Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

This policy has been updated to incorporate KCSIE 2026 and was originally adapted from the 2025 recommended model policy written by Sefton Local Authority Safeguarding Team and.

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Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Ross Flanagan, Sandra Scott, Vincent McPoland
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Chair of Governors	Bill Doherty
Date Approved	31st August 2026
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Position	Chair of Governors

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1. Policy Statement

At Foundations for LIFE School, 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, valued, and can recognise when they are at risk and how to access help when they need it. We are alert to the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection, and justice. The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, governors, volunteers, and contractors.

All staff working with children at Foundations for LIFE School will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff will always act in the best interests of the child, and if any member of our community has a safeguarding concern about any child or adult, they should act immediately.

Our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures will be made available through our school's website, reviewed, and ratified annually by the Governing Body. We will ensure it remains current and incorporates all revisions made to local and national guidance. All staff in our school are consulted and contribute to the development of this policy as part of the review process. Parents/carers can request a copy. We are also able to arrange for our policy to be made available to parents/carers whose first language is not English, upon request.

Our governing body recognises the need to ensure that it complies with its duties under legislation, and this policy has regard to statutory guidance: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), key statutory and non-statutory guidance and any locally agreed inter-agency procedures. See Appendix 1 – Key Statutory and non-statutory guidance.

Our school staff including Trustees/governors will ensure they comply with data protection law; develop data policies; understand what staff and pupil data to keep; and prevent personal data breaches (see 'Data protection in schools' guidance on GOV.UK).

The school will ensure we practise safer recruitment in checking the suitability of adults to deter and reject unsuitable people from entering the workplace. See Appendix 2 – Safer Recruitment, selection, and pre-employment vetting (Part 3, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026).

Anyone who teaches, trains, instructs, cares for or supervises children now requires an Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information, whether they are supervised as per KCSIE 2026.

Foundations for LIFE School will work in partnership with Sefton Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the local area, and follow relevant local arrangements, policies, and procedures. We will be part of the DSL network and access up-to-date multi-agency training and attend safeguarding events. We will facilitate meetings for our children and families to support easier local access.

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- Prevention: positive, supportive, safe culture, curriculum and pastoral opportunities for children, safer recruitment procedures.
- Protection: following the agreed procedures, ensuring all staff are trained and supported to recognise and respond appropriately and sensitively to protection and safeguarding concerns.
- Support: for all children, parents/carers and staff, and where appropriate specific interventions are required for those who may be at risk of harm.
- Working with parents/carers and other agencies: to ensure timely, appropriate communications and actions are undertaken when safeguarding concerns arise.

2. Definition

For the purposes of this policy and procedures a child, young person, pupil, or student is referred to as a 'child' or a 'pupil' and they are normally under 18 years of age. Wherever the term 'parent' is used this includes birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example stepparents, foster carers, and adoptive parents. 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.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing 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
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

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

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

Alleged perpetrator(s) and perpetrator(s) are widely used and recognised terms. As a school we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children) as, in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what's appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

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

- The local authority depending which site.
- Integrated Care Board (ICB) for an area within the relevant local LA.
- The chief officer of police for a police area in the respective local area

KSIE 2026 reinforces alignment with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and the national move towards 'Family Help' — a single, whole-family multi-agency offer that sits ahead of statutory social care involvement. Where this policy refers to Early Help (see Section 10.1), staff should understand this as the local expression of the Family Help reform, and the DSL should ensure the school's referral pathways reflect the current Family Help arrangements of the relevant LA.

3. Implementation

This Policy, and supporting procedures, apply to all who encounter children in the school, including teachers, supply teachers, learning support staff, teaching assistants, mid-day supervisors, admin

staff, meals supervisors, caretakers, cleaners, visiting students, parents/carers, helpers/volunteers, governors, contractors, and other visitors.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other related policies and procedures including:

