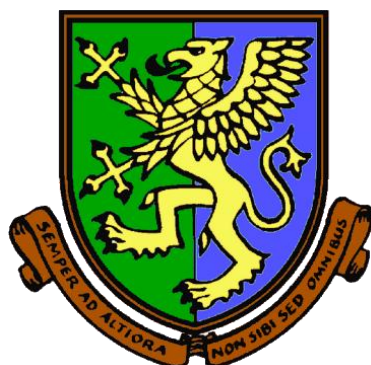


COWLEY INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE



SAFEGUARDING POLICY Incorporating Child Protection Procedures

Status	STATUTORY
Responsible Governors' Committee	Pupil Behaviour and Well-being (full Governing Body approval required)
Responsible Person	Student Support Manager & DSL
Review Date	Spring 2026
Next Review Date	Autumn 2026

Named personnel with designated responsibility for Child Protection – Contact 01744 678030 or <http://www.cowley.st-helens.sch.uk/>

Policy Review dates

Review Date	Changes made	Date Shared with staff
Spring Term 2025	General policy updates DSL and Deputy training updated General updates Policy and Principles - Updated with 2024 guidance	March 2025
Spring 2020	General updates including change from LSCB to SCP Training updated	March 2020
Spring 2021	Updating Statutory Guidance General updates Updated Definitions of Safeguarding Update Appendix documents	March 2021
Autumn 2021	General updates to include Guidance Sept 2021	September 2021
Autumn 2022	General updates to include Guidance Sept 2022	September 2022
Spring 2023	General updates	February 2023
Spring 2024	General Updates	February 2024

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1 Policy Statement and Principles

This policy is one of a series in the school's integrated safeguarding portfolios and approach.

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment and Selection
- Confidential Reporting (whistle blowing)
- Attendance Policy and Procedures including missing from education
- Allegations against staff as per Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023
- Anti-bullying including logs and analysis
- Student Behaviour
- Online Safety
- IT acceptable use
- Use of reasonable force/appropriate physical contact
- Intimate care
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Condition Policy and Procedures
- Complaints
- Disciplinary rules and procedures
- Grievance procedures
- Risk assessments for educational visits
- Risk assessments
- SEND
- Single Central Record
- Health and Safety advice for schools Health and Safety Policy
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation
- Drug Procedures
- Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- the school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance.
- safer children make more successful learners.
- representatives of the school community will be involved in policy development and review.
- this policy will be reviewed annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.
- all policies are reviewed tri-annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggest the need for an interim review.
- the school will work with other agencies and share information appropriately to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our students.

Child protection statement

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We will act quickly and

follow our procedures to ensure children receive early help and effective support, protection and justice.

Policy principles

- Welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection
- All staff have an equal responsibility to identify children who may benefit from early help and to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm.
- Early Help should be considered as a support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse.
- There is a culture of transparency, openness and, if needed, challenge with regards to maintaining high standards in safeguarding.
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support
- Staff should be aware of the potential need for Early Help for students who have experienced multiple suspensions and are at risk of being permanently excluded from schools/colleges.

Policy aims

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities.
- To provide parents and carers with the necessary information to enable them to have confidence in school's policies and procedures.
- To provide parents and carers with the necessary information to enable them to know what to do if they have a safeguarding or child protection concern and who is responsible in school.
- To ensure consistent good practice.
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to child protection to pupils, parents and other partners.
- To contribute to the school's safeguarding portfolio.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff and governors and are consistent with those of the St Helens 'Safeguarding Children Partnership'.

Research suggests that between 6-19% of school-aged children will suffer severe maltreatment, and disabled children are three times more likely to be abused. Due to their day-to-day contact with pupils, school staff are uniquely placed to observe changes in children's behaviour and the outward signs of abuse. Children may also turn to a trusted adult in school when they are in distress or at risk. It is vital that school staff are alert to the signs of abuse, both inside and outside the school and understand the procedures for reporting their concerns. The school will act on identified concerns and provide early help, or support others to do so, to prevent concerns from escalating.

Terminology

School Cowley International College

Child/Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

Safeguarding

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

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

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

Early Help providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. It is about providing support quickly whenever difficulties emerge to reduce the impact of problems.

EHAT Early Help Assessment Tool designed to aid a multi-agency approach to supporting children and their families.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting/carer role, for example stepparents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

LADO (or LDO) – a post in the local authority, to coordinate and manage allegations against / involving staff.

SCP – Safeguarding Children Partnership, formerly Local Safeguarding and Children's Board (LSCB), comprising of three key partners; the Police, the Local Authority and the Clinical Commissioning Group.

DSL – Designated Safeguarding Lead

2 Safeguarding Legislation and Guidance

Education Act 2002

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires local education authorities and the

governors of maintained schools and further education (FE) colleges to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

[Read the document here](#)

Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015

Section 26 applies to schools and other providers;

To have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism.

[Read the document here](#)

Childrens Act 1989 and 2004

The Children Act 1989 gave every child the right to protection from abuse and exploitation and the right to inquiries to safeguard their welfare. Its central tenet was that children are usually best looked after within their family.

[Read the 1989 legislation here](#)

[Read the 2004 legislation here](#)

Statutory Guidance

Working Together to Safeguarding Children covers the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services (including schools and colleges) to safeguard and promote the welfare of Children. It also provides the framework for Local Safeguarding Children Boards (SCP's) to monitor the effectiveness of local services, including safeguarding arrangements in schools.

[Read the document here](#)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) is issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 and the Education (Non-Maintained Special Schools) (England) Regulations 2011. Schools and colleges must have regard to this guidance when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Unless otherwise stated, 'school' in this guidance means all schools, whether maintained, non-maintained or independent, including academies and free schools, alternative provision academies, pupil referral units and maintained nursery schools. College means further education and sixth form colleges under the further and higher education act 1992 and relates to under 18's, but excludes 16-19 academies and free schools.

[Read the document here](#)

All staff should read Part One of this guidance. All staff receive a copy of this document on induction and updates are emailed as published. Staff can also find a copy on the Staffroom Safeguarding Noticeboard.

Prevent Duty Guidance – England and Wales

Covers the duty of schools and other providers in section 29 Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, to have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism.

[Read the document here](#)

Teaching Standards

The Teacher Standards 2011 (last update 2021) state that teachers, including head teachers should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

[Read the document here](#)

Pan-Merseyside Procedures

All agencies across Merseyside are fully committed to safeguarding children and young people from being sexually exploited or criminally exploited, whilst disrupting and prosecuting individuals who have exploited them. This Protocol provides a set of multiagency principles for tackling Child Exploitation across Merseyside. An overarching term of Child Exploitation will be used throughout this Protocol to encompass both criminal and sexual exploitation of children in our area.

[Read the document here](#)

When to Call the Police

This NPCC advice does not cover safeguarding incidents. Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately. Referrals should follow the local referral process.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility for Safeguarding no matter what their role. These are outlined clearly in Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025. All staff should be instructed to read Part 1.

The school ensures there is a member of the senior leadership team in the DSL role and that appropriate cover is provided if they are unavailable. This person will have the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post including committing resources and, where appropriate, supporting and directing other staff. They will ultimately have lead responsibility, which will not be delegated; however, deputy leads will be trained to the same level.

DSL responsibilities:

Manage referrals

The DSL will:

- refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care as required;
- support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care;
- refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required;
- support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme;
- refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child in liaison with the Principal to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required; and
- refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.

Work with others

- liaise with the Principal to inform him or her of issues especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- as required, liaise with the "case manager" (as per part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education) and the LADO at the local authority for child protection concerns (all cases which concern a staff member); and liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.
- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff.
- receive and act upon concerns raised by parents.
- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for parents.

