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child being absent from school or going missing in future. Where children are already known to external agencies, where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family, or where there is prolonged absence and/or unexplained absence for any child, the school will request that the parents/carers facilitate regular visibility of the child remotely, over MS Teams. Where the parents/carers do not comply with this request, consideration will be given to seeking advice/making a referral to local authority children's Social Care.

Staff should be aware of the school's unauthorised absence and local authority 'children missing/absent from education' procedures.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children Missing Education - statutory guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf) and our Admission and Attendance Policy which discusses changes implemented by Working together to Improve School Attendance

Children go missing from education for a number of reasons including:

- They don't start school at the appropriate time and so they do not enter the educational system
- They are removed by their parents
- Mental Health Issues
- Behaviour and/or attendance difficulties
- They cease to attend, due to exclusion, illness or bullying
- They fail to find a suitable school place after moving to a new area
- The family move home regularly
- Problems at home

Children in the following groups are more likely to be missing from education: Young people who have committed offences; children living in women's refuges; children of homeless families perhaps in temporary housing; young runaways; children with long term medical or emotional problems; unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees or children of asylum seeking families; looked after children; children with a Gypsy/Traveller background; young carers; children from transient families; teenage parents; children who are excluded from school; children who are removed or asked to leave independent schools. Children who are not in school could be missing out on vital educational and social opportunities and experiences. Some of them may be at risk of harm or be in situations that are unsafe. They are at greater risk of involvement in criminal activity and becoming victims of crime themselves. There is also a higher risk that these children will be victims of abuse.

Entry and Exit Procedures at Caversham Prep

Children Joining the School

The School has a safeguarding transfer form, so that safeguarding information or concerns about the child can be securely transferred to us when the child starts. This form is separate from the pupil file and is secured with the safeguarding documentation. Where information is provided to us, it will be reviewed by the DSL and DDSL, and reported to the Proprietors, and relevant staff in the school will be made aware. Where pupils join at non-standard times (i.e. not into the Nursery, or Reception classes) in September, pupil information is shared with Reading Borough Council under the [CME statutory guidance](#).

Children Leaving the School

When a pupil leaves Caversham Preparatory School, for instance to a senior school, the DSL will provide (within 5 days or in the first 5 days of term) safeguarding information to the new school, generally this will take the form of a safeguarding form as part of the move on process. Where pupils leave Caversham Prep at non-standard times (i.e. not the end of the Summer Term in Year 6), pupil information is shared with Reading Borough Council under the [CME statutory guidance](#). See section on **Information Sharing** for how Caversham Preparatory School provides information to Reading Borough Council for non-standard starters and leavers. Please also refer to our **Admissions, Registrations and Children Missing Education Policy** for more information.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, it is recommended that key professionals work together to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. This would be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has SEND, and/or has a social worker, and/or is otherwise vulnerable. Where a child has an Education, Health and Care plan local authorities will need to review the plan. Many home educated children have a positive learning experience. However, elective home education can mean that some children are not in receipt of suitable education and are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their needs. In accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, Caversham Preparatory School makes a return to the local authority when a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register.

Alternative Provision

If Caversham Preparatory School places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, we will continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs.

Looked After Children (and Previously Looked After Children)

A child who is looked after by a local authority (referred to as a looked-after-child) as defined in section 22 Children Act 1989, means a child who is subject to an (interim or full care order, or who is voluntarily accommodated by the local authority. The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation. They might be living with foster parents or at home with their parents under an Interim Care Order (Children Act 1989), or in residential children's homes, or other residential settings like schools or secure units. A child who is *adopted* is not a Looked After Child.

As a result of their experiences both before and during care, Looked After Children are at greater risk than their peers; they are, for example, four times more likely than their peers to have a mental health difficulty. Providing a secure, caring environment in school and enabling such children to develop strong, trusting, and stable relationships with professionals is critical to their immediate and longer-term safety and wellbeing. A previously looked after child (whether in care temporarily or longer term into adoption) also potentially remains vulnerable and staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. Appropriate staff should have access to the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents, or on an interim or full care order) and the child's contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. They should also have information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her.