- Staff code of conduct
- Whole school behaviour policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Exclusion policy
- Relationships – Sex and Health Education
- Policies and guidance related to Mental and Physical Health
- Guidance for NPCC helpline and usage – When to call the police guidance from the NPCC
- Attendance policy and procedures
- Online policy and procedures including filtering and monitoring
- Health and Safety policy and procedures
- Safer Recruitment, Selection and Pre-Employment Vetting Policy and Procedures
- School Single Central Record (restricted access)
- Single Equality Scheme/Objectives
- Accessibility Plan
- Data Protection Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical/Health Conditions Policy and Procedures
- SEND Special Educational Needs Policy
- Whistleblowing Procedures
- Intimate Care Procedures
- Educational Visits Procedures (including procedures for assessing risks)
- First Aid and Accident Procedures
- Administering medicines
- Missing Procedures
- Guidance on the use of Photographic Images
- Guidance on the use of mobile phones and cameras
- Procedures for protecting children when contractors are working in educational settings
- Code of Conduct for adults visiting or working on a school site (leaflet)
- Risk Assessments (incl. Fire Safety)
- Premises Management including security measures (formal inspections and Buildings Register), Lettings arrangements
- Sefton Level of Need Guidance
- The school's Mobile Phone Policy and Online/Online Safety Policy should be reviewed alongside this update to reflect the DfE's mobile phones in schools guidance referenced in KCSIE 2026

Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) Policies and Procedures Online Manual can be found via the Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

St Helen's Authority procedures can be found on the St Helen's local authority website.

4. Equality Statement

Our school recognises children's diverse circumstances and is committed to the legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. As a school we understand that children, regardless of their background, could be a victim of abuse and are therefore entitled to the same degree of protection and support regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children:

- who have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities or health conditions, which is of paramount importance as all our pupils have EHCPs so are registered as SEND
- who are young carers
- who may experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- who have English as an additional language
- who are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- who are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- who are asylum seekers
- who are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- who are looked after or previously looked after
- who are absent from school
- who are missing from education
- whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated

Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information, resources and support services in community languages and accessible formats.

4A. Gender-Questioning Children

When a child questions their gender, or a request is made for the school to support any degree of social transition (including a change of pronouns, name, or uniform), our starting point will always be the best interests of that child. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the child's parents/carers wherever safe and appropriate to do so, taking account of the child's wider safeguarding needs, wellbeing, and any views expressed by staff who know the child well, informed by the principles emerging from the Cass Review.

- The school does not allow children into toilets, changing rooms or showers designated for the opposite biological sex.
- We provide separate toilets for boys and girls aged 8 and over, as required by the School Premises (England) Regulations, other than individual toilets in a lockable room intended for one pupil at a time.
- Where a child does not wish to use the toilet, changing room or shower for their biological sex, we will consider whether an alternative facility (for example a self-contained individual toilet) can be provided without compromising the provision of single-sex facilities, or the safety, comfort, privacy or dignity of that child or of other children.
- A child aged 11 or over at the start of the school year (this does not affect Year 6 pupils who turn 11 during the academic year) will not be required or permitted to undress in front of pupils of the opposite biological sex, and vice versa. Any younger pupils requesting privacy will be offered a separate space to get changed.

- A clear, dated record will be kept of any request for alternative arrangements, the decision made, and the reasons for it. These arrangements will be communicated appropriately to relevant staff and reviewed regularly.
- Residential trips and off-site activities involving overnight accommodation will be risk-assessed with the same principles in mind.

Any member of staff with a concern relating to a gender-questioning child – including where the child may be vulnerable to bullying, isolation, or other safeguarding risk – should speak to the DSL in the usual way.

5. Policy Compliance, Monitoring, and Review

Foundations for LIFE School will review this policy at least annually (as a minimum) and will update it as needed, so that it is kept up to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learnt. The policy will also be revised following any national or local updates, significant local or national safeguarding events and/or learning, and/or any changes to our own procedures.

All staff will have read the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and signed to say they have understood it. All new members of staff will be given a copy of our child protection procedures and of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026: Part One, in full, together with the new 'Part One: Overview for all staff' as part of their induction into the school. All staff will sign to say they have read and received these documents. Staff who join the school part-way through the year will undergo safeguarding and child protection induction (including online safety/filtering and monitoring) that includes reading Part One of KCSIE 2026 in full.