Undertake training

The DSL (and any deputies) will undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training should be updated at least every two years.

The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training.

In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills will be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, but at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as early help assessments;
- have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so;
- ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's or college's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff;
- are alert to the specific needs of children in need, children who are looked after, those with special educational needs and young carers;
- are able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals;
- understand and support the school with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation;
- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses; and
- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them.

Raise Awareness

The DSL will ensure:

- the school's child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately;

- the school's child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with the governing body regarding this;
- the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this; and
- links with the local SCP are maintained to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding.

Child protection files

Where children leave the school or college, the DSL (or a deputy) will ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit and confirmation of receipt should be obtained.

Availability

During term time the DSL (or a deputy) will always be available (during school or college hours) for staff or parents to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

The DSL will ensure the deputy DSLs are appropriately trained and, in the absence of the DSL, carry out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. However, the senior DSL holds lead responsibility.

The Governing Body:

- creates a culture where the welfare of students is paramount, and staff feel confident to challenge over any concerns;
- complies with their duties under legislation - including the Prevent Duty 2015.
- contributes to interagency working and plans;
- takes into account SCP procedures;
- have a nominated governor (the Chair) who liaises with the LADO in the event of an allegation being made against the Principal;
- have an effective safeguarding policy (updated annually and on the website) as well as staff Code of Conduct and Staff Social Media and Mobile Communication Policy and these are provided to and followed by all staff in a timely manner;
- have an appropriate response to children who go missing from education and inform and report to the Local Authority when required;
- appoints a DSL who is a member of the senior leadership team, trained every 2 years, and that the responsibilities are explicit in the role holder's job description.
- gives the DSL time, funding and training to support their role;
- always has cover for the DSL role;
- have considered how children are taught about safeguarding – PSHE/SRE;
- have evidence of student voice and that there are systems in place for feedback and pupils' views;
- appoints a designated Looked After Children (LAC) teacher and ensures

appropriate training to ensure staff have awareness of this group and their needs including contact arrangements;

- have procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the Principal and allegations against other children (peer to peer) and procedures are in place for referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service;
- have safer recruitment procedures that include statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children and ensures recording of this;
- ensures volunteers are appropriately supervised;
- ensures at least one person on appointment panel is safer recruitment trained;
- develops a training strategy that ensures all staff receive information about the school's safeguarding arrangements on induction and appropriate child protection training, which is regularly updated in line with any requirements of the SCP; and
- ensures appropriate online filter and monitoring systems are in place and ensure online safety is included in lessons.

The Principal:

- ensures that the child protection policy and code of conduct are implemented and followed by all staff;
- allocates sufficient time, training, support and resources, including cover arrangements when necessary, to enable the DSL and deputies to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings;
- ensures that all staff and parents feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle blowing procedures;
- ensures that pupils are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online;
- liaises with the LADO where an allegation is made against a member of staff; and
- ensures that anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

4. Good Practice Guidelines and Staff Code of Conduct

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards pupils we need to agree standards of good practice that form a code of conduct for all staff. Good practice includes:

- Treating all pupils with respect.
- Being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and to signs of abuse and neglect.
- Recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse.
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately, including online.
- Involving pupils in decisions that affect them.
- Encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils including challenging inappropriate or discriminatory language or behaviour.
- Avoiding behaviour or language that could be seen as favouring pupils.
- Avoiding any behaviour that could lead to suspicions of anything other than a professional relationship with pupils.
- Reading and understanding the school's child protection policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, and appropriate IT/social media use.
- Asking the pupil's permission before initiating physical contact, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during PE or administering first aid.
- Maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between pupils. Avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language, even in joke.
- Being clear on professional boundaries and conduct with other staff when pupils present.
- Being aware that the personal, family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse.
- Applying the use of reasonable force only as a last resort and in compliance with school procedures.
- Dealing with student infatuations in an open and transparent way e.g. informing the correct managers and managing the situation in a way that is sensitive to the feelings of the student.
- Referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the DSL, or, if necessary, directly to police or children's social care.
- Following the school's rules about communication with pupils and use of social media and online networking.
- Avoiding unnecessary time alone with pupils and risk manage any time alone or 1:1 working.
- Avoiding sharing excessive personal information with pupils.

[Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings \(February 2022\)](#)

5. Abuse of Position of Trust

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

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that pupil is over the age of consent.

6. Children Who May Be Particularly Vulnerable

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse. It is important to understand that this increase in risk is due more to societal attitudes and assumptions, and child protection procedures that fail to acknowledge children's diverse circumstances, rather than the individual child's personality, impairment or circumstances. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

Some groups such as SEND can be disproportionately impacted by bullying/communication barriers/dismissal of signs and indicators as relating to the disability without further exploration.

To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- missing education/missing from education;
- disabled or have special educational needs;
- Young Carers;
- Looked After Children;
- privately fostered children;
- affected by domestic abuse;
- affected by substance misuse/drug use;
- affected by mental health issues including self-harm and eating disorders;
- affected by poor parenting;
- at risk of Fabricated or Induced Illness;
- at risk of gang and youth violence;
- asylum seekers;
- living away from home;
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying including cyber, homophobic, racist etc;
- live transient lifestyles;
- LGBT (lesbian gay bisexual transgender);
- missing from home or care;
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations;
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity,

- religion, disability or sexuality;
- vulnerable to extremism or radicalisation;
- vulnerable to faith abuse;
- involved directly or indirectly in child sexual exploitation CSE or trafficking;
- do not have English as a first language;
- at risk of Honour Based Violence (HBV) including; female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.

This list provides examples of additional vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive.

Safeguarding and Attendance

When a vulnerable student is absent from school the usual school procedures of 1st day absence call applies. If further concerns are raised due to this, then appropriate action will be taken, such as home visits, EWS involvement, contact with external services or notification of Social Workers. Please refer to the college attendance policy for more detailed information.

7. Some Current Issues

There are many issues of concern affecting children today and not all can be listed here. The issues are often complex and overlap, e.g. example drug use/alcohol misuse/truancy. Drugs advice [here](#). Whenever there is a drug or alcohol incident, we will request the services of YPDAAT with consent of the caregivers, or inform them of the incident if consent is not given.

We will have a consistent approach of following our procedures and consulting with other agencies if there are any concerns with any of our pupils.

Online safety is exceptionally important and will continue to receive a high priority as an issue, as it is often how issues are facilitated CSE, radicalisation, bullying etc. Appropriate filters and monitoring are in place, as well as education of staff and pupils. See later section.

Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual Safeguarding is informed by relevant local issues. These issues influence the teaching of targeted topics through citizenship and the PSHE curriculum.

Peer-on-peer abuse

Peer-on-peer abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- physical and sexual abuse;
- sexual harassment and violence;
- emotional harm;
- on and offline bullying;

- teenage relationship abuse.

It can even include grooming children for sexual and criminal exploitation. It is important to challenge inappropriate behaviours between peers to reduce the risk of fostering an unsafe environment which can lead to the normalisation of abuse within the school culture.

School has a responsibility to educate students around the risks and keeping themselves safe as well as reporting and acting on concerns raised, in line with safeguarding procedures. Methods of support including referring to children's social care, police or external support agencies may be necessary.

Further guidance is given in [Keep Children Safe in Education](#).

Peer on peer abuse will always be taken seriously and acted upon, under the appropriate policy e.g. safeguarding, bullying, not dismissed as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. These issues will be part of PSHE lessons and discussions. Victims will be supported through the school's pastoral system. Any hate crime/incident will be reported through local reporting mechanisms.

This includes all kinds of peer on peer abuse including and not limited to boys inappropriately touching girls or visa versa, girl on girl or boy on boy hazing/'joking' (such as inappropriate or dangerous dares or challenges even online) or initiation, as well upskirting, sexting and bullying. It can be inside and outside of school and online.