Virtual School Heads and Designated Teachers

Independent schools are not required to have a virtual headteacher. The role of a Virtual School Head (VSH) is a statutory requirement for local authorities in England to support looked-after and previously looked-after children. Independent schools, while they may have designated teachers for these pupils, are not obligated to have a dedicated virtual school head. A designated teacher, if we needed one, would be appointed and trained to work with the local authority to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked after. This role was extended in 2025 to include responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children in kinship care.. With the commencement of sections 4 to 6 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, designated teachers have a responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales. Virtual School Heads manage pupil premium plus for looked after children and kinship care. The designated teacher or appropriately trained teacher should work with the Virtual School Head to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children. Statutory guidance on [Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children](#) contains further information on the roles and responsibilities of Virtual School Heads. Non-statutory guidance on [Promoting the education of children with a social worker](#) and children in kinship care

arrangements contains further information on the roles and responsibilities of Virtual School Heads

Care leavers

Local authorities have on-going responsibilities to children who cease to be looked after and become care leavers.

Children involved in the court system

Criminal courts

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or crimes they have witnessed. Age-appropriate guides to support these children are at [5-11-year olds](#).

Family Courts

Making child arrangements via the family courts following parent separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be extremely stressful for children caught up in proceedings, and in the most complex situations, cause significant emotional abuse to the child and a referral to local authority children's services may be required. The Ministry of Justice has launched an **online child arrangements information** tool with clear and concise information for on the dispute resolution service.

Where children are involved in the above family courts, the school has a duty to support any court order granted and cannot become involved in individual discussions with parents around court decisions around collections/residence. Those with Parental Responsibility must seek permission from the courts to disclose any variation to orders with the school. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online **[child arrangements information tool](#)** with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service.

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 to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

Cybercrime

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

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded

- 'Denial of Service' (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting' are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources
- making, supplying or obtaining malware such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

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

Operation Encompass operates in all Police forces across England. It helps Police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children and families where abuse is happening. The system ensures that when the Police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the Police will inform the DSL in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This ensures that the school has up to date information about the child's circumstances and can enable immediate support. Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures. **Operation Encompass website.**

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse, and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals/discussion with the Local Housing Authority should progress, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into local authority children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Modern slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking, sexual exploitation and slavery, servitude and forced

or compulsory labour, servitude, forced criminality, and the removal of organs. Further information on the signs and the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in Statutory Guidance. **[Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK](#)**

Host families/Homestays

Schools may make arrangements for children to take part in exchange visits, either to other parts of the

UK or abroad. Our children are too young to go away on their own, and we do not arrange visits from children abroad, but our families may host families in their own homes from time to time and those children may attend Caversham Prep for a set period of time.

Private arrangements

Where the child's parent(s) arranges their own homestay themselves, this would be a private arrangement, therefore the school would not be the regulated activity provider. Where it is a private arrangement, the school would not obtain a standard or enhanced DBS check.

Additional action for extended homestays Where a period of UK homestay lasts 28 days or more, for a child aged under 16 years of age (under 18 years of age if the child has disabilities), this may amount to Private Fostering under the Children Act (1989). In these cases, the school must notify the local authority of the arrangements. Private fostering legislation places a duty on local authorities to satisfy themselves that the welfare of a child who is being, or proposed to be, privately fostered in their area is being or will be satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted.

Sponsored International students (Tier 4 child visas)

Caversham Prep does not sponsor international students (Tier 4 child visas)

Private fostering

Private fostering is when a child under 16 years old (or 18 if they have a disability) is looked after for 28 days or more by someone who is not a close relative, legal guardian, or person with parental responsibility. Close relatives *only* include parents, step-parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. It is not private fostering if the child is 'looked after' by the Local Authority (also known as 'in foster care' and which includes placement in residential care, with an approved foster carer or a 'kinship' carer). By law, the Local Authority must be informed about all private fostering situations. Where Children's Social Care are not already aware of the circumstances, the DSL should make a referral to them, after making enquiries with the family about the arrangement

Staff Training

At the point of induction, all new school employed staff, including those with governance oversight will be provided with, should read, and should be trained by the DSL (or delegated to the DDSL) in:

- KCSIE 2025 – Part One and Annex B (contact with children) and/or Annex A (no contact)
- Our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure
- Online Safety (which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring)
- [Behaviour Policy](#)
- Admission and Attendance Registers and Children Missing Education Policy
- Staff Handbook
- [Whistle Blowing Policy](#) and Procedures for Allegations Against Staff
- IT Policy (including Digital Safety and Acceptable Use)
- Social Media Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Prevent Policy

- Code of Conduct (including staff/pupil relationships and communications)

Copies of the above documentation are available on staff 'teams'. All staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, will be provided with induction training that makes them aware of the schools safeguarding systems. Likewise, all agency/supply staff must be informed of those with these roles, and of the school processes for raising concerns about children or adults in the school. All new staff must be made aware that they are not to ever use their personal mobile phone/other personal devices when on the school site where children are present unless they are photographing/videoing children with permission of the school. All staff are required to wear the coloured lanyard for staff at all times when on the school site.