Parents/carers can obtain a copy of the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and other related policies on request. Additionally, our policies can be viewed via the school's website: https://foundationsforlife.co.uk

The policy forms part of our school development plan and will be reviewed annually by the governing body, who have responsibility for oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher will ensure regular reporting on safeguarding activity and systems to the governing body.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Role of All Staff Including Supply Staff, Volunteers, and Contractors

Safeguarding and child protection is everyone's responsibility. This policy applies to all staff including those not directly employed by the school, such as contractors, volunteers, and governors. This policy will be read by all staff as part of their induction.

The Governing Body will be collectively responsible for ensuring that child protection and safeguarding arrangements are fully embedded within the school's ethos and in the school's day-to-day safeguarding practice.

The school plays a crucial role in preventative education, in the context of a whole-school approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, and sexual violence/harassment. This is underpinned by our behaviour policy, pastoral support systems and practice, and our planned programme of relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE), which is inclusive and delivered regularly, tackling issues such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships
- Boundaries and consent
- Stereotyping, prejudice, and equality

- Body confidence and self-esteem
- How to recognise an abusive relationship (including coercive and controlling behaviour)
- The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) and how to access support
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why they are always unacceptable

All staff:

Will read and understand their statutory responsibilities outlined in Part One (in full) of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, together with the 'Part One: Overview for all staff' companion document. This now applies to every member of staff, whether or not they work directly with children as per KCSIE 2026.

- Will provide a safe space for pupils who are LGBT+ to speak out and share their concerns.
- Will be aware of our systems which support child protection/safeguarding.
- Understand their professional responsibilities outlined in the staff code of conduct.
- Understand the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL (DDSL).
- Read and understand the school behaviour policy and online safety policy, including the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.
- Understand the school's safeguarding responses to children who are absent during the school day/missing from education.
- Understand the early help/Family Help process and the offer in the school.
- Understand that a child's experiences, such as abuse, neglect, exploitation, trauma and adverse childhood experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.
- Are clear about the process for making referrals to the local authority Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) (or other local authority children's social care where relevant).
- Understand that if there are concerns about a child's welfare, they will firstly speak to the DSL, DDSL or Headteacher (in the absence of a DSL), to agree a course of action. In the absence of a DSL or Headteacher being available, staff must not delay in directly contacting Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) or the police if they believe a child is at immediate risk of significant harm.
- Know what to do if they identify a safeguarding issue, or a child discloses to them that they are being abused, neglected or exploited.
- Recognise the link between mental health, school attendance, children absent from education, and the impact on learning, progress, and educational attainment.
- Know children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home, at school and online, and should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns.
- Are aware that children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBT+) can be targeted by other children.
- Use school procedures for recording any cause for concern and passing information on to the DSL in accordance with the school's recording systems.
- Understand the signs and indicators of different types of abuse, neglect and exploitation, as well as the specific safeguarding issues outlined in this policy.
- Speak to the DSL if they have a concern about a child's mental health.

6.2 The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL (Helen Webster, Sandra Scott, Ross Flanagan and Vincent McPoland)

The school has a member of the senior leadership team designated by the Governing Body as the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who has lead responsibility for child protection and safeguarding, including keeping children safe online by understanding the filtering and monitoring processes on our school devices and networks. The role of the DSL is set out in Annex C of KCSIE 2026

During term-time the DSL and/or a deputy will always be available (during school hours) for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns, including during off-site visits or extra-curricular activities. Our DSL has knowledge and a good understanding of harmful sexual behaviours and is trained in the Brook Traffic Light Tool, and is also the Prevent Single Point of Contact (SPOC).