Upskirting

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

This is an offence as laid out in the [Voyeurism \(Offences\) Act 2019](#) and would be brought to the attention of the DSL to address, put appropriate support in place and reported through local reporting systems.

Sexting

Sexting is when people share a sexual message and/or a naked or semi-naked image, video or text message with another person. It's also known as nude image sharing. Children and young people may consent to sending a nude image of themselves. They can also be forced or coerced into sharing images by their peers or adults online.

If a child or young person originally shares the image consensually, they have no control over how other people might use it.

If the image is shared around peer groups, it may lead to bullying and isolation. Perpetrators of abuse may circulate a nude image more widely and use this to blackmail a child and/or groom them for further sexual abuse.

It's a criminal offence to create or share explicit images of a child, even if the person doing it is a child. If sexting is reported to the police, they will make a record but may decide not to take any formal action against a young person.

In the UK, the age of consent for sexual intercourse is 16. However, it is an offence to make, distribute, possess or show any indecent images of anyone aged under 18, even if the content was created with the consent of that young person. The law is contained in [Section 1 Protection of Children Act 1978](#).

School will follow the updated guidance in how to deal with sexting incidents brought to our attention including DSL involvement and support for the students involved;

[DfE guidance - Managing Sexting Incidents](#)

[DfE guidance - Searching, Screening and Confiscation](#)

Bullying

Bullying is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's wellbeing and in very rare cases has been a feature in the suicide of some young people.

All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying will be recorded and reported and will be managed through our behaviour and anti-bullying procedures. All pupils and parents can access a copy of the policy and procedures on the website (see link in paragraph 1). The subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in PSHE education, assemblies and citizenship. If the bullying is particularly serious, or the tackling bullying procedures are deemed to be ineffective, the Principal and the DSL will consider implementing child protection procedures.

Bullying incidents including discriminatory and prejudicial behaviour e.g. racist, disability and homophobic bullying and use of derogatory language will be recorded and analysed.

There will be occasions when a pupil's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures.

[DfE guidance - Preventing and tackling bullying](#)

Children with sexually harmful behaviour

Research suggests that up to 40 per cent of child sexual abuse is committed by someone under the age of 18.

The management of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the school will work with other agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community. Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator. Staff who become concerned about a pupil's sexual behaviour should speak to the DSL as soon as possible.

Missing Children

A child going missing from education, which includes within the school day, is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation. Unauthorised absences will be monitored and followed up in line with procedures, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions. All staff will be aware of the signs of risk and individual triggers including travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

All pupils will be placed on admission and attendance registers as required by law. We will inform the local authority of any child removed from our admission register. We will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend for a continuous period in line with Local Authority procedures.

If a child goes missing during the school day, the following procedure applies:

- confirm child is no longer on school site;
- carry out CCTV check to identify leaving route;
- contact parents/carers and advise to contact Police if necessary;
- we may assist in a search of the local area.

Child Sexual Exploitation CSE

This involves exploitative situations where a child, male or female, receives something from an adult as a result of engaging in sexual activity. This can be seemingly 'consensual' relationships to serious organised crime gangs. There will be an imbalance of power where the perpetrator holds power over the victim. This is a form of child sexual abuse. Technology is often used. This is a serious crime. The police can be contacted for extra support and information.

Some indicators of CSE include:

- going missing for periods of time or regularly returning home late;
- skipping school or being disruptive in class;
- appearing with unexplained gifts or possessions that can't be accounted for;
- experiencing health problems that may indicate a [sexually transmitted infection](#);
- having mood swings and changes in temperament;
- using drugs and/or alcohol;

- displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour, such as over-familiarity with strangers, dressing in a sexualised manner or sending sexualised images by mobile phone ("sexting");
- they may also show signs of unexplained physical harm, such as bruising and cigarette burns.

https://liverpoolsqb.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/pan_merseyside_exploit.pdf

Definition

The Home Office defines Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) as:

Child Criminal Exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual.

Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Criminal exploitation often happens alongside sexual or other forms of exploitation.

Child Criminal exploitation is broader than just county lines and includes for instance children forced to work on cannabis farms, to commit theft, shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Currently there is no statutory definition for Child Criminal Exploitation. However, it is covered within the Modern Slavery Act 2015 which sets out the offences of slavery, servitude and forced and compulsory labour in section 1, and human trafficking in section 2. Potential victims can be exploited in a number of ways, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude and criminal exploitation. Children may be forced to work in cannabis factories, move drugs, money or weapons across county lines or within their locality, launder money through their bank accounts or carry out crimes of theft or violence, particularly against other young people.

The child (or a third person or persons) receives 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them completing a task on behalf of another individual or group of individuals; this is often of a criminal nature. Child criminal exploitation often occurs without the child's immediate recognition, with the child believing that they are in control of the situation. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economical and/or emotional vulnerability.

The criminal exploitation of children includes a combination of:

- Pull factors: children performing tasks for others resulting in them gaining accommodation, food, gifts, status or a sense of safety, money or drugs; often the hook is through the perpetrator supplying Class B drugs such as cannabis to the child or young person;
- Push factors: children escaping from situations where their needs are neglected and there is exposure to unsafe individuals, where there is high family conflict or the absence of a primary attachment figure;
- Control: Brain washing, violence and threats of violence by those exploiting the child particularly when the child or young person is identified by the Police, they are expected to take full responsibility for the offences for which they are charged – i.e. possession and supply of illegal substances.

CCE is a complex form of abuse and it can be difficult for those working with children to identify and assess. The indicators for CCE can sometimes be mistaken for 'normal adolescent behaviours'. It requires knowledge, skills, professional curiosity and an assessment which analyses the risk factors and personal circumstances of individual children to ensure that the signs and symptoms are interpreted correctly and appropriate support is given. It can include vehicle crime and threatening/committing serious violence.

- Children may become trapped as they or their families may be threatened with violence and they may be coerced or entrapped into debt or into carrying weapons. They may carry weapons as a form of protection.
- Children involved in criminal exploitation need to be treated as victims themselves (particularly older children), even though they may commit crimes themselves.
- You should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too, even though their experience may be different.

Domestic Abuse

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

The school is a partner in the Local Authority/Merseyside Police initiative, Operation Encompass.

Local details:

<http://www.operationencompass.org/>

Honour Based Violence HBV – e.g. FGM/Forced Marriage

Honour based abuse is defined by the National Police Chief's council as an incident or crime involving violent, threats of violence, intimidation, coercion or abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse), which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of an individual, family and or community for alleged or perceived breaches of the family and / or community's code of behaviour.

Female Genital Mutilation FGM

This is illegal and a form of child abuse. It involves a procedure to remove all or some of the female genitalia or any other injury to these organs. Staff will be aware of the signs and indicators of this and their legal duty to report **known cases** to the police.

Some of the signs that a girl might be at risk of FGM include:

- Telling friends about FGM
- Confiding that she is going to have a 'special procedure' or is attending a special occasion to 'become a woman'
- Talking about an upcoming long holiday to a country where the practice is prevalent
- Approaching a teacher to discuss her concerns if she is aware of, or suspects she is at immediate risk

It is important to also report any concerns you may have that a girl has already fallen victim to FGM. Some signs and indicators to suggest a girl has been through a female genital mutilation procedure include the following:

- Difficulty walking
- Looking uncomfortable while sitting down
- Taking a long time in the toilet
- Significant changes in behaviour, such as becoming withdrawn

Multi agency guidelines:

[HM Government - Multi-agency statutory guidance on Female Genital Mutilation](#)

Forced Marriage

Forced marriage is illegal and a form of child abuse. A marriage entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties, where violence threats or coercion is used.

Some signs to watch out, both pre and post marriage:

- the victim or her family come from a community where Forced Marriage and 'Honour' is culturally embedded;
- an announcement of engagement to a stranger not previously mentioned;
- parents removing a child from education, preventing further education or extra-curricular activities;
- there may be noticeably higher levels of absenteeism, lateness – school, college or employment;
- there may feel like an element of 'surveillance' and control by the family or community members;
- significant personality changes may become evident;
- the victim may appear depressed, withdrawn, anxious or suicidal;
- there may be noticeable deterioration in the victim's self-esteem and appearance;
- the victim may run away, go missing from home or have a fear of returning home;
- the victim may talk about a family holiday abroad and may seem anxious about this;
- may fail to return home from a visit to the family's country of origin;
- early and/or unwanted pregnancy;
- reports of self-harm or suicide attempts, particularly in the early stages of marriage;
- domestic incidents or crimes at the family home. The fact that a victim was forced to marry may only reveal itself years after the marriage has taken place;
- victims appear to be dominated – subject to financial control, no access to mobile phone, internet etc.

[HM Government Multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of Forced Marriage](#)

Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII)

Fabricated or induced illness (FII) is a rare form of child abuse. It happens when a parent or carer, usually the child's biological mother, exaggerates or deliberately causes symptoms of illness in the child.

FII is also known as "Munchausen's syndrome by proxy" (not to be confused with [Munchausen's syndrome](#), where a person pretends to be ill or causes illness or injury to themselves).

Signs of fabricated or induced illness

Fabricated or induced illness (FII) covers a wide range of symptoms and behaviours involving parents seeking healthcare for a child. This ranges from extreme neglect (failing to get medical care) to induced illness.

Behaviours in FII include a mother, or other carer, who:

- persuades healthcare professionals that their child is ill when they're healthy;
- exaggerates or lies about their child's symptoms;
- manipulates test results to suggest the presence of illness, for example, by putting glucose in urine samples to suggest the child has diabetes;
- deliberately induces symptoms of illness, for example, by poisoning their child with unnecessary medicine or other substances.

Learn more about the [signs of fabricated or induced illness](#).

Preventing Radicalisation and Hate

This is part of our wider safeguarding duty. We will intervene where possible to prevent vulnerable children being radicalised. The internet has become a major factor in radicalisation and recruitment.

As with all other forms of abuse, staff should be confident in identifying pupils at risk and act proportionately.

We will work with other partners including the Channel Panel.

The DSL is appropriately trained and be able to offer advice, support and information to other staff.

We will ensure safe internet filters are in place and ensure our pupils are educated in online safety.

Prevent duty – link in legislation section.

<http://educateagainsthate.com/>

Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. (*Close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and stepparents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.)

A discussion with the care giver would take place and a referral to children's social care would be completed to ensure the safety of the student and suitability of the placement as well as understanding the background and reasons for the arrangement in line with the mandatory duty to inform the LA of any private fostering arrangement.

Dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility

The school will always take legal advice in matters relating to parental responsibility.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility>

County Lines

County Lines is where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police and local authority boundaries (although not exclusively), usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs. The 'County Line' is the mobile phone line used to take the orders of drugs. Importing areas (areas where the drugs are taken to) are reporting increased levels of violence and weapons related crimes as a result of this trend.

A common feature in county lines drug supply is the exploitation of young and vulnerable people. The dealers will frequently target children and adults - often with mental health or addiction problems - to act as drug runners or move cash so they can stay under the radar of law enforcement.

School will initiate a multi-agency response to address any concerns regarding our young people in relation to these concerns.

[Find more information here](#)

Gangs and Knife Crime

Youth violence is often synonymous with gangs. Over recent years, there has been increasing concern about knife crime.

Some vulnerable groups include:

- those with a chaotic home life where children are not priority;
- Poor supervision from an early age;
- Issues within home (e.g. domestic abuse, mental ill health);
- Familial history of offending;
- Children with additional needs;
- Poor engagement with education;
- Poor self-image / self-worth;
- Looked after children.

A school response to issues and concerns around gangs and knife crime would be a referral to the front door team and/or prevent referral to initiate a multi-agency response and CE panel consideration. Incidents of this nature in the local community help to inform a whole school awareness and education initiative.

Gender Based Violence

Gender-Based violence is the general term used to capture violence that occurs as a result of the normative role expectations associated with each gender, along with the unequal power relationships between the two genders, within the context of a specific society.

Whilst gender-based violence is mainly aimed at women and girls, there are also instances affecting men. There is significant under reporting of violence against boys and men regarding domestic and sexual abuse, this is thought to be due to societal stereotyping.

Cutting across all boundaries (e.g. age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation), gender-based violence covers multiple forms of abuse against people linked directly to their gender:

- VAWG – violence against women and girls;
- VAM – violence against men;
- domestic violence – based on gender;
- sexual violence – rape, forced sexual acts, forced pregnancy, abortion or sterilisation, FGM;
- psychological violence – threats, isolation, emotional abuse;
- faith abuse – forced marriage, exorcism due to sexuality, forced circumcision,
- economic violence – controlling their access to all of the family resources: time, transportation, food, clothing, shelter, insurance, and money;
- use of children – to maintain control over a partner by not paying child support, requiring the children to spy, threatening to take children away, legal fights over custody, kidnapping or taking the children hostage to force.

Failure to address this issue also entails a significant cost for the future. Numerous studies have shown that children growing up with violence are more likely to become survivors themselves or perpetrators of violence in the future.

School has a duty to follow up all concerns within the normal safeguarding procedures as laid out in this policy.

Mental Health

Everybody has the right to be safe and to thrive no matter who they are or what their circumstances. School's mentally healthy approach to safeguarding includes the concept of a 'culture of care' that supports and promotes wellbeing and encourages resilience and the prevention of harm.

Stigma is a significant issue when suffering from mental ill health and so it is important that we lead by example and that we also ensure that when working with individuals or groups of children and young people we educate them about mental ill health and how to help friends who may be experiencing problems.

All concerns regarding the mental health of our young people will be addressed and supported at the appropriate level. External support will be sought where necessary from mental health support services such as CAMHS, Barnardo's, F-CAMHS, Listening ear etc. according to the needs of the individual and with support of the family.

Concerns in relation to parents, carers or family member's mental health is also important to ensure the safety of our young people.

We will work with families and students to identify the level of risk and act appropriately in response to ensure the correct level of support is provided to the family.

Modern Slavery

This covers slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking.

Signs of modern slavery:

- situations where you do not know who holds parental responsibility (see also private fostering);
- children not attending school;
- unbelievable or surprising accounts of how they are in the country;
- intimidation of people at risk;
- parents working without pay;
- children being involved in inappropriate work;
- injuries;
- tattoos or other marks indicating 'ownership';
- distrust of authority.

[More information on the Modern Slavery act 2015 legislation](#)

Human Trafficking

Traffickers may use grooming techniques to gain the trust of a child, family or community. They may trick, force or persuade children to leave their homes. Child trafficking can involve a network of organised criminals who recruit, transport and exploit children and young people within or across borders. Some people in the network might not be directly involved in trafficking a child but play a part in other ways – such as falsifying documents, bribery, owning or renting premises, or money laundering (Europol, 2011).

Child trafficking can also be organised by individuals and children's own families. School is responsible for the education of the young people to identify risks to help protect themselves, as well as identifying signs of trafficking and reporting concerns either through the police if there is an immediate danger, or through the normal safeguarding procedures and social care referrals.

In these cases, a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referral must be made via the LA in line with legislation: [More information here.](#)

8. Helping Children to Keep Themselves Safe

Children are taught to understand relationships, promote British values and respond to and calculate risk through our personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) Sex and Relationships (SRE) education lessons and in all aspects of school life.

Our approach is designed to help children to think about risks they may encounter and have help to work out how those risks might be overcome and the support available to them. Discussions about relationships and risk are empowering and enabling for all children and promote sensible behaviour rather than fear or anxiety. Children are taught how to conduct themselves and how to behave in a responsible manner. Children are also reminded regularly about e-safety, including sexting and tackling bullying procedures including the legalities and consequences.

The school continually promotes an ethos of respect for children and the emotional health and wellbeing of our students is important to us. Pupils are encouraged to speak to a member of staff in confidence about any worries they may have.

However, all our pupils are aware that if they disclose that they are being harmed or that they have, or intend, to harm another that this cannot be kept secret and that information will need to be shared.

9. Support for those involved in a child protection issue

Child abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved.

We will support pupils, their families, and staff by:

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously;
- nominating a link person, the DSL who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact;
- where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a pupil, separate link people will be nominated to avoid any conflict of interest;
- responding sympathetically to any request from pupils or staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety;
- maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies;
- maintaining and storing records securely;
- offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support;
- following the procedures laid down in our whistleblowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures;
- cooperating fully with relevant statutory agencies.

10. Complaints Procedure

Our complaints procedure will be followed where a pupil or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a pupil that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Poor practice examples include unfairly singling out a pupil, belittling a pupil or discriminating against them in some way. Complaints are managed by senior staff, the Principal and governors.

Complaints from staff are **dealt with under the school's Grievance procedures.**

11. If staff or parents/carers have concerns about a colleague/member of staff or safeguarding practice

Staff or parents/carers who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague/member of staff or safeguarding practice within the school are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation.

All staff, parents and carers must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount and should feel able to report all concerns about a colleague/member of staff or the safeguarding practice within the school. The school's Confidential Reporting Policy can be found on the staff common drive and this outlines the procedure for staff to raise concerns or allegations in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the Principal. Complaints about the Principal should be reported to the Chair of Governors.

Staff may also report their concerns directly to the DSL or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action or to the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line>.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is when a worker reports suspected wrongdoing at work. Wrongdoing covered by this 'public interest disclosure' includes:

- someone's health and safety is in danger;
- damage to the environment;
- a criminal offence;
- not obeying the law;
- covering up wrongdoing;
- misusing public funds; (and in schools);
- actions that negatively affect the welfare of children.

Where staff have concerns, they should aim to report it internally first before using an external 'prescribed person or body'.

Making a report to an external person may only be undertaken where the staff member thinks the school will cover it up, would treat them unfairly if they complained or have raised the matter before, but the concern hasn't been dealt with.

Staff members with concerns should follow these steps:

- Line Manger
- Principal or Governor
- Local Authority
- Union or Professional Association
- Prescribed Person or Body (e.g. Ofsted, Education Funding Agency, Children's Commissioner or NSPCC)
- alternatively contact the whistleblowing charity [Protect](#)

Reporting a colleague

All concerns should initially go to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. Where the concern is around those in charge, you may wish to contact the LADO direct.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) has overall responsibility for the management of allegations of abuse by adults who work with children. The LADO provides advice and guidance, liaises with the Police, Social Care Teams, Regulatory Bodies such as Ofsted and other organisations as needed and ensures a consistent, fair and thorough process for both child and adult.

To make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) the referrer is to complete the LADO referral form and email securely to sthelenslado@sthelens.gov.uk and then follow up with a telephone call to the Safeguarding Children Unit on **01744 671252 within 1 day of the allegation.**

The form is available here: <https://sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk/scp>

12. Allegations against staff

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is important to have a culture of openness and transparency and a consultation with the LADO will happen if staff have:

- behaved in a way which has harmed, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they would pose a risk of harm to children.

Allegations against staff should be reported to the Principal. Allegations against the Principal should be reported to the Chair of Governors. Staff may also report their

concerns directly to the Police, LADO Officer or NSPCC Whistle blowing helpline if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

External organisations may use the school premises to run activities for children (for example, sports, community groups). If an allegation is made relating to an incident that happened when an individual or external group were using the school premises then these set procedures will again be followed, this may again include a consultation with LADO.

It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen. We recognise that a child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. However, if a child is found to continually make false allegations, this may be a sign of mental health issues and a referral to services such as CAMHs (Child and Adolescent Mental Health) may be required.

An uncomfortable fact is that some professionals do pose a serious risk to pupils and we must act on every allegation. However, staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not the default option and alternatives to suspension will always be considered. In some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed the best way to ensure that children are protected. Staff will be advised to contact their trade union and will also be given access to a named representative.

The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

Staff, parents and governors are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing, including content placed on social media sites. We will communicate this to all parties.

13. Staff Training and Induction

It is important that all staff have regular training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse and neglect and to know what to do if they have a concern. All staff will be regularly trained in Safeguarding and given at least annual updates in the form of email/newsletter/staff meetings.

The DSL will receive training updated at least every two years, including training in inter-agency procedures. They will be supported and encouraged to attend additional training to keep up-to-date, including forums and multi-agency training offered by SCP.

Governors will receive strategic governor safeguarding training.

All training will be recorded and monitored to flag in advance when updates are

required.

The booklet 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' 2015 and Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 are available on the Safeguarding noticeboard in the staffroom or from this link

[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused.](#)

New staff and governors will receive an induction in safeguarding which includes the school's child protection policy, details for the DSL, reporting and recording arrangements specific to the school, dates of their last training, the staff code of conduct and the whistleblowing policy. All staff including temporary staff will sign to say they have received this and understood.

14. Safer recruitment

Our school endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ 'safe' staff by following the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) together with SCP and the school's individual procedures.

Recruitment, selection and pre-employment vetting is carried out in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, including:

- verifying identity;
- Enhanced DBS (disclosure and barring service) check for those in regulated activity;
- prohibition from teaching check – teacher services system – for all teaching posts/EEA restrictions;
- verification on mental and physical fitness;
- right to work in UK;
- Professional qualifications.

Governors of our school will have an Enhanced DBS check.

A timeframe for retaining copies of DBS certificates and any records of criminal information disclosed by candidates does not exceed 6 months.

Please see below a link to the school retention policy that shows a clear rational and process for retaining and securely destroying these documents.

[SORP Template \(cowley.st-helens.sch.uk\)](http://cowley.st-helens.sch.uk)

References will be sought before interview so any concerns can be explored.

For staff in childcare provision or directly managing these appropriate checks will also be carried out in accordance with Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (updates September 2018) statutory guidance.

At least one member of each recruitment panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training.

The Single Central Record is maintained in accordance with Keeping Children Safe

in Education 2025 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

We will obtain written confirmation from supply agencies that agency and third party staff have been appropriately checked and ensure the correct person arrives in school.

Volunteers

Volunteers, including governors will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the school and contact with pupils i.e. if they are in regulated activity or not.

Contractors

We will check the identity of all contractors working on site and requests evidence of checks where they work in regulated activity or unsupervised.

Visitors

Schools do not have the power to ask for DBS checks or see the certificate. Staff use their professional judgement regarding escorting visitors in the school. All visitors will be asked to wear a badge identifying them as a visitor.

The school may incorporate an online search of shortlisted candidates during the recruitment process. This search could be carried out on publicly accessible social media platforms, blogs or professional networks. This due diligence check will be clearly communicated to shortlisted candidates and the process will be consistent and fair.

15. Site security

Visitors to the school are asked to sign in, if necessary show ID, and are given a badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in. All visitors are expected to enter through one entrance and observe the school's safeguarding and health and safety regulations to ensure children in school are kept safe. Staff will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site. Security policy and procedure are in place and risk assessment has been undertaken.

16. Extended school and off-site arrangements

Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own child protection policy and procedures apply and the DSL will be available. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site, we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures in line with SCP standards.

When our pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work related activities, we will risk assess and check that effective child protection arrangements are in place. We will clarify whose procedures are to be followed, with the DSL kept appropriately informed.

If alternative providers are used, we will ensure they have effective safeguarding in place, with the DSL kept appropriately informed.

17. Photography and images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place.

To protect pupils we will:

- seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications);
- seek parental consent;
- not use pupils' full name with an image;
- ensure pupils are appropriately dressed;
- ensure that personal data is not shared;
- store images appropriately, securely and for no longer than necessary;
- only use school equipment, i.e. not personal devices;
- encourage pupils to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

18. Physical intervention and use of reasonable force

All staff are encouraged to use de-escalation techniques and creative alternative strategies that are specific to the child. Restraint will only be used as a last resort and only by trained staff (CPI) and all incidents of this are reviewed, recorded and monitored. Reasonable force will be used in accordance with government guidance.

[DfE guidance Use of reasonable force](#)

19. Intimate Care

If a child requires regular intimate care on site this will be written into a care plan which staff will adhere to. Staff will behave in an open and transparent way and follow best practice to afford dignity to the child as well as security to the staff member. All incidents will be recorded.

20. Online Safety

Our pupils increasingly use mobile phones, tablets and computers on a daily basis. They are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, we know that some adults and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive communications, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography, encouraging radicalisation or face-to-face meetings. Cyberbullying and sexting by pupils, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and in the absence of a child protection concern will be managed through our anti-bullying and confiscation procedures.

Chatrooms and some social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and pupils are not allowed to access these sites in school. Some pupils will undoubtedly be 'chatting' outside school and are informed of the risks of this through PSHE/SRE. Parents are encouraged to consider measures to keep their children safe when using social media.

Acceptable IT use for staff, pupils will be enforced and parents are also informed of expectations.

[AcceptableUsePolicySept23.pdf \(cowley.st-helens.sch.uk\)](#)

All staff will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, cyber security and data protection (GDPR) which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring. This training will be regularly updated. In addition to provide staff with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively staff will receive safeguarding updates via e-mail and staff briefings.

The school use an education based online filtering service called Smoothwall that filters and monitors both staff and students' online searches/activity.

The Designated Safeguarding lead will be notified of any search flagged under the following safeguarding categories

Abuse

Adult Content

Bullying

Criminal Activity

Radicalisation

Substance Abuse

Suicide

21. First aid and managing medical conditions.

Nominated staff are trained appropriately in first aid and the college ensures an appropriate number are in place at all times to meet the needs of the school. Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on schools to make arrangements for supporting pupils at their school with medical conditions. Individual Health Care Plans may need to be drawn up and multi-agency communication will

be essential. Staff will be appropriately trained and responsibilities will be carried on in accordance with the latest HSE and DfE guidance.

[DfE guidance Support pupils at school with medical conditions](#)

[Supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf \(cowley.st-helens.sch.uk\)](#)

[First-Aid-Procedures-January-2023.pdf \(cowley.st-helens.sch.uk\)](#)

22. Child Protection Procedures

Categories and Definitions

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone, or leaving knives or matches within reach of an unattended toddler.

Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

There are four categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. (This used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy, but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

Emotional abuse

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

maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (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.

Position of Trust

The age of consent for sexual activity is 18 years old if you are in a position of trust over that child. Refer to Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health 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); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Definitions taken from *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government, 2018). [DfE guidance Working together to safeguard children](#).

Indicators of abuse

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty.

However, children may have no physical signs or they may be harder to see (e.g. bruising on black skin) therefore staff need to also be alert to behavioural indicators of abuse.

A child who is being abused or neglected may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries;

- show signs of pain or discomfort;
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather;
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming;
- look unkempt and uncared for;
- change their eating habits;
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships;
- appear fearful;
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety;
- self-harm;
- frequently miss school or arrive late;
- show signs of not wanting to go home;
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn;
- challenge authority;
- become disinterested in their school work;
- be constantly tired or preoccupied;
- be wary of physical contact;
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol;
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.

It is very important that staff report and record their concerns – they do not need 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk.

Impact of abuse

The impact of child abuse should not be underestimated. Many children do recover well and go on to lead healthy, happy and productive lives, although most adult survivors agree that the emotional scars remain, however well buried. For some, full recovery is beyond their reach, and research shows that abuse can have an impact on the brain and its development. The rest of their childhood and their adulthood may be characterised by anxiety or depression, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, unequal and destructive relationships and long-term medical or psychiatric difficulties.

Taking Action

It is the responsibility of staff to report and record their concerns as soon as possible.

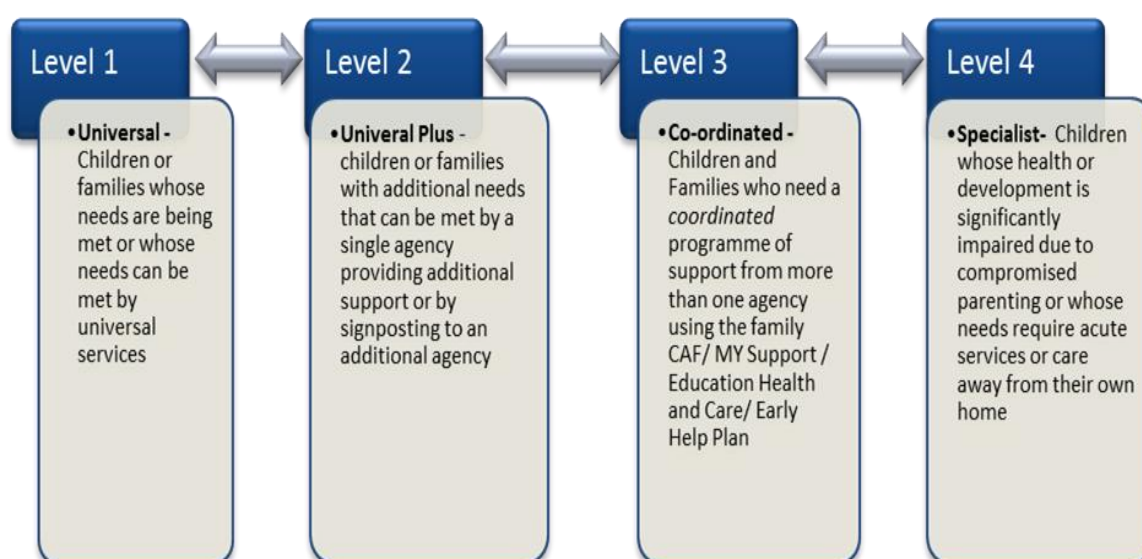
We actively encourage 'it can happen here' and 'never do nothing' attitude and if staff have a concern about a child and promote discussion with DSL if in any doubt.

It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has

been abused.

Any child, in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”.

St Helens has a Continuum of Need for children and families who need support, this ranges from Level 1 to Level 4. It is worth noting that a cause for concern does not always require a Level 4 response, it may be the family need so lower level of support to help the situation. The Early Help Team is able to offer support at lower levels and advise school staff at Level 3.



Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- if an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999;
- **REPORT your concern to the DSL as soon as possible and certainly by the end of the day;**
- **Complete a RECORD of concern (Appendix ii) and immediately pass onto to the DSL;**
- do not start your own investigation;
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue unnecessarily with colleagues, friends or family;
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

If you are concerned about a pupil's welfare

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk, but have no 'real' evidence. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical but inconclusive signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, **staff will give the pupil the opportunity to talk.** The signs they have noticed may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died,

a grandparent is very ill. It is fine for staff to ask the pupil if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should record these early concerns. If the pupil does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the disclosure advice below. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL.

Students with SEND

Children with disabilities are 3.7 times more likely than other children to be abused or neglected. Sometimes this is because of high care needs, increased vulnerability or the range of other factors that affect other children. Parenting children with disabilities comes with additional stresses or challenges, which can heighten the potential for abuse or neglect, especially in the context of a society where there remains much prejudice and barriers to disabled children and their families. Similar factors affect young people experiencing mental health conditions. Professionals can sometimes miss signs of abuse due to the complexity of young people's needs, an acceptance of things being how they are, or allowing their recognition of the challenges facing parents to cloud their judgement leading to abuse or neglect being under-reported.

Children have a wide range of needs and this section considers children with a formal diagnosis or condition, as well as where issues are apparent but there is no formal diagnosis. These children are at greater risk of abuse or neglect and the barriers to identifying and intervening are also higher. It is, therefore, important that we maintain an open mind about what we are seeing, and, as suggested by Lord Laming, maintain a professional curiosity. For example:

- not accepting that an injury is a result of the needs of the child, but instead consider what other causes there may be and what the evidence suggests;
- considering a behaviour such as self-harm as possibly being indicative of abuse;
- recognising the potential for fabricated or induced illness.

It is important that there are also clear lines of communication between all involved in the child's care so that concerns can be discussed and referred as necessary.

Early intervention

If the concern is low level and does not require social care involvement the DSL will initiate early intervention to:

- engage with the parents/carers as soon as possible (unless the situation is so serious that would put the student at increased risk) - we then can evidence quick action was taken and the length of time of involvement;
- invite the parents/carers into school for a meeting to demonstrate professional concerns and discuss a supportive working partnership for the best interests of the student (e.g. breakfast club, additional in school support) - at this meeting we will discuss the plan of next action should the situation not improve;
- record all contacts with the family, dates and times, including phone calls/letters;

- monitor the student closely - behaviour/concerns/interaction with peers and parents/academic progress etc. - this will demonstrate the frequency of concerns and help to build patterns;
- Invite external agencies supporting the family into an EHAT to follow the early help support offer.

If a pupil discloses to you

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault.

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

During their conversations with the pupils, it is best practice for staff to:

- allow pupils to speak freely;
- remain calm and not overreact – the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting their listener;
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’;
- not be afraid of silences, and allow space and time for pupil to continue, staff will recognise the barriers the pupil may have had to overcome to disclose;
- clarify or repeat back to check what they have heard if needed but will not lead the discussion in any way and *will not* ask direct or leading questions – such as whether it happens to siblings too, or what does the pupil’s mother think about it;
- use questions such as Tell me.....? Is there anything else?;
- at an appropriate time tell the pupil that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on;
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort - it may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused;
- remember professional boundaries and not share personal experiences such as ‘that happened to me’;
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier; saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ or ‘I can’t believe what I’m hearing’ may be the staff member’s way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong;
- tell the pupil what will happen next - the pupil may agree to go with you to see the DSL, otherwise let them know that you will be consulting them;
- write up their conversation as soon as possible on the record of concern form and hand it to the DSL;

- seek support if they feel distressed.

Notifying parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DSL will be in the most informed position to make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from the Contact Centre or Safeguarding Unit.

Records and Monitoring

Why recording is important

Our staff will be encouraged to understand why it is important that recording is timely, comprehensive and accurate and what the messages are from serious case reviews are in terms of recording and sharing information.

Cause for concerns recording template is available at Appendix ii.

Any concerns about a child will be recorded and given to the DSL asap. All records will provide a factual and evidence-based account and there will be accurate recording of any actions. Records will be signed and dated and logged securely on CPOMS.

At no time will a staff take photographic evidence of any injuries or marks to a child's person. The body map will be used instead in accordance with recording guidance.

It may be appropriate for the DSL to open a secure safeguarding file and start a chronology page. This will help in building patterns and decision making.

We will feedback to the staff member any actions, however this will be on a need to know basis. It may not be appropriate for staff members to know every detail of the child's life.

The safeguarding file

The establishment of a safeguarding file is an important principle in terms of storing and collating information about children that relates to either a safeguarding concern or an accumulation of welfare concerns that are outside of the usual range of concerns in ordinary life events.

It needs to be borne in mind that what constitutes a 'concern' for one child may not be a 'concern' for another and the particular child's circumstances and needs will differ i.e. a child subject to a child protection plan, looked after child, Child in Need may be looked at differently to a child recently bereaved, parental health issues etc. We will therefore use professional judgement when making this decision as will have

clear links and discussions between pastoral staff and DSLs.

This file will be kept separately from the main pupil file and **will held securely only to be accessed by appropriately trained people. The main file held on CPOMS, will be open to selected staff, will have a marker to signify that a separate safeguarding file exists for that child so that all staff coming into contact with that child are aware that an additional vulnerability exists.**

The school will keep electronic records of concerns about children even where there is no need to refer the matter to external agencies immediately. Each child will have an individual file i.e. no family files.

All incidents/episodes will be recorded e.g. phone calls to other agencies, in the chronology with more detail and analysis in the body of the file. This will help build a picture and help the DSL in analysis and action, which may include no further action, monitoring, whether a CAF (level 3) should be undertaken, or whether a referral should be made to other agencies - Social Care/Early Help Team in line with the Continuum of Need document.

In cases where there is multi agency involvement - meetings and plans, actions and responsibilities shall be clarified, and outcomes recorded.

Files will be made available for external scrutiny for example by a regulatory agency or because of a serious case review or audit.

Records will be kept up to date and reviewed regularly by the DSL to evidence and support actions taken by staff in discharging their safeguarding arrangements. The file can be non-active in terms of monitoring i.e. a child is no longer LAC, subject to a child protection plan. If future concerns then arise, it can be re-activated and indicated as such on the CPOMS record and on the chronology as new information arises.

If the child moves to another school, the file will be securely sent or taken, to the DSL at the new establishment/school and a digital receipt will be obtained. There will be a timely liaison between each school's DSL to ensure a smooth and safe transition for the child. We will retain a copy of the chronology to evidence actions, in accordance with record retention guidance.

Referral to Contact Centre (Level 4)

The DSL will make a referral to the Contact Centre if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm – Level 4 on the Continuum of Need. This is best done with reference to the Continuum of Need (see link in appendix).

If there is already a social worker assigned to this case - for safeguarding reasons, the social worker should be contacted.

The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

If the situation does not appear to be improving the school will press for reconsideration through the escalation / appeals procedures.

Any member of staff can refer to other agencies in exceptional circumstances, i.e. in an emergency or when there is a genuine concern that action has not been taken.

Confidentiality and sharing information

Staff will only discuss concerns with the DSL, Principal or Chair of Governors (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

We will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DSL will be in the most informed position to make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

However, if we believe that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from the First Response Team.

The Seven Golden Rules for Safeguarding Information Sharing 2015

- Data Protection/Human rights laws are not a barrier.
- Be open and honest. (unless unsafe or inappropriate)
- Seek advice. (anonymise if necessary)
- Share with consent if appropriate.
- Consider safety and wellbeing.
- Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure.
- Keep a record of decision and reason for it.

[DfE advice Information sharing](#)

The Data Protection Act does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child. Ideally, information sharing will be done in writing so that there is an evidence trail however there may be occasions where this method is too slow. In cases where agencies such as MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) ring the school requesting information reception staff will take a message and inform the DSL immediately, the DSL will ensure they can identify who is requesting the information before sharing and then record what has been shared, when, why and with whom.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Principal.

Any personal safeguarding information shared with external agencies will be done so

securely e.g. by secure email, password protected or recorded delivery.

23. Special Circumstances

Children We Look After (CLA)

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after status and care arrangements including contact. The designated teacher for Children We Look After and the DSL have details of the child's social worker. As well as the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head for children in care. They will work with the virtual head to discuss how funding can be best used to support the progress of CLA and meet the needs in their PEP (Personal Education Plan)

[DfE guidance Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children](#)

[DfE guidance The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#)

Work Experience

The school has detailed procedures to safeguard pupils undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervise pupils on work experience which are in accordance with the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

Children staying with host families

The school may make arrangements for pupils to stay with a host family during a foreign exchange trip or sports tour. In such circumstances, this may amount to Private Fostering and the school follows the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (annex D) to ensure that hosting arrangements are as safe as possible.

Some overseas pupils may reside with host families during school terms and we will work with the local authority to check that such arrangements are safe and suitable

Local Contact Details

Contact Centre Team – Anyone can phone contact cares as a first point of call if they have a concern for the welfare of a child. This includes out of school times and school holidays.

Phone: 01744 676600

These are some services that work alongside contact cares following an initial concern referral

Early Help Team

Phone: 01744 678373

Operation Encompass

Phone: 01744 671290

Designated Officer (LADO)

Phone: 01744 671252

NSPCC

Phone: 0808 800 5000

Prevent Police Officer

Phone: 0151 777 6811

CSE Police Team

Phone:

Child Missing Education Officers

Education Welfare Service

Phone: 01744 676636

Virtual Head for LAC

01744 671044

Continuum of Need document: <http://sthelensSCP.org.uk/continuum-of-need/>

NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline

0800 028 0285

School nurse

School Health

North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Moss Bank Children's Centre, Kentmere Avenue, Moss Bank, St Helens, WA11 7PQ

National Association People Abused in Childhood NAPAC

<http://www.mindingyourhead.info/service/napac-national-association-people-abused-childhood>

Stop It Now

Leading charity working in the field of sexual abuse. Also provides support for people who are worried about their own thoughts or behaviour towards children.

<http://www.stopitnow.org.uk/>

Reporting Hate Crime

Hate Crime/incident is any behaviour that anyone thinks was caused by hatred of:

- race
- sexual orientation
- gender identification
- disability
- religion or faith

A hate crime could be:

- name calling
- arson/fire
- attacks or violence
- damage such as to your house or car
- graffiti or writing.

SHARP <http://cowleysthelens.thesharpsystem.com/index.php>

ST HELENS SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD CHILD PROTECTION FLOWCHART

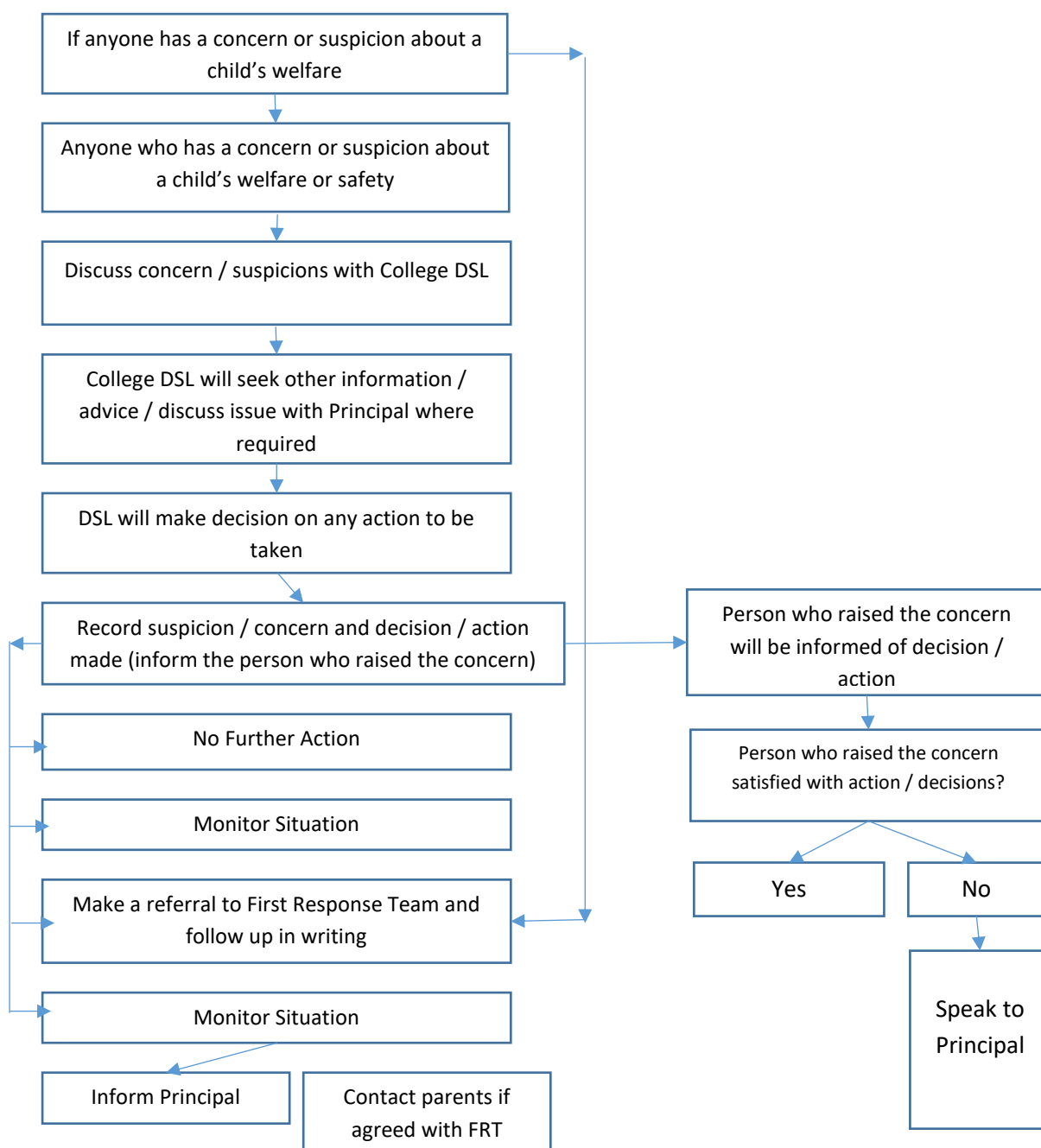
College CONTACT NAMES AND NUMBERS

Our Designated Senior Leads (DSL) for Child Protection are:
 Susan Fairhurst (Student Support Manager) Ext 121
 Mike Bennett (Assistant Head Teacher) Ext 184

If the DSL above is not available:
 T Hewlett (Head of Upper School) Ext 146
 P Leadbeater (Head of Lower School) Ext 122
 D Faulkner (Post 16) Ext 171

FOR ADVICE, ring: FIRST RESPONSE TEAM 01744 676600

PROCEDURE



Record of Concern Form

Cowley International College

SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT / CONCERN FORM



Pupil/Child name		Date of birth and Year Group/Class	
Name and position of person completing form (please print)			
Date of incident /concern: (DD MM YY)			
Incident / concern (who what where when)*			
Any other relevant information (witnesses, immediate action taken, questions asked)*			
Signature: (name of member of staff)		Date form completed (DD MM YY):	
Role:			
Action taken (including reasons for decisions) and Outcomes*			
(NB – this section is only to be completed by DSL)			
Signature of DSL		Date (DD MM YY)	
Signature of Lead DSL (if appropriate)		Date (DD MM YY)	

*Continue on a separate sheet if necessary

To be sent to susan.fairhurst@cowleysthelens.org.uk and mike.bennett@cowleysthelens.org.uk via e-mail and followed up in person. Please also include in the relevant year team.