All staff employed receive face to face annual safeguarding and child protection training from the DSL at the start of the academic year, in addition to any other presentation/information that the DSL has prepared for the school. ***This is mandatory and must be recorded on the school Training Log.**

The DSL/DDSL do their **Level 2 Safeguarding Training with Reading Borough Council**. They also

- understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes, such as early help assessments.
- have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case and/or review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff.
- are alert to the specific needs of children in need (section 17(10) Children Act 1989), those with special educational needs and young carers
- take the lead for online safety.
- take the lead for staff training.

Other non-mandatory training sessions/webinars can be arranged by the DSL, and accessible by all staff can also be recorded on the school Training Log.

Preventing Radicalisation

All school employed staff must complete online Prevent training every 3 years. ***This is mandatory and must be recorded on the school Training Log.**

Female Genital Mutilation

All school employed staff who have contact with children must also complete online FGM training every 5 years. ***This is mandatory and must be recorded on the school Training Log.**

Safer Recruitment Training

Andrew Lawson, Caroline Kidao and Jacqueline Lawson must also complete Safer Recruitment

training every 2 years ***This is mandatory and must be recorded on the school Training Log.**

Non-Mandatory training Drug and Alcohol Awareness

Arranged by the DSL and is non-mandatory (need-led assessment). It should be updated every 3 years. **Should a staff member undertake this training, it should be added to the school Training Log.**

Mental Health Awareness (Children)

Arranged by the DSL and is non-mandatory (need-led assessment). It should be updated every 3 years.

Should a staff member undertake this training, it should be added to the school Training Log.

The school does not presently employ supply staff as we handle absences 'in house'. However, if we had to then we would ask them to show evidence of Basic Safeguarding training undertaken within 3 years, prior to attending the school for the first time, and must receive a Safeguarding Induction prior to first contact with children which includes the school's approach to online safety and managing incidents of sexual violence/harassment. The induction can be completed by the DSL or delegated to the DDSL. ***This is mandatory and should be recorded on the school Training Log.**

Peripatetic Teachers

Must show evidence of having undertaken Basic Safeguarding training within the last 3

years prior to attending the school for the first time and should receive a Safeguarding Induction prior to first contact with children which includes the school's approach to online safety and managing incidents of sexual violence/harassment. The induction can be completed by the DSL or delegated to the DDSL.

***This is mandatory and should be recorded on the school Training Log.**

Third-party contractors

It is good practice for those employed as third-party contractors who work regularly in school with the opportunity for contact with pupils to have Basic Safeguarding training, at a level appropriate to their role. This training should be arranged by their employers.

Policy Review

This policy is updated annually by Andrew Lawson, followed by a Governor review which includes an evaluation of the extent to which the school's policies have been effectively implemented. The school will remedy any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements without delay and without waiting for the next policy review date, should any be necessary. Staff are invited to contribute to, and shape safeguarding arrangements based on reflection and learning.

Footnote

KCSIE has been revised regularly for many years. Future iterations will reflect the progress into legislation of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill; the emerging further learnings from the work of the recent Casey Audit and subsequent inquiries; the Violence Against Women and Girls strategy and the interactions between these advances.

Update and Review Log

Updated/ Reviewed By	Date	Notes
C.Neal	Created September 2017	
C.Neal	Reviewed April 2018	Changed during the Inspection
Full Board	Proprietor Review/July 2018	When writing Action Plan
C. Neal	Updated January 2019	Procedures of how to deal with allegations against teachers and other staff edited to give greater clarity.
J Lawson	Proprietor Review Jan 2019	Agreed
C. Neal	Updated February 2019	Using ISSR's Safeguarding Checklist Review
J. Lawson	Proprietor Review February 2019	Using ISSR's Safeguarding Checklist Review – Agreed and Signed off
N. Williams	Updated September 2020	Apprised with KCSIE 2020 updates
J. Lawson	Proprietor Review September 2020	Apprised with KCSIE 2020 updates
A Lawson	Administrative Review April 2020	Updated formatting, updated links, removed some references, updated for KCSIE 2021 references
N. Williams	Updated August 2021	Apprised with KCSIE 2021 updates
N. Williams	Updated August 2022	KCSIE 2022
A Lawson	Updated September	KCSIE 2023
J Lawson	Updated September	KCSIE 2024
J Lawson	Updated September 2025	KCSIE 2025
A Lawson	September 2025	Governor Review