Liaison and Referrals – the DSL will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Care and other agencies in Sefton and other areas if the pupils do not reside in Sefton.
- Refer all cases of suspected abuse or allegations to Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) immediately; contact the police if at any point there is a risk of immediate serious harm to the child.
- Liaise with staff and act as a source of support, advice and expertise within school when deciding to make a referral.
- Liaise with the Headteacher to inform them of issues under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- Ensure the most relevant trained person attends strategy discussions, case conferences, core groups, and other multi-agency planning meetings.
- Be confident that they know what local specialist support is available for all children involved in sexual violence and sexual harassment, including victims and alleged perpetrators.
- Ensure that any child on a child protection plan who is absent from school without explanation is referred to Sefton's School Attendance First Day Response Scheme, with contact made to the social worker or, in their absence, a Team Manager.
- Be responsible for responding to domestic abuse notifications from the Operation Encompass Initiative.
- Refer concerns about child-on-child abuse, including allegations of sexual violence and sexual harassment, and access multi-agency support when appropriate.
- Refer concerns about missing children or transfer concerns to Sefton Children Missing Education.
- Advise and support school staff regarding the Prevent Duty, and refer children (and support staff who make referrals) to the Channel programme where there are radicalisation concerns.
- Refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child and who has been removed from working in regulated activity or would have been removed had they not voluntarily left.
- Refer to the police cases where a crime may have been committed.
- Hold information on which children have a social worker, so decisions can be made in the child's best interests.
- If a child is believed to be in danger, staff must call 999 or take the child to A&E immediately (or 111 where it is not an emergency) and inform the DSL as soon as possible afterwards. This applies alongside, the existing duty to inform the DSL and to refer to CHAT and/or the police.

Training – the DSL will receive appropriate training (including 'Working Together' training, updated every two years) and other training associated with the role, including Prevent awareness, domestic abuse, online safety and record keeping; attend the DSL network; and ensure staff and s have access to and understand the school's child protection policy, staff code of conduct and behaviour policy.

(The full responsibilities of the DSL are set out in Annex C of KCSIE 2026 – Role of the designated safeguarding lead. All designated safeguarding leads and deputy safeguarding leads must read and comply with this.)

6.3 The Role of the Headteacher

- Ensure that staff (including temporary and supply staff) and volunteers are informed of this policy as part of their induction.
- Ensure policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body are fully implemented.
- Ensure the Single Central Record is up to date and reflects the safer recruitment practices set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, including ensuring volunteers undergo the same safeguarding checks and all paid staff.
- Ensure that all staff receive an induction to the work they are to undertake in the school.
- Communicate this policy to parents/carers when their child joins the school and via the school website.
- Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the DSL/DDSL, as referenced in Annex C of KCSIE 2026, are reflected in their job description.
- Make decisions regarding low-level concerns, in collaboration with the DSL as appropriate.
- Ensure that the DSL has appropriate time, training, and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent.
- Act as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff (including supply staff) or volunteer, where appropriate.
- Ensure that all recommendations made by the Local Authority in relation to strengthening the school's safeguarding arrangements are actioned in a timely fashion.
- Ensure all staff, volunteers and contractors can raise concerns about unsafe practice in relation to children.

6.4 The Role of Teachers

Teachers, including the Headteacher, will safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties in line with the Teacher Standards.

6.5 The Role of the Governing Body/Proprietors

The Governing Body is responsible and accountable for ensuring:

- The school facilitates a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and protection underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development.
- Oversight of the Online Safety Policy, and the arrangements for appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and networks, informed in part by the Prevent Duty risk assessment.
- Filtering and monitoring provision is reviewed at least once every academic year (KCSIE 2026 makes this an explicit minimum), with roles and responsibilities assigned for managing the systems, harmful content blocked without unreasonably restricting teaching and learning, and standards discussed with IT staff and service providers against the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards.
- Ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety training.
- Be aware of obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

- The school has appointed an appropriate senior member of staff to the role of DSL, with a named deputy.
- Evaluation and approval of this policy at each review, ensuring it complies with the law, and holding the Headteacher to account for its implementation.
- Appointment of a governor to lead on protection/safeguarding, who accesses designated safeguarding governor training and associated briefings.
- All governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction, and all staff receive regular updates at least annually.
- The school has recruitment and selection procedures in place, and any child protection files are maintained as set out in Annex C.
- The school undertakes an annual safeguarding audit and actions any identified improvements.
- If an allegation of abuse is made against the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors acts as the 'case manager'.
- The school has appropriate IT filtering and monitoring systems in place, informed by the Prevent Duty risk assessment.
- Written assurances are obtained from any alternative/off-site providers (Foundations for LIFE School currently uses CTS Northwest, MODE Training, Shy Lowen Horse and Pony Sanctuary, and STAR-SLA) that their safeguarding arrangements, including safer recruitment and allegation management, are secure.
- The governing body will supply information as requested by the Sefton Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP).

(The full responsibilities of the governing body are set out in Part Two of KCSIE 2026 – The management of safeguarding.)

6.6 The Role of Clinical Practitioners in School

The school's clinical practitioners have completed safeguarding training and will report any safeguarding concerns to the DSL onsite or one of the DDSLs. The clinical team also have their own DSL Lorna Harvey who liaises with the SLT. Clinicians access C-POMS to report any safeguarding incidents

7. Checking the Identity and Suitability of Visitors, Volunteers and Regulated Activity

Our school has robust procedures in place for people visiting the school. For visitors in a professional capacity we will check ID and be assured the visitor has had the appropriate DBS check. Visitors are always expected to sign the visitors' book and wear a visitor's badge when in school and will always be accompanied by a member of staff.

Visitors to the school for a professional purpose will be asked to show their DBS certificate, checked alongside photo ID; or the sending organisation will provide prior written confirmation that an appropriate level of DBS check has been carried out. We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise children or staff.

8. Children Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Our school recognises that concerns raised by children need to be taken seriously. We recognise the importance of ensuring children feel safe and comfortable to come forward and report any concerns and/or allegations. We have systems in place that are well promoted, easily understood and accessible for all our children, including those with additional needs.

Pupils are asked on a monthly basis by the Headteacher to whom they should report any concerns, to ensure they know who the DSL and all the DDSLs are. All pupils are involved in discussions in PSHE, incorporating our relationships/sex education curriculum, about how they will feel safe and be protected in submitting any concerns, e.g. reassurances provided following disclosures.

9. Opportunities to Teach Safeguarding

Our school plays an essential role in helping children to understand and identify what is appropriate adult behaviour, what is 'safe' both online and offline, how to recognise when they and others close to them are not safe, and how to seek advice and support when they are concerned.

The governing body ensures our children are taught about safeguarding (including online safety) through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. Our curriculum provides opportunities for increasing self-awareness, self-esteem, social and emotional understanding, assertiveness, and decision making, so children have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others.

We encourage the safe use of external agencies or speakers to enrich the experiences of our children, but will positively vet those invited to ensure their messages are consistent with the school's ethos, do not marginalise any communities, groups or individuals, and do not seek to glorify criminal activity or violent extremism, or radicalise children through extreme or narrow views of faith, religion, culture, or other ideologies.

Specific systems outside day-to-day classroom interaction include: School Council; peer-mentoring systems; peer mediation; PSHE events; regular feedback questionnaires with groups of children; anti-bullying work; a digital literacy scheme of work; and links with NSPCC and Bully Busters. Our PSHE scheme of work, incorporating RSHE, is the JIGSAW programme, adapted to enable all of our pupils to access the curriculum.

10. Our Role in Supporting Children Who Are Vulnerable and at Risk Through a Child-Centred and Coordinated Approach

Our school recognises that while all children have a right to be safe, some children may be more vulnerable to suffering abuse, neglect and exploitation. We understand that no single person can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who encounters them at our school has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action.

10.1 Children Who May Require Early Help

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. In the first instance, staff should discuss early help requirements with the DSL. The school is committed to early identification and multi-agency Family Help arrangements ahead of statutory social care involvement wherever possible. The school's priority to support parents and carers through liaising with professional bosies to support our pupils and their families.

We have a strong pastoral ethos in school with an in-house Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Clinical Psychologist, mentors and coaches, music therapy, art therapy and a therapy dog onsite. We also work with the LFC Foundation and Apple cast Farm to support pupils individually. Our school is committed to using the Early Help/Family Help process to support children and families and will take on the role of Lead Practitioner where appropriate. We have our own Family Support Worker Lauren Humphries and our DSL Helen Webster is also the Pastoral lead.

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

- Is disabled and has specific additional needs.

- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan).
- Is a young carer.
- Is bereaved.
- Is missing education, persistently absent from school, or not in receipt of full-time education.
- Has experienced multiple suspensions, has been repeatedly removed from the classroom, or is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges or alternative provision.
- Is on a part-time timetable.
- Is not in education, training, or employment after the age of 16 (NEET).
- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gangs, county lines, organised crime, or serious violence including knife crime.
- Is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate online content, or developing inappropriate relationships online.
- Has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending.
- Runs away or goes missing from home or care.
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves.
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation.
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges, such as substance abuse, adult mental health issues or domestic abuse.
- Has returned home to their family from care.
- Is showing early signs of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
- Is a privately fostered child.

Knowing what to look out for is vital to the early identification of abuse, neglect and exploitation. If staff are unsure, they should always speak to the DSL (or deputy). If, in exceptional circumstances, the DSL (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken; staff should speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT), sharing any action taken with the DSL as soon as practically possible.

10.2 Children in Need with a Social Worker

A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Children in need may be assessed under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

The DSL, leadership team and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children. Where we are aware that a child has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure decisions are made in the child's best interests, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on educational outcomes.

The Virtual School Headteacher has non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of pupils with a social worker, and works closely with our DSL, Headteacher and SENCO. Our school responds to absence/missing education where there are known safeguarding risks by working with Sefton Council's first day response system: where we have not received a call to explain an absence, we call home immediately, and where necessary go and collect the pupil.

10.3 Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children

At Foundations for LIFE School, we ensure staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked-after children and previously looked-after children safe. Our DSL has details of all children's social workers and Virtual Heads. Appropriate staff have relevant information about looked-after children's legal status, contact arrangements, and care arrangements.

Our school has a Designated Teacher with lead responsibility for helping school staff understand the things which affect how looked-after children learn and achieve, working closely with the DSL and Virtual School Heads, including on how pupil premium plus funding (when awarded) best support looked-after children's personal education plans can.

10.4 Children Requiring Support with Their Mental Health

There will be occasions when children in our school struggle with mental health issues resulting in low mood or self-harm. If a member of staff notices low mood in a child, they should speak with the relevant professional in the school. Any signs that a child is at risk, or a threat of or evidence of self-harm, should be reported to the DSL.

Where a member of staff believes a child is in danger, they must call 999 or take the child to A&E immediately (or 111 where it is not an emergency), and inform the DSL as soon as possible. This applies in addition to, not instead of, referral to CHAT and involving parents/carers where safe to do so.

Children will be monitored and, if needed, a referral made to the CHAT Team. Where parents/carers can keep the child safe, they will be contacted and advised to seek medical advice from their GP or A&E. The child will be provided with support in school through pastoral care systems and external agencies, and a risk assessment may be put in place where a child poses significant risk in school.

Kooth in Sefton is a free, online counselling and emotional wellbeing platform for young people aged 11 to 19, available 24 hours a day, self-referral, addressing issues including relationships, bullying, self-harm, suicide, loneliness, self-confidence, self-esteem, pregnancy, abuse, bereavement, anger, and risk-taking behaviours.

10.5 Children with SEN/Disabilities/Health Conditions

All our pupils have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and, in some instances, health conditions that can bring additional safeguarding challenges. Pupils with SEND are three times more likely to be abused than their peers. Abuse involving SEND pupils requires close liaison between the DSL (or deputy) and the SENCO. We also have mentors, therapists, teaching assistants and one-to-one support available.

Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their child protection policy reflects the additional barriers that can exist when recognising abuse, neglect, and exploitation in this group of children, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse (behaviour, mood, injury) relate to the child's condition, without further exploration.
- Children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other pupils.
- Children with SEN, disabilities or certain health conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing signs.
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.
- Cognitive understanding – difficulty distinguishing fact from fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in school, or the consequences of doing so.

Our school works closely with social workers, care managers, CAMHS, and other external agencies as required, and with Sefton's Barnardo's Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS). We also

have a medication policy, and all rooms except toilets have cameras and sound recording for additional safeguarding.

10.6 Harm Outside the Home (Extra Familial Harm)

We recognise safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside the school, including online. All staff, especially the DSL (or deputy), should consider the context within which such incidents occur, and whether wider environmental factors are a threat to the child's safety and/or welfare. It is important that staff provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process.

10.7 Children Who Live in Private Fostering Arrangements

A private fostering arrangement is one made privately (without local authority involvement), for the care of a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled), by someone other than a parent/carer or immediate relative, lasting or intended to last 28 days or more. Examples include children needing alternative care due to parental illness, work or study commitments, children sent from abroad to improve educational opportunities, unaccompanied asylum-seeking and refugee children, and teenagers staying with friends after falling out with parents.

Our school will fulfil the mandatory duty to inform the CHAT Team of a private fostering arrangement. A social worker will then assess the child's needs, check the suitability of carers and accommodation, decide whether the arrangement can go ahead, and visit the child to ensure their needs are met.

11. Recognising and Identifying Abuse, Neglect and Significant Harm

To ensure that our children are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect. Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Types of abuse are defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and Appendix 4 of this policy.

11.1 Physical Abuse

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

11.2 Emotional Abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so 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, unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person; not giving the child opportunities to express their views; deliberately silencing them; age-inappropriate expectations; overprotection; seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another; or serious bullying, including cyberbullying. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment, though it may occur alone.

11.3 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 penetrative acts (such as rape) or non-penetrative acts, such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in

preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males – women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

11.4 Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy 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 caregivers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- provide suitable education

12. Specific Safeguarding Issues

12.1 Sharing of Nudes and Semi-Nudes (Sexting)

If staff are made aware of an incident involving the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images/videos ('sexting' or 'youth produced sexual imagery') including deepfake or Ai-generated nude images, they must report it to the DSL immediately. Staff will not view, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery, ask a child to share, download or delete it, ask involved pupils to disclose information about the imagery, share information about the incident beyond what is necessary, or say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.

Following a report, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting to consider whether there is immediate risk to the child(ren); whether a referral to police and/or CHAT is needed; whether it is necessary to view the image(s) (in most cases they should not be viewed); what further information is required; whether the image(s) have been shared widely; whether immediate action is needed to delete or remove images; and whether to contact parents/carers (in most cases we will).

The DSL will make an immediate referral to police and/or CHAT if: the incident involves an adult; there is reason to believe a child has been coerced, blackmailed, or groomed, or there are concerns about capacity to consent; the content depicts sexual acts unusual for the young person's developmental stage or is violent; the imagery involves a person under 13; or the DSL believes a child is at immediate risk of harm (for example presenting as suicidal or self-harming).

The DSL will inform parents/carers at an early stage unless there is good reason to believe this would put the child at risk. Any referral to police will be made through our existing local arrangements. All incidents, and the decisions made in responding to them, will be recorded in C-POMS. Children are taught about the issues surrounding the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes as part of PSHE/RSHE and computing, covering what it is, how it is encountered, the consequences (including legality), and the strategies and skills needed to manage requests or pressure.

12.2 Online Safety and the Use of Mobile Technology and Cameras

Please see our Mobile Phone Policy for further information. We recognise that our children are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline, and we want to equip our pupils with the knowledge needed to make the best use of the internet and technology in a safe, considered, and respectful way.

There are four categories of risk:

Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful material, for example pornography, disinformation, misinformation and conspiracy theories, racist or extremist views.

- Contact: being exposed to harmful online interaction with other users, for example commercial advertising or adults posing as children or young adults.
- Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying.
- Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising,

Our school will:

- Undertake an annual review of online safety to identify any risks the school community may be exposed to, and ensure governors have knowledge of online safety.
- Reinforce the importance of online safety when communicating with parents.
- Provide online guidance and support to children and parents to remain free from risk, exploitation, grooming and radicalisation.
- Ensure staff receive induction and annual refresher training on using the internet safely, cyberbullying, and online radicalisation.
- Ensure appropriate security protection procedures are in place and reviewed periodically to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies.

Ensure that filtering and monitoring systems are reviewed for their effectiveness at least once every academic year (a new explicit minimum introduced by KCSIE 2026), using tools such as the DfE's 'Plan technology for your school' self-assessment, and that filtering and monitoring rules are applied to AI tools in line with the DfE's Generative AI: Product Safety Expectations.

- Ensure a comprehensive whole-school curriculum response is in place to enable all children to learn about and manage online risks effectively.
- Ensure all members of the school community sign an agreement regarding acceptable use of the internet, the school's ICT systems, and mobile/smart technology.
- Ensure staff, children and parents are aware that staff have the power to search children's phones, in line with DfE searching, screening and confiscation guidance.
- Ensure the school is a mobile-free environment during the school day. The only phones in the classrooms are the school phones whish are only to take pictures of schoolwork and to use to communicate in an emergency, in particular a lockdown situation.
- Staff can bring personal phones to school for their own use but will limit this to non-contact time; personal phones will remain in bags, lockers or cupboards during contact time with pupils, and staff will not take pictures or recordings of children on personal devices. We follow UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 when taking and storing photos and recordings for school use.
- Pupils must hand in their phones at the office before there are allowed to go through into the main building.

12.3 Remote Learning and Safeguarding

If children are asked to learn online at home, we follow DfE advice on safeguarding and remote education. Where the DSL has identified a vulnerable child learning remotely, a robust communication plan will be put in place (which may include remote contact, phone contact, or door-step visits), and details recorded. Where a child is open to social care, we will report through the School Attendance First Day Response Scheme and inform the child's allocated social worker.

12.4 Children Absent from School/Missing Education

A child being absent from school is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Children particularly at risk of becoming missing from education include those at risk of harm or neglect, criminal/sexual exploitation, forced marriage or FGM; from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families; from service families; at risk of travelling to conflict zones; who go missing or run away; supervised by the youth justice system; with a mental health need affecting attendance; or from new migrant families.

Our school holds at least two contact numbers for every child, used as part of the First Day Calling process. We notify the Local Authority of any child who fails to attend school regularly after reasonable enquiries, or who has been absent without permission for 10 or more continuous days, and of any child to be deleted from the admission register. Where a child leaves without a destination, we follow Sefton Council's Children Missing Education procedures.

If a parent/carer expresses an intention to remove their child to be electively home educated, we work with key professionals, including the Complementary Education Service, to coordinate a meeting to discuss the reasons and options – particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable, or has a social worker.

If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we contact parents/carers immediately while waiting with the pupil, recording this on C-POMS if the parent/carer is more than 15 minutes late. If the parent/carer does not arrive within 30 minutes, the secondary contact is used; if there is still no response within a defined period (one hour), the school will contact the Local Authority's Children's Social Care and continue to supervise and care for the child until responsibility is taken by Social Care or a parent/designated person arrives.

12.5 Missing: Children Who Run Away or Go Missing from Home or Care

Children who run away or go missing are potentially vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, offending and physical harm. As soon as the Local Authority is notified that a child has gone missing, contact will be made with parents/carers seeking consent to a Return Home Interview (RHI). To fulfil the 72-hour timescale, the school will facilitate RHIs where necessary, including releasing pupils from their timetable and providing an appropriate, safe space on site. Children aged 16 and 17 are generally considered able to consent or withhold consent to their own information being shared.

12.6 Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours – psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional – and may be a single incident or a pattern. Children can be victims in their own right, whether witnessing abuse at home or experiencing abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). Under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, behaviour is domestic abuse where A and B are aged 16 or over, personally connected, and the behaviour is abusive – including physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, or psychological/emotional abuse.

In Sefton, agencies supporting people experiencing domestic abuse include the Safer Families Practice Hub, Sefton Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA), Sefton Women & Children's Aid (SWACA), and the Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (RASA).

Our school is part of the Operation Encompass Scheme, a national police and education early intervention partnership. Police share information with schools about attended domestic abuse incidents involving any of our children prior to the start of the next school day. Our DSL and DDSLs have completed Operation Encompass Key Adult training and cascade the principles to all staff and governors.

12.7 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child under 18 into sexual activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the advantage of the perpetrator. A child may have been sexually exploited even if the activity appears consensual, and CSE does not always involve physical contact – it can occur wholly through technology.

Possible indicators include unexplained gifts or new possessions, association with others involved in exploitation, older boyfriends/girlfriends, sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy, changes in emotional wellbeing, drug/alcohol misuse, going missing, and regularly missing school.

12.8 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting, pickpocketing, vehicle crime, or committing/threatening serious violence. Perpetrators may threaten victims and families with violence or entrap them in debt. Children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, so their status as victims is not always recognised. Both boys and girls can be criminally exploited, and both may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Specific indicators of county lines exploitation include going missing and being found away from home; involvