

Bedford College Academies Trust
Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Status: Statutory	Member of staff responsible: Principal/Head-teacher	Implementation date: 25 September 2021
Issue No: 1	Approved by: BCAT Board Subject to ratification at the Trust Board 8 October 2021	Next Review Date: September 2022

Our Vision

“Our vision is to provide all of our pupils with a first-class academic education comparable with the very best schools nationally. We also aim to develop those skills and qualities in our pupils’ character which, hand-in-hand with exam qualifications, will deliver success and resilience in later life”.

Every adult has the right and duty to refer any safeguarding concerns that they have themselves. In the case of a child, this should be direct to the Integrated Front Door (IFD)* or in the case of an adult, to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

*The IFD brings together the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Early Help Bedford Borough Children’s Services; Police; Community Health Services.

Policy Consultation & Review

This policy is available on our schools website and is available on request from the schools office. We also inform parents and carers about this policy when their children join our schools and through our schools newsletter.

We recognise the expertise our staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis and we therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated safeguarding arrangements.

The policy is provided to all staff at induction alongside our Staff Code of Conduct, behaviour policy and the safeguarding response to those pupils who are missing from education. In addition, all staff are provided with Part One of the statutory guidance [‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’](#), DfE (2021).

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Board on an annual basis. This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Board on [insert date]. It is due for review on [insert date].

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1. PURPOSE & AIMS

1.1 The purpose of Bedford college Academies Trust (BCAT) School's (Wixams Academy and Wixams Tree Primary Schools) safeguarding policy is to ensure every child who is a registered pupil at our schools is safe and protected from harm. This means we will always work to:

- Protect children and young people at our schools from maltreatment;
- Prevent impairment of our children's and young people's mental and physical health or development;
- Ensure that children and young people at our schools grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- Undertake that role so as to enable children and young people at our schools to have the best outcomes.

1.2 This policy will give clear direction to all staff including supply staff, volunteers, visitors and parents about expected behaviour and our legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children at our schools.

1.3 Our schools fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children from harm and supporting and promoting the welfare of all children who are registered pupils at our schools. The elements of our policy are prevention, protection and support.

1.4 We recognise that our safeguarding responsibilities are clearly linked to our responsibilities for ensuring that appropriate safeguarding responses are in place for children who are absent from schools or who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. The Attendance Lead will regularly liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to discuss all persistently absent pupils and those who go missing to identify the risk of abuse and neglect including sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation to ensure that appropriate safeguarding responses have been put in place to reduce the risk of future harm.

1.5 This policy applies to all pupils, staff, parents, trust board members, governors/local advisory board members, volunteers and visitors.

2. OUR ETHOS

2.1 The child's welfare is of paramount importance. Our schools will establish and maintain an ethos where pupils feel secure, are encouraged to talk, are listened to and are safe. Children at our schools will be able to talk freely to any member of staff at our schools if they are worried or concerned about something. All staff will reassure children that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. Children will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment.

2.2 Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. We recognise that staff at our schools play a particularly important role as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children to prevent concerns from escalating. **All staff are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.** When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members must always act in the **best interests** of the child.

2.3 At BCAT Schools we ensure that safeguarding and child protection is at the forefront and underpins all relevant aspects of process and policy development. We operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

2.4 Where there is a safeguarding concern, the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. The systems we have in place are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report any concerns or abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.

2.5 All staff and regular visitors will, through training and induction, know how to recognise indicators of concern or abuse, how to respond to a disclosure from a child and how to record and report this information. We will not make promises to any child and we will not keep secrets. Every child will know what the adult will have to do with any information they have chosen to disclose.

2.6 Throughout our broad and balanced curriculum, we will provide activities and opportunities for children to develop the knowledge, values and skills they need to identify risks, including knowing when and how to ask for help for themselves and others to stay safe (this includes online). The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education will cover relevant, topics in an age and stage appropriate way, through a planned, developmental curriculum enabling pupils to learn about their rights and responsibilities to behave and stay safe in a variety of contexts on and offline. This will provide further reinforcement to help children identify risks, know when to seek support and develop the skills to ask for help from trustworthy, reliable sources. Further information can be found in the DfE guidance [‘Teaching online safety in schools.’](#) and [‘Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education.’](#)

- PSHCE
- Computing
- Assemblies
- Liaison with local police
- Outside agencies (NSPCC, Think u know, Childnet, Hazzard Alley)
- Pupil voice

2.7 At all times we will work in partnership and endeavour to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers and colleagues from other agencies in line with [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (2018) and the [Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board Interagency Child Protection Procedures.](#)

2.8 As part of our responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, we will provide a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified. These may include if a child:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan);
- has an emotional wellbeing and/or mental health need;
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse;
- has returned home to their family from care;
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect;

- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage;
- is a privately fostered child
- has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending;
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the schools day.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Name	Contact details
Schools Name and contact details	Wixams Academy	Green Lane Wixams Academy Bedford MK42 6BA 01234 608950 info@wixamsacademy.co.uk
Schools Name and contact details	Wixams Tree Primary	Green Lane Wixams Academy Bedford MK42 6BA 01234 608960 Info@wixamstreeprimary.co.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead and contact details	Wixams Academy	Mrs Lindsey Pearson 01234 608950 lpearson@wixamsacademy.co.uk
	Wixams Tree Primary	Mrs Kelly Pestell 01234 608960 kpestell@wixamstreeprimary.co.uk
Deputy/Deputies Designated Safeguarding Lead and contact details	Wixams Academy	Mr A O'Rourke aorourke@wixamsacademy.co.uk Mrs A Maddox amaddox@wixamsacademy.co.uk Mrs C Mountain cmountain@wixamsacademy.co.uk Miss H Stack hstack@wixamsacademy.co.uk Ms C Stacey cstacey@wixamsacademy.co.uk Mrs N Biddles nbiddles@wixamsacademy.co.uk Mrs L Bonforte lbonforte@wixamsacademy.co.uk

	Wixams Tree Primary	Mrs Mary Langley 01234 608960 mlangley@wixamstreeprimary.co.uk
Designated Governor for Safeguarding and schools contact details	Wixams Academy	Mrs Emma Baker Ebaker@wixamsacademy.co.uk
	Wixams Tree Primary	Mrs Aoife Greaves
Designated Lead for Mental Health and Wellbeing and contact details	Wixams Academy	Mrs A Maddox amaddox@ wixamsacademy.co.uk
	Wixams Tree Primary	Mrs Helen Protheroe hprotheroe@wixamstreeprimary.co.uk
Designated Trustee with responsibility for Mental Health and Wellbeing and contact details	BCAT	Alan Evans Alan.evans08@gmail.com Interim Chief Executive and Anthony Abrahams aa2abrahams@yahoo.co.uk
Reviewed annually, date last reviewed	Trust	September 2021
	Wixams Academy	September 2021
	Wixams Tree Primary	September 2021

3.1 It is the responsibility of every member of staff, volunteer and regular visitor to our schools to ensure that they carry out the requirements of this policy and, at all times, work in a way that will safeguard and promote the welfare of all of the pupils at this schools. This includes the responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn. Designated safeguarding leads (DSL's) will oversee the safeguarding procedures for BCAT schools (see appendix 5 for job description).

The BCAT Trust

3.2 The Trust Board of BCAT is accountable for ensuring the effectiveness of this policy and our compliance with it. Although the Trust Board takes collective responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of our pupils, we also have a named person who champions safeguarding within each Academy

3.3 The Trust Board will ensure that:

- The safeguarding policy is in place and is reviewed annually, is available publicly via our academy websites and has been written in line with Local Authority guidance and the

requirements of the Bedford Borough safeguarding children board interagency child protection procedures;

- The schools contributes to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018);
- A senior member of staff from leadership team is designated to take the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection and that there is at least one deputy DSL(S)(s) who is appropriately trained member to deal with any issues in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL(S)). There will always be cover for this role. The role will be evidenced explicitly in the role holder's job description.
- All staff receive a safeguarding induction and are provided with a copy of this policy, the staff code of conduct, the behaviour policy and the school's safeguarding response for those pupils who go missing from education as detailed section 6 of this policy.
- All staff undertake appropriate child protection training that is updated annually and on-line safety training;
- Procedures are in place for dealing with allegations against members of staff and volunteers, including supply staff in line with statutory guidance;
- Safer recruitment practices are followed in accordance with the requirements of ['Keeping Children Safe in Education'](#) DfE (2021);
- They remedy without delay any weakness in regard to our safeguarding arrangements that are brought to their attention.

3.4 The governing board will receive a safeguarding report at each meeting that will record the training that has taken place, the number of staff attending and any outstanding training requirements for the schools. It will also record all safeguarding activity that has taken place, for example, meetings attended, reports written, training or induction given. It will not identify individual pupils.

The Principal/Headteacher

3.5 At BCAT Schools the Principal/Headteacher is responsible for:

- Identifying a senior member of staff from leadership team to be the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL(S));
- Identifying alternate members of staff to act as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL(S)) in his/her absence to ensure there is always cover for the role;
- Ensuring that the policies and procedures adopted by the governing body, particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, are followed by all staff;
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and such concerns are addressed sensitively in accordance with agreed whistle-blowing procedures;
- Liaise with the LADO in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff or volunteer.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL(S))

3.6 The Designated Safeguarding Leads are senior members of staff, from the schools leadership team who take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within our schools. The DSL(S) will carry out their role in accordance with the responsibilities outlined in Annex C of ['Keeping Children Safe in Education'](#).

3.7 The DSL(S) will provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters. Any concern for a child's safety or welfare will be recorded in writing and via CPOMS and given to the DSL(S).

3.8 During term time the DSL(S) and or a deputy will always be available (during schools or college hours) for staff in the schools to discuss any safeguarding concerns. If in *exceptional* circumstances, a DSL(S) is not available on the schools site in person, we will ensure that they are available via telephone and/or any other relevant media.

3.9 The DSL(S) at BCAT Schools will represent our schools at child protection conferences and core group meetings. Through appropriate training, knowledge and experience our DSL(S) will liaise with Children's Services and other agencies where necessary, and make referrals of abuse to Children's Services, take part in strategy discussions and other interagency meetings and contribute to the assessment of children.

3.10 The DSL(S) will maintain records and child protection files ensuring that they are kept confidential and stored securely (see section 7 for more information.)

3.11 The DSL(S) is responsible for ensuring that all staff members and volunteers are aware of our policy and the procedure they need to follow. They will ensure that all staff, volunteers and regular visitors have received appropriate child protection information during induction and have been trained within the schools.

3.12 The DSL(S) will obtain details of the Local Authority Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support a child who is a care leaver.

3.13 The DSL(s) will work with the Principal/Headteacher and senior leaders, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement.

3.14 This will include understanding their academic progress and attainment and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort and supporting teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential.

3.15 We recognise that 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, emotional wellbeing and mental health. The DSL(S) will use the information that they hold about children with a social worker to make decisions in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and help promote educational outcomes. The DSL(S) will ensure that staff, know who these children are, understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort; supporting teaching staff to identify the challenges that children in this group might face and the additional academic support and adjustments that they could make to best support these children.

4. TRAINING & INDUCTION

4.1 When new staff or volunteers join our schools they will be informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They will be given a copy of our schools safeguarding and child protection policy along with the staff code of conduct, Part one and/or Annex A of '*Keeping Children Safe in Education*' (2021) and told who our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL(S)) and Deputy DSL(S)s are. They will also receive a copy of the behaviour policy and

the school's response to children who go missing from education – this information is included in section 6 of this policy. All staff are expected to read these key documents and will be asked to sign that they have read and understood the policy. They will also be provided with information about how to record and report safeguarding concerns. All BCAT use the CPOMS system to report and manage safeguarding concerns and are given the appropriate training.

4.2 Every new member of staff or volunteer will receive safeguarding training during their induction period immediately upon joining the schools. This programme will include information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, how to manage a disclosure from a child (including reassuring the child that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe), how to record, the processes for referral to Children's Services and the statutory assessments under Section 17 and Section 47 as well as the remit of the role of the DSL(S). The training will also include information about whistleblowing in respect of concerns about another adult's behaviour and suitability to work with children. Staff will also receive on-line safeguarding training as this is part of the overarching safeguarding approach of our schools.

4.3 In addition to the safeguarding induction, we will ensure that mechanisms are in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities as set out in Part one of *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'*. In order to achieve this, we will ensure that:

- all members of staff will undertake appropriate safeguarding training on an annual basis and we will evaluate the impact of this training;
- all staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings), as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively;

4.4 All regular visitors, temporary staff and volunteers to our schools will be given a set of our safeguarding procedures; they will be informed of whom our DSL(S) and Deputy DSL(S) are and what the recording and reporting system is. (See Appendix 2).

- Policies shared
- In house training via PPT/Video presentations
- Location of paper cause for concern forms

4.5 The DSL(S), the deputy designated member(s) of staff and any other senior member of staff who may be in a position of making referrals or attending child protection conferences or core groups will attend one of the multi-agency training courses at least once every three years. The DSL(S) and deputy will attend DSL(S) training provided by the Local Authority every two years. In addition to formal training, DSL(S) will ensure that they update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals, but at least annually, to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

- *disseminating national and local updates to staff,*
- *attendance at DSL(S) cluster/forum meetings,*
- *Local Safeguarding Children's Groups,*
- *Personal Development.*

4.6 Our LAB /BCAT Trust will also undertake appropriate training to ensure they are able to carry out their duty to safeguard all of the children at our schools. Training for Governors to support them in their safeguarding role is available from Bedford Borough Governor Training & Development Co-ordinator, governorstraining@bedford.gov.uk

4.7 We actively encourage all of our staff to keep up to date with the most recent local and national safeguarding advice and guidance, Annex A of *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'*

(2021) provides links to guidance on specific safeguarding issues such as Child Sexual Exploitation and Female Genital Mutilation.

5. PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING CONCERNS

5.1 BCAT Schools adheres to child protection procedures that have been agreed locally through the Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board. Where we identify children and families in need of support, we will carry out our responsibilities in accordance with [Bedford Borough Safeguarding Board threshold](#).

5.2 Every member of staff including volunteers working with children at our schools are advised to maintain an attitude of '*it could happen here*' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child and have a responsibility to take action as outline in this policy.

5.3 All staff are encouraged to report any concerns that they have and not see these as insignificant. On occasions, a referral is justified by a single incident such as an injury or disclosure of abuse. More often however, concerns accumulate over a period of time and are evidenced by building up a picture of harm over time (chronology); this is particularly true in cases of emotional abuse and neglect. In these circumstances, it is crucial that staff record and pass on concerns in accordance with this policy immediately to allow the DSL(S) to build up a picture and access support for the child at the earliest opportunity. A reliance on memory without accurate and contemporaneous records of concern could lead to a failure to protect.

5.4 It is *not* the responsibility of schools staff to investigate welfare/safeguarding concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All staff, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and/or abuse/neglect and pass the information on in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

5.5 The DSL(S) should be used as a first point of contact for concerns and queries regarding any safeguarding concern in our schools. Any member of staff or visitor to the schools who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that a child is at risk of significant harm must report it immediately to the DSL(S) or, if unavailable, to the deputy designated person. In the absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff or the Bedford integrated front door.

5.6 All concerns about a child should be reported without delay and recorded in writing using the agreed system in the setting (see Appendix 1 for suggested template). Records should include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern and if possible the lived experience of the child
- any history of concerns for the child
- what the child has said (their wishes and views)
- details of how the concern was followed up, resolved or tried to resolve
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome

5.7 Following receipt of any information raising concern, the DSL(S) will consider what action to take and seek advice from the [Integrated Front Door](#) (IFD) as required. All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented.

5.8 All referrals will be made in line with Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

5.9 If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to the [Integrated Front Door](#) immediately or call 999. Anybody can make a referral in these circumstances. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration by raising concerns again with the DSL(S) and/or The Principal/Headteacher. Concerns should always lead to help for the child.

5.10 Staff should always follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy in the first instance. However, they may also share information directly with the Integrated Front Door, or the police if:

- the situation is an emergency and the designated senior person, the deputy and the Principal/Headteacher are all unavailable;
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the child's safety.

5.11 Any member of staff who does not feel that concerns about a child have been responded to appropriately and in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy should raise their concerns with the Principal/Headteacher or the Chair of Local advisory board. If any member of staff does not feel the situation has been addressed appropriately at this point they should escalate their concerns using the Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board's [Escalation procedures](#).

See appendix 6 for flow chart

6. Specific Safeguarding Issues

Contextual safeguarding

6.1 At BCAT Schools we recognise that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of the schools environment and/or can occur between children outside of the schools. This is known as contextual safeguarding. It is key that all schools staff understand the definition of contextual safeguarding and consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Through training we will ensure that staff and volunteers are aware that extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence (peer on peer abuse). When reporting concerns, staff should include as much information and background detail as possible so the DSL(S) can make a referral with a holistic view of the child. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse.

6.2 We recognise that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges and these are discussed in staff training. These additional barriers can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse/neglect such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying- without outwardly showing any signs; and communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

6.3 At BCAT Schools we recognise that a previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, it is important that all agencies work together, and prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.

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

6.4 At BCAT we train staff to recognise that both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

6.5 At BCAT Schools we recognise that Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse and this imbalance of power coerces, manipulates or deceives a child or young person into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator. Child sexual exploitation does not always include physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology (online). We understand that some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they may believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

6.6 At BCAT Schools we understand that criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity. Drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs.

6.7 We understand that children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. We will treat these children as victims first understanding that they have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to. We recognise the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys and that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

6.8 At BCAT staff are aware of the indicators and risk factors which may signal a child is vulnerable to or involved with serious violent crime. We make reference to the Home Office's [Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#) and [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines](#) guidance and [chapter 3.7 Safeguarding Children and Young People from Exploitation in the Bedford Borough Child Protection Procedures](#) for more information .

6.9 If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a referral to the [Integrated Front Door](#) will be made alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

So-called 'honour-based violence (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage

6.10 At BCAT Schools we recognise that our staff are well placed to identify concerns and take action to prevent children from becoming victims of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and other forms of so-called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) and provide guidance on these issues through our safeguarding training. If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBV, they should inform the DSL(S) who will activate [local safeguarding procedures](#), using existing national and local protocols for multiagency liaison with police and children's services.

6.11 Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on 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 in England and Wales, 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. We will provide guidance and support to our teachers on this requirement and further information on when and how to make a report can be found in the following Home Office guidance: [Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation- procedural information](#) Home Office (December 2015) and the [Bedford Borough Child Protection Procedures](#).

6.12 At BCAT Schools we recognise that 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 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. The Forced Marriage Unit has [statutory guidance](#) and [Multi-agency guidelines](#) and can be contacted for advice or more information: Contact 020 7008 0151 or email fm@fco.gov.uk. [There are also procedures for Forced Marriage in the Bedford Borough Child Protection Procedures](#).

Preventing radicalisation and extremism

6.13 We recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation and extremism is no different to safeguarding against any other vulnerability in today's society. At BCAT Schools, we will ensure that:

- Through training, staff, volunteers and governors have an understanding of what radicalisation and extremism is, why we need to be vigilant in schools and how to respond when concerns arise.
- There are systems in place for keeping pupils safe from extremist material when accessing the internet in our schools by using effective filtering and usage policies.
- The DSL(S) has received Prevent training and will act as the point of contact within our schools for any concerns relating to radicalisation and extremism.
- The DSL(S) will make referrals in accordance with [Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board Interagency Child Protection Procedures](#) and will represent our schools at Channel meetings as required.
- Through our curriculum, we will promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

Peer on peer abuse- Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment

6.14 At BCAT schools all staff are trained so that they are aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- upskirting;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

6.15 We recognise that children are vulnerable to physical, sexual and emotional abuse by their peers or siblings. Abuse perpetrated by children can be just as harmful as that perpetrated by an adult, so it is important that all staff and volunteers to remember the impact on both the victim of the abuse as well as to focus on the support for the child exhibiting the harmful behaviour. We understand that abuse can occur in intimate personal relationships between peers; and that consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi nude images and or videos¹ (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery) is a form of peer on peer abuse.

6.16 We understand, that even if there are no reports in our setting it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. We recognise that children may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse and can show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to. In some cases, the child may not make a direct report, and this may come from a friend or a conversation that is overheard. Such abuse will always be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult and the same safeguarding children procedures will apply in respect of any child who is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Staff must never tolerate or dismiss concerns relating to peer on peer abuse; it must never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'. Doing this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

6.17 At BCAT Schools all staff will reassure children that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. Children will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor will a child ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

6.18 All staff will understand that they should follow our safeguarding procedures for reporting a concern if they are worried about peer on peer abuse. The DSL(S) will respond to any concerns related to peer on peer abuse in line with guidance outlined in Part five of '*Keeping Children Safe in Education*' and '[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#)' (2021). We will ensure that all concerns, discussions and decisions reached are clearly recorded and any identified actions are followed up.

6.19 We will work with other agencies including the police and Children's Services, as required to respond to concerns about sexual violence and harassment. We will seek consultations where there are concerns or worries about developmentally inappropriate or harmful sexual behaviour from the [Integrated Front Door](#) as required so that we ensure we are offering the right support to the child(ren).

6.20 Support will depend on the circumstances of each case and the needs of the child, it may include completion of risk assessments to support children to remain in schools whilst safeguarding other children and the victim, delivery of early intervention in respect of harmful sexual behaviours (HSB) and/or referral to [The Emerald Centre](#) (SARC) where a pupil

¹ UKCIS guidance: [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes advice for education settings](#)

discloses a rape, an attempted rape or a serious sexual assault whether this has happened recently or in the past. The SARC also has a 24/7 helpline 0330 223 0099 if pupils or staff need to speak to a Crisis Worker for help & advice.

Modern Slavery

6.21 At BCAT Schools we understand that modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs. We refer to the DfE guidance [Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims](#) for concerns of this nature for concerns of this nature.

Safeguarding responses to children who go missing

6.22 At BCAT schools all staff should be aware of the safeguarding responsibilities for children who are missing education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

6.23 At BCAT schools we adhere to the following procedures and processes to ensure there is an appropriate safeguarding response to children who missing:

- An attendance register is taken at the start of the first session of each schools day and once during the second session;
 - We make every effort to contact parents and carers and follow up with the emergency contacts held;
 - We hold at least two emergency contact numbers for each of the children on our roll wherever possible.
 - Staff will alert DSL(S)s to any concerns raised regarding children who are absent from schools;
 - The DSL(S)s will meet regularly with the Attendance Lead, SENCo and other members of the pastoral team to ensure that each response is thorough and takes into account all the relevant information about individual children;
 - We will follow the procedures outlined in our attendance policy including undertaking first day calling and monitoring data to ensure we intervene early in cases of poor attendance and/or unexplained absences.
 - When removing a child from roll at the standard and non-standard transition points, we will inform the Local Authority in accordance with statutory requirements and pass on all safeguarding files.
-
- home visits,
 - referral to Parent Support Advisor,
 - attendance panel meetings with parents and carers
 - police involvement if appropriate
 - EWO involvement if appropriate

Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health

6.24 At BCAT schools all staff are made aware, through training, that emotional wellbeing and mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Our staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing an emotional wellbeing or mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

6.25 We understand that where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Therefore, through training, staff are

aware of how children's experiences, can impact on their emotional wellbeing, mental health, behaviour and education. All staff are aware that if they have an emotional wellbeing or mental health concern about a child that is *also* a safeguarding concern, they should take immediate action by passing the information on to a DSL(S).

6.26 At BCAT schools we have a named Mental Health Lead. There are clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible emotional wellbeing or mental health problems and work with other agencies as required to respond to these concerns. DSL(S) make reference to the [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#)' DfE guidance for further support.

Online Safety

6.27 At BCAT Schools all staff are aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. We understand that in many cases abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life. We know that children can also abuse their peers online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography.

6.28 As part of the requirement for staff to undergo regular updated safeguarding training, online safety training is also delivered. We will ensure online safety is a running and interrelated theme throughout the curriculum and is reflected in relevant policies, teacher training, the role and responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead and any parental engagement.

6.29 More details can be found in our policies on Online Safety and Mobile and Smart Technology which consider the 4Cs, content, contact, conduct and commerce.

6.30 At BCAT Schools we recognise that technology, and risks and harms related to the internet evolve and change rapidly. Therefore, we carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by a risk assessment (on at least an annual basis) that considers and reflects the risks that children face in our setting.

Cybercrime

6.31 We understand that 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).

6.32 If there are concerns about a child in this area, the DSL(S) will consider a referral to the [Cyber Choices programme](#) which aims to intervene where children are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests. It aims to intervene where children are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities or physical health issues

6.33 At BCAT Schools we recognise that children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges such as

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse/neglect such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration;
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children;

- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.

6.34 We work to address these additional challenges and consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place.

6.35 At BCAT Schools we also recognise that children who attend Alternative Provision will often have complex needs and due to this we are aware of the additional risk of harm these children may be vulnerable to including criminal and sexual exploitation. At BCAT schools we will ensure that any alternative provision centres are both OFSTED registered (with a URN number) and provide a broad and balanced curriculum.

Young carers

6.36 At BCAT Schools we believe that all children and young people have the right to an education, regardless of what is happening at home. When a young person looks after someone in their family who has a serious illness, disability or substance misuse problem, he or she may need a little extra support to help him or her get the most out of school.

Our school:

- Has a member of staff with special responsibility for young carers and lets all new pupils know who they are and what they can do to help.
- Has dedicated Pastoral Heads of Year who are accessible for Young Carers to access pastoral support
- Can put young carers in touch with the local Young Carers Service. We can also put families in touch with other support services.
- Is accessible to parents who have mobility and communication difficulties and involves them in parents' evenings.
- Respects your right to privacy and will only share information about you and your family with people who need to know to help you.
- Will consider alternatives if a young carer is unable to attend out of school activities e.g. detention, sports coaching, concerts, due to their caring role
- Complies with the Disability Discrimination Act by offering disabled parents support to get their children into school.

7. RECORDS AND INFORMATION SHARING

7.1 If staff are concerned about the welfare or safety of any child at our schools, they will record their concern either on the agreed reporting system (CPOMs)

Any other staff on site will complete a paper based record of concerns which should be passed to the DSL(S) without delay.

7.2 Any information recorded will be kept in a separate named file, in a secure cabinet if a paper system is used and not with the child's academic file. These files will be the responsibility of the DSL(S). Child protection information will only be shared within schools on the basis of 'need to know in the child's interests' and on the understanding that it remains strictly confidential.

7.3 Child protection information will be kept up to date. Each concern logged will include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern;
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved;

- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

Records of concern, copies of referrals, and invitations to child protection conferences, core groups and reports will be stored on the child's file whether an electronic or paper system is used. All our safeguarding records will include; a chronology, contents front cover and will record significant events in the child's life.

7.4 When a child leaves our schools, (including in year transfers) the DSL(S) will make contact with the DSL(S) at the new schools and will ensure that the child protection file is forwarded to the receiving schools. This will be within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. We recognise that not providing information as per the timescales can impact on the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes.

7.5 We will retain evidence to demonstrate how the file has been transferred; this may be in the form of a written confirmation of receipt from the receiving schools and/or evidence of recorded delivery.

7.6 Prior to a child leaving we will consider if it would be appropriate to share any additional information with the new schools or college in advance to help them put in place the right support to safeguard this child.

7.7 Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, we recommend that LAs, schools, and other key professionals work together to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. Ideally, 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, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker

The schools will make arrangements to pass any safeguarding concerns to the Elective Home Education Officer, David Roberts ehe@bedford.gov.uk within Bedford Borough Council.

8. WORKING WITH PARENTS & CARERS

8.1 BCAT Schools is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to support them to understand our statutory responsibilities in this area.

8.2 When children join our schools, parents and carers will be informed that we have a safeguarding policy. A copy will be provided to parents on request and is available on the schools website. Parents and carers will be informed of our legal duty to assist our colleagues in other agencies with child protection enquiries and what happens should we need to make a referral to the [Integrated Front Door](#).

8.3 We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission, or it is necessary to do so in order to safeguard a child from harm.

8.4 We will seek to share with parents any concerns we may have about their child *unless* to do so may place a child at increased risk of harm. A lack of parental engagement or agreement regarding the concerns the schools has about a child will not prevent the DSL(S) making a referral to the [Integrated Front Door](#) in those circumstances where it is appropriate to do so.

8.5 In order to keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them, the schools requires parents to provide accurate and up to date information regarding:

- Full names and contact details of all adults with whom the child normally lives;
- Full names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above);
- Emergency contact details (if different from above);
- Full details of any other adult authorised by the parent to collect the child from schools (if different from the above).

The Schools will retain this information on the child's file. The schools will only share information about a child with adults who have parental responsibility for that child or where a parent has given permission and the schools has been supplied with the adult's full details in writing. As part of meeting a child's needs, BCAT schools recognise the importance of information sharing between practitioners and local agencies. This should include ensuring arrangements are in place that set out clearly the processes and principles for sharing information within the school or college and with children's social care, the safeguarding partners, other organisations, agencies, and practitioners as required.

9. CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES

9.1 Children's Services will convene a Child Protection conference once a child protection enquiry under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 has been undertaken and the child is judged to be at continuing risk of significant harm. A review conference will take place once a child has been made the subject of a Child Protection Plan in order to monitor the safety of the child and the required reduction in risk.

9.2 Staff members may be asked to attend a child protection conference or core group meetings on behalf of the schools in respect of individual children. Usually the person representing the schools at these meetings will be the Headteacher or DSL(S). In any event, the person attending will need to have as much relevant up to date information about the child as possible; any member of staff may be required to contribute to this process.

9.3 All reports for child protection conferences will be prepared in advance using the [guidance](#) and [parent information](#) provided by the Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board. The information contained in the report will be shared with parents before the conference as appropriate and will include information relating to the child's physical, emotional and intellectual development and the child's presentation at schools. In order to complete such reports, all relevant information will be sought from staff working with the child in schools.

9.4 Clearly child protection conferences can be upsetting for parents. We recognise that we are likely to have more contact with parents than other professionals involved. We will work in an open and honest way with any parent whose child has been referred to Children's Services or whose child is subject to a child protection plan. Our responsibility is to promote the protection and welfare of all children and our aim is to achieve this in partnership with our parents.

10. SAFER RECRUITMENT

10.1 We will ensure that the Principal/Headteacher and at least one member of the Governing Body have completed appropriate safer recruitment training. At all times the Principal/Headteacher and Governing Body will ensure that safer recruitment practices are followed in accordance with the requirements of '*Keeping Children Safe in Education*', DfE (2021). At least one person involved in conducting an interview will have received safer recruitment training.

10.2 At BCAT Schools we will use the recruitment and selection process to deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for or securing employment, or volunteering opportunities.

10.3 We require details of a candidate's present (or last) employment and reason for leaving; full employment history, (since leaving schools, including education, employment and voluntary work) including reasons for any gaps in employment and evidence of original academic certificates. We do not accept testimonials and insist on taking up references prior to interview. We will question the contents of application forms if we are unclear about them, and shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children.

10.4 At BCAT Schools we use a range of selection techniques to identify the most suitable person for the post. Structured questions are agreed by the interview panel and any potential areas of concern are explored to determine the applicant's suitability to work with children.

10.5 We will undertake Disclosure and Barring Service checks and other pre-employment checks as outlined in *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'* to ensure we are recruiting and selecting the most suitable people to work with our children.

10.6 We will maintain a Single Central Register (SCR) of all safer recruitment checks carried out in line with statutory requirements. A senior member of staff will check the SCR regularly to ensure that it meets statutory requirements.

10.7 At BCAT Schools we recognise that safer recruitment is not just about carrying out the right DBS checks and is not limited to recruitment procedures. Therefore, we understand the importance of continuous vigilance, maintaining an environment that deters and prevents abuse and challenges inappropriate behaviour. Further information about all of these processes can be found in our Recruitment and Selection policy.

11. SAFER WORKING PRACTICE

11.1 All adults who come into contact with our children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our children are competent, confident and safe to do so.

11.2 All staff will be provided with a copy of our schools' code of conduct at induction. They will be expected to know our schools Code of Conduct and policy for positive handling and carry out their duties in accordance with this advice. There will be occasion when some form of physical contact is inevitable, for example if a child has an accident or is hurt or is in a situation of danger to themselves or others around them. However, at all times the agreed policy for safe restraint must be adhered to. A list of staff that have accessed training will be kept by the Principal/Headteacher and or DSL(S)

11.3 If staff, visitors, volunteers or parent helpers are working with children alone they will, wherever possible, be visible to other members of staff. They will be expected to inform another member of staff of their whereabouts in schools, who they are with and for how long. Doors, ideally, should have a clear glass panel in them and be left open.

11.4 Guidance about acceptable conduct and safe practice will be given to all staff and volunteers during induction. These are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with children. This advice can be found in ['Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings'](#) (May 2019). All staff and volunteers are expected to carry out their work in accordance with this guidance and will be made aware that failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action.

12. MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

Allegations that may meet the harms threshold

12.1 Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the wellbeing and very best outcomes for the children at our schools. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

12.2 Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur, they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children. We work to the thresholds for harm as set out in *'Working Together to Safeguard Children'* (2018) and *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'*, DfE (2021) below. An allegation may relate to a person who works / volunteers with children who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The 4th bullet point above recognises circumstances where a member of staff (including supply teachers) or volunteer is involved in an incident outside of schools/college which did not involve children but could have an impact on their suitability to work with children; this is known as transferrable risk.

12.3 At BCAT Schools we recognise our responsibility to report / refer allegations or behaviours of concern and / or harm to children by adults in positions of trust who are not employed by the Schools to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) service directly at 01234 276693 or email lado@bedford.gov.uk adults such as those in the voluntary sector, taxi drivers, escorts, and fosters carers.

12.4 We will take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults in our schools are safe to work with children. When concerns arise, we will always ensure that the procedures outlined in the local protocol [Allegations Against Persons who Work with Children](#) and Part 4 of *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'*, DfE (2021) are adhered to and will seek appropriate advice. The first point of contact for schools regarding concerns and/ or allegation issues (including for supply teachers) is via the LADO 01234 276693 or email lado@bedford.gov.uk

12.5 If an allegation is made or information is received about *any* adult who works/ volunteers in our setting which indicates that they may be unsuitable to work / volunteer with children, the member of staff receiving the information should inform the Principal/Headteacher immediately. This includes concerns relating to agency and supply staff and volunteers. Should an allegation be made against the Principal/Headteacher, this will be reported to the Chair of Governors. In the event that neither the Principal/Headteacher nor Chair of Governors is not contactable on that day, the information must be passed to and dealt with by either the member of staff acting as Principal/Headteacher or the Vice Chair of Governors.

12.6 The Principal/Headteacher or Chair of Governors will seek advice from the LADO within one working day. No member of staff or the governing body will undertake further investigations before receiving advice from the LADO.

12.7 When using a supply agency, we will inform the agency of our process for managing allegations against staff and keep them up to date with any policy developments. Where concerns are raised about an individual and the schools is not their employer, we recognise that we still have responsibility to ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In order to achieve this, we will liaise with relevant parties including the LADO to determine a suitable outcome. Whilst the supply agency should be fully involved and co-operate with any enquiries from the LADO, police and/or children's services, we recognise that the Schools will usually take the lead in conducting an investigation as we have direct access to any affected children and other schools staff to collect the facts.

12.8 Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns with the Principal/Headteacher or Chair of Governors should contact the LADO directly via email to lado@bedford.gov.uk

12.9 Further national guidance can be found at: [Advice on whistleblowing](#). The [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](#) is also available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday or via e-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk.

12.10 The Schools has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our schools, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the LADO and/or HR. The Schools must also consider whether to refer the case to the Secretary of State (via the Teaching Regulation Agency) if a teacher is dismissed or the setting ceases to use the services of a teacher because of serious misconduct, or might have dismissed them or ceased to use their services had they not left first.

Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold

12.11 The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the thresholds as stated above. If the concern is raised via a third party, the Principal/ Headteacher will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

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

The Principal/Headteacher will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action, in line with the school's staff code of conduct. We as BCAT schools will still contact the LADO if support or guidance is needed. At BCAT Schools we promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the schools (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

12.12 We have a policy which sets out what low level concerns are, the importance of sharing these appropriately, how the setting addresses unprofessional behaviour and

supports the individual to correct it at an early stage. This includes when staff should self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

12.13 At BCAT Schools we understand the importance of recording low-level concerns and the actions taken in light of these being reported. The records are kept confidential and stored securely. We will review the records we hold to identify potential patterns and take action. Please note, where a child, parent/carer or staff member makes an allegation of harm, this will not be considered as a 'low level' concern without consultation with the LADO directly.

12.14 We recognise that low level concerns should not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance. However, where a low-level concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated, it should be referred to in a reference.

13. Use of premises for non-schools activities

13.1 Where we hire or rent out our facilities/premises to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations, and service providers to run community or extra-curricular activities) we ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe.

13.2 We will seek assurances that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed). Safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.

14 RELEVANT POLICIES

14.1 To underpin the values and ethos of our schools and our intent to ensure that children at our schools are appropriately safeguarded the following policies are also included under our safeguarding umbrella:

- Staff Code of Conduct, including Low Level Concerns
- Anti-Bullying
- Behaviour which includes measures to prevent bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Recruitment & Selection (which adheres to Part 3 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)).
- Whistleblowing
- Attendance
- Online Safety
- Health and Safety including site security
- Harassment and discrimination including racial abuse
- Meeting the needs of pupils with medical conditions
- Intimate Care
- First aid
- Educational visits including overnight stays
- RSHE

15. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) DfE (July 2018)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) DfE (2021)
- [Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings](#) (May 2019)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) DfE (March 2015)
- [Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services](#) DfE (July 2018)
- [The Prevent duty: Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers](#) DfE (June 2015)
- [Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation- procedural information](#) Home Office (December 2015)
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#) DfE (July 2021)
- [Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners](#) DfE (February 2017)
- [Teaching online safety in schools](#) DfE (June 2019)
- [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#) DfE (November 2018)
- [Data protection: toolkit for schools](#) DfE (September 2018)
- Promoting the education of children with a social worker (June 2021) (June 2021)
- [Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#)
- [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines](#)
- [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education](#)
- [Bedford Borough Inter-agency Child Protection Procedures](#)

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

Appendix 1: types of abuse

Abuse, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

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

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

Emotional abuse may involve:

Conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person

Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate

Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction

Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another

Serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

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

Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing

Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

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

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

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

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

Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger

Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)

Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

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

Appendix 2: safer recruitment and DBS checks – policy and procedures

Recruitment and selection process

To make sure we recruit suitable people, we will ensure that those involved in the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children have received appropriate safer recruitment training.

We have put the following steps in place during our recruitment and selection process to ensure we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Advertising

When advertising roles, we will make clear:

Our school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

That safeguarding checks will be undertaken

The safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of the role, such as the extent to which the role will involve contact with children

Whether or not the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020. If the role is exempt, certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', so they do not need to be disclosed, and if they are disclosed, we cannot take them into account

Application forms

Our application forms will:

Include a statement saying that it is an offence to apply for the role if an applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children (where the role involves this type of regulated activity)

Include a copy of, or link to, our child protection and safeguarding policy and our policy on the employment of ex-offenders

Shortlisting

Our shortlisting process will involve at least 2 people and will:

Consider any inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them

Explore all potential concerns

Once we have shortlisted candidates, we will ask shortlisted candidates to:

Complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children, so that they have the opportunity to share relevant information and discuss it at interview stage. The information we will ask for includes:

- If they have a criminal history
- Whether they are included on the barred list
- Whether they are prohibited from teaching
- Information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales
- Any relevant overseas information

Sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true

Seeking references and checking employment history

We will obtain references before interview. Any concerns raised will be explored further with referees and taken up with the candidate at interview.

When seeking references we will:

Not accept open references

Liaise directly with referees and verify any information contained within references with the referees

Ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer and completed by a senior person. Where the referee is schools based, we will ask for the reference to be confirmed by the headteacher/principal as accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations

Obtain verification of the candidate's most recent relevant period of employment if they are not currently employed

Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the candidate worked with children if they are not currently working with children

Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any inconsistencies with the candidate

Resolve any concerns before any appointment is confirmed

Interview and selection

When interviewing candidates, we will:

Probe any gaps in employment, or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, and ask candidates to explain this

Explore any potential areas of concern to determine the candidate's suitability to work with children

Record all information considered and decisions made

Pre-appointment vetting checks

We will record all information on the checks carried out in the school's single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files. We follow requirements and best practice in retaining copies of these checks, as set out below.

New staff

All offers of appointment will be conditional until satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-employment checks. When appointing new staff, we will:

Verify their identity

Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity (see definition below). We will obtain the certificate before, or as soon as practicable after, appointment, including when using the DBS update service. We will not keep a copy of the certificate for longer than 6 months, but when the copy is destroyed we may still keep a record of the fact that vetting took place, the result of the check and recruitment decision taken

Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available

Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities

Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards

Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate

Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher

Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK. Where available, these will include:

- For all staff, including teaching positions: [criminal records checks for overseas applicants](#)
- For teaching positions: obtaining a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country where the applicant has worked

Check that candidates taking up a management position* are not subject to a prohibition from management (section 128) direction made by the secretary of state

* Management positions are most likely to include, but are not limited to, Principal/Headteachers, principals and deputy/assistant Headteachers.

We will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we take a decision that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment on the individual's personnel file. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Regulated activity means a person who will be:

Responsible, on a regular basis in a schools or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children; or

Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a schools or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children; or

Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not

Existing staff

In certain circumstances we will carry out all the relevant checks on existing staff as if the individual was a new member of staff. These circumstances are when:

There are concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children; or

An individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is; or

There has been a break in service of 12 weeks or more

We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult where:

We believe the individual has engaged in [relevant conduct](#); or

We believe the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence, under the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 \(Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions\) Regulations 2009](#); or

We believe the 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm); and

The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

Agency and third-party staff

We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Contractors

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the schools has had the appropriate level of DBS check (this includes contractors who are provided through a PFI or similar contract). This will be:

An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity

An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children

We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors.

We will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months.

Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.

We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the schools.

For self-employed contractors such as music teachers or sports coaches, we will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Trainee/student teachers

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

In both cases, this includes checks to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006.

Volunteers

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity

- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity

- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment

- Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought

Governors

All governors will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information.

They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity.

The chair of the board will have their DBS check countersigned by the secretary of state.

All proprietors, trustees, local governors and members will also have the following checks:

- A section 128 check (to check prohibition on participation in management under [section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008](#))

- Identity

- Right to work in the UK

- Other checks deemed necessary if they have lived or worked outside the UK

Appendix 3: allegations of abuse made against staff

Section 1: allegations that may meet the harms threshold

Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

Substantiated: there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation

Malicious: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive, or to cause harm to the subject of the allegation

False: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation

Unsubstantiated: there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)

Unfounded: to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made

Non-recent allegations

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

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

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

Definition of low-level concerns

The term 'low-level' concern is any concern – no matter how small – that an adult working in or on behalf of the schools may have acted in a way that:

Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, **and**

Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the designated officer at the local authority

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

Being overly friendly with children

Having favourites

Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone

Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door

Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

Appendix 4: specific safeguarding issues

Children missing from education

A child going missing from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

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

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

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

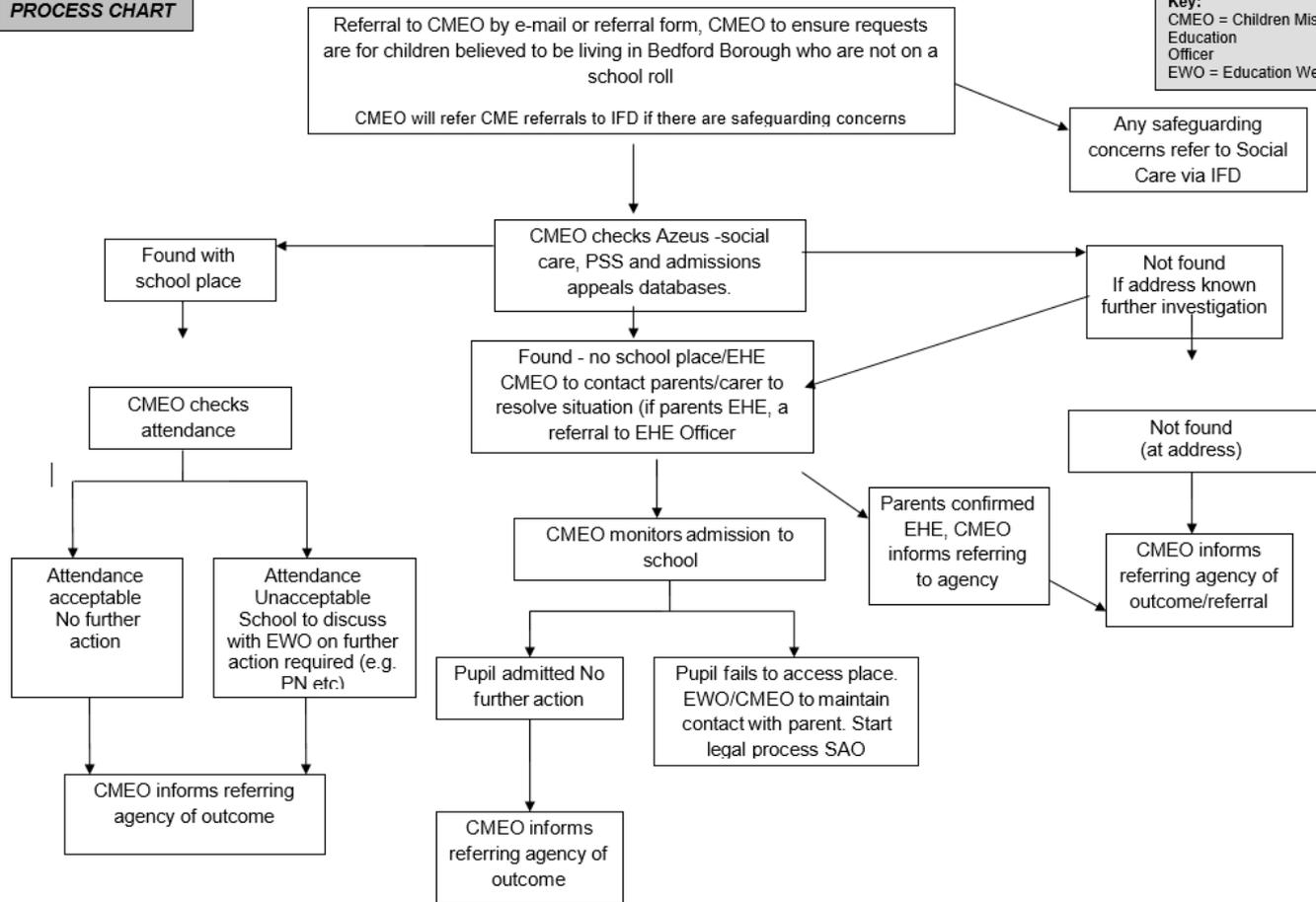
Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being missing, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority children’s social care team, and the police, if the child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

PROCESS CHART

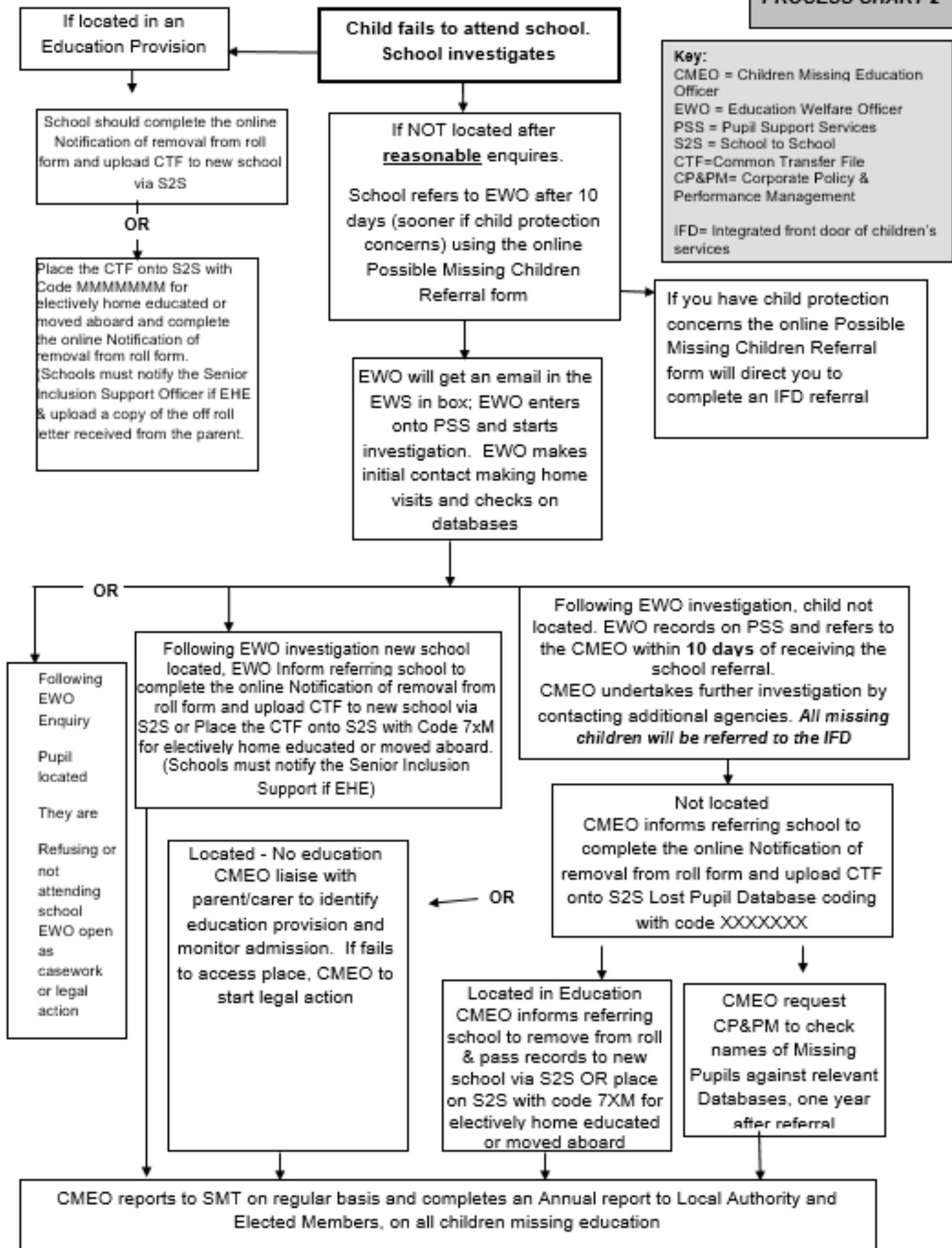
CME REFERRALS FROM OTHER LA AND OTHER AGENCIES

Key:
 CMEO = Children Missing Education Officer
 EWO = Education Welfare

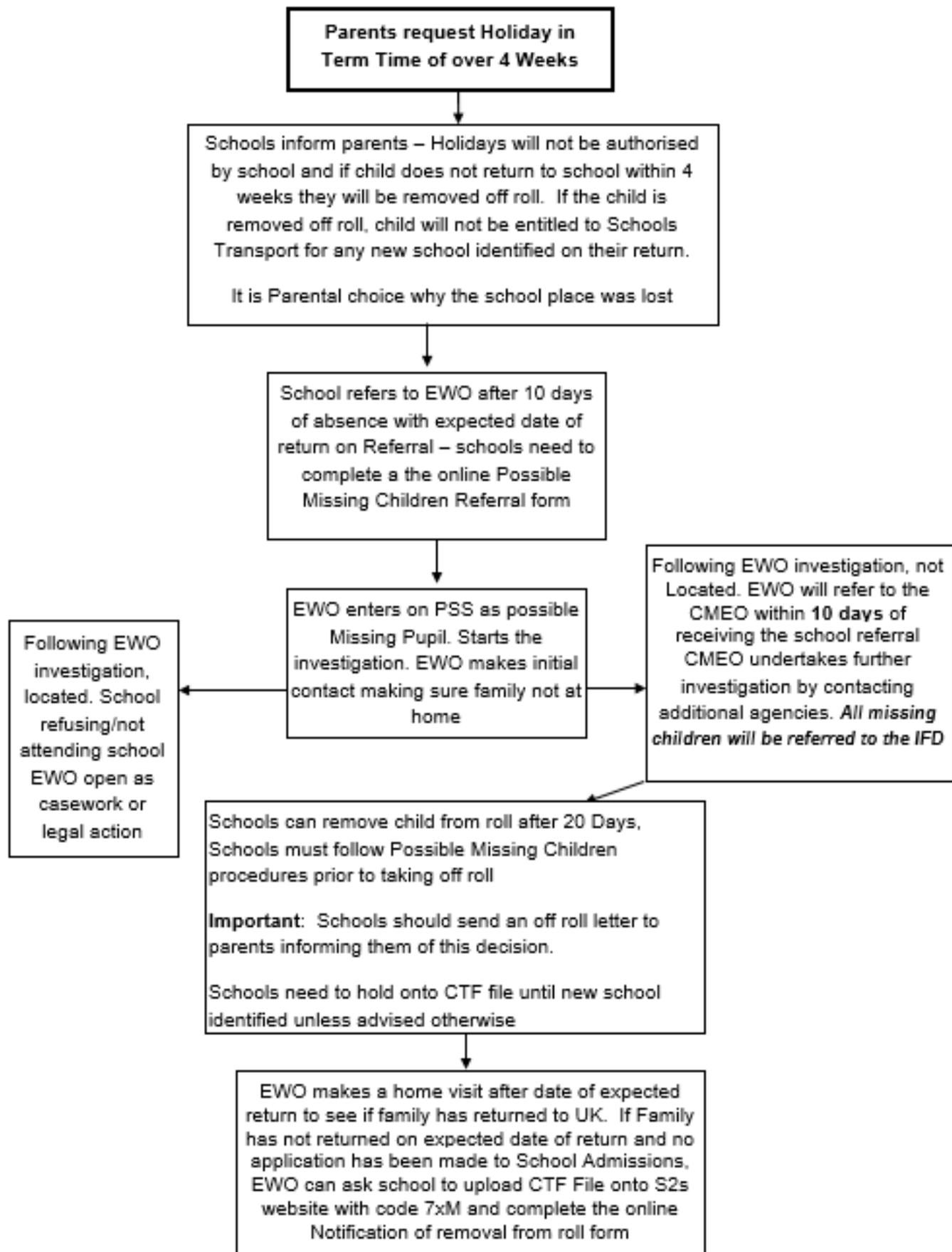


POSSIBLE MISSING CHILDREN REFERRAL PROCESS FOR ALL BEDFORD BOROUGH SCHOOLS

PROCESS CHART 2



Process of Removing a Child from Roll after 4 weeks of unauthorised absence



Child criminal exploitation

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

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. It does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be forced to work in cannabis factories, coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Indicators of CCE can include a child:

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

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

Child sexual exploitation

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

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

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

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

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

- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend

Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant

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

Domestic abuse

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

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

Older children may also experience domestic abuse and/or violence in their own personal relationships.

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children.

From February 2022 we are working in partnership with Bedford Borough Council and Bedfordshire Police to identify and provide appropriate support to pupils who have experienced domestic abuse in their household; nationally and locally, this scheme is called Operation Encompass. In order to achieve this, the police will share information with the Nominated SPOC of all domestic incidents where one of the pupils in the school has been affected. On receipt of any information, the Nominated SPOC will decide on the appropriate support the child requires.

All information sharing and resulting actions will be undertaken in accordance with the 'Operation Encompass guidance for schools'. The information will be recorded and stored in accordance with the record keeping procedures outlined in this policy.

This is a police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people who experience Domestic Abuse. Operation Encompass means that the police will share information about Domestic Abuse incidents with our school PRIOR to the start of the next school day when they have been called to a domestic incident.

Our parents are fully aware that we are an Operation Encompass school. The Operation Encompass information is stored in line with all other confidential safeguarding and child protection information.

The DSL has also led training for all school staff and Governors about Operation Encompass, the prevalence of Domestic Abuse and the impact of this abuse on children. We have also discussed how we can support our children following the Operation Encompass notification. We are aware that we must do nothing that puts the child/ren or the non-abusing adult at risk.

The Safeguarding Governor will report on Operation Encompass in the termly report to Governors. All information is anonymised for these reports. The DSL has used the Operation Encompass Toolkit to ensure that all appropriate actions have been taken by the school.

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

Homelessness

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

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

Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL(S) will also make a referral to children's social care.

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

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

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

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

FGM

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

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

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A pupil confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
- A family/pupil already being known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
 - Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
 - Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)
 - Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
 - Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
 - Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE
 - Being repeatedly absent from schools, or absent for a prolonged period
 - Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour
 - Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations
 - Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem

- Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

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

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

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

Forced marriage

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

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

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

The DSL(S) will:

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

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

Preventing radicalisation

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups

Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and 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 of terrorism must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Schools have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. The DSL(S) will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk.

We will assess the risk of children in our schools being drawn into terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

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

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

Staff will be alert to changes in pupils' behaviour.

The government website [Educate Against Hate](#) and charity [NSPCC](#) say that signs that a pupil is being radicalised can include:

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance
- Rejecting activities they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use

- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions
- Accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter
- Possessing extremist literature
- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations

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

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

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

Further information on the schools measures to prevent radicalisation are set out in other schools policies and procedures, including

- curriculum policy,
- behaviour policy,
- online/e-safety policy,

Peer-on-peer abuse

Peer-on-peer abuse is when children abuse other children. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of schools and online.

Peer-on-peer abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

Bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)

Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers

Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)

Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)

Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse

Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party

Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)

Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm

Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

Where children abuse their peers online, this can take the form of, for example, abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages; the non-consensual sharing of indecent images,

especially around chat groups; and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content.

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

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur:

- Between 2 children of any age and sex

- Through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children

- Online and face to face (both physically and verbally)

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap.

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

If a victim reports an incident, it is essential that staff make sure they are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- Challenging inappropriate behaviours

- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up

- Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them

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

Serious violence

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

- Increased absence from schools

- Change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups

- Significant decline in performance

- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing

- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries

Unexplained gifts or new possessions (this could indicate that the child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation (see above))

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

Being male

Having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from schools

Having experienced child maltreatment

Having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery

Staff will be aware of these indicators and risk factors. If a member of staff has a concern about a pupil being involved in, or at risk of, serious violence, they will report this to the DSL(S).

Checking the identity and suitability of visitors

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff and to leave their belongings, including their mobile phone(s), in a safe place during their visit.

If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.

Visitors are expected to sign the visitors' book and wear a visitor's badge.

Visitors to the schools who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists and schools improvement officers, will be asked to show photo ID and:

- Will be asked to show their DBS certificate, which will be checked alongside their photo ID; or
- The organisation sending the professional, such as the LA or educational psychology service, will provide prior written confirmation that an appropriate level of DBS check has been carried out

All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. We will not invite into the schools any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using schools facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise pupils or staff.

Non-collection of children

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

- Call emergency contact numbers
- Keep the child safe
- Contact integrated front door after school hours

Appendix 5 Designated safeguarding Lead job description

Main purpose

The DSL will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection across the school (including online safety). They will take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and contribute to the assessment of children.

They will advise and support other members of staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, and liaise with relevant agencies such as the local authority and police.

Some safeguarding activities may be delegated to deputies, but the DSL will retain ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.

Duties and responsibilities

• Managing referrals

Refer cases of suspected abuse and neglect to the local authority children's social care

Support staff who make referrals to the local authority children's social care

Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern

Support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme

Refer cases to the Disclosure and Barring Service where a person is dismissed or leaves due to risk or harm to a child

Refer cases to the police where a crime may have been committed

• Working with staff and other agencies

Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff

Act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners

Inform the headteacher of safeguarding issues, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations

Liaise with the case manager and the local authority designated officer(s) (LADO) for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member

Liaise with staff on matters of safety, safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety), and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children's needs are considered holistically

Liaise with the senior mental health lead and, where available, the mental health support team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health

Promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances

Work with the headteacher and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by:

- Knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced
- Identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school

The above includes:

- Ensuring the school knows which children have or have had a social worker, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort
- Supporting teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help these children reach their potential

• Managing the child protection file

Ensure child protection files are kept up to date

Keep information confidential and store it securely

Make sure records include: a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern; details of how the concern was followed up and resolved; and a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome

Ensure files are only accessed by those who need to see them, and that where a file or content within it is shared, this happens in line with information sharing advice as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

Where children leave the school (including in year transfers):

- Ensure their child protection file is securely transferred to the new school as soon as possible, separately from the main pupil file, with a receipt of confirmation, and within the specified time set out in KCSIE
- Consider whether it would be appropriate to share any additional information with the new school before the child leaves, to help them put appropriate support in place

- **Raising awareness**

Ensure each member of staff has access to, and understands, the school's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part-time staff

Work with the governing board to ensure the child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly

Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this

Link with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements

Help promote educational outcomes by sharing information with teachers and school leadership staff about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children who have or have had a social worker are experiencing

- **Training**

Undergo training (at least every 2 years) to gain the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role and meet the expectations set out in KCSIE, including those outlined in the 'Training, knowledge and skills' section of annex C

Undertake Prevent awareness training

Refresh knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually

- **Providing support to staff**

Support and advise staff and help them feel confident on welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters

Support staff during the referrals process

Support staff to consider how safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked, including to inform the provision of academic and pastoral support

- **Understanding the views of children**

Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, and in any measures the school may put in place to protect them

Understand the difficulties that children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication

- **Holding and sharing information**

Understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school, with other schools and colleges on transfer, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners

Understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

Keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals

- **Other areas of responsibility**

The DSL will be required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, and follow school policies and the staff code of conduct.

During term time, the DSL should always be available during school hours for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Ideally this will be in person, but can also be via phone or video call in exceptional circumstances.

Please note that this list of duties is illustrative of the general nature and level of responsibility of the role. It is not a comprehensive list of all tasks that the DSL will carry out. The postholder may be required to do other duties appropriate to the level of the role.

Appendix 6: Actions where there are concerns about a child flow chart

Actions where there are concerns about a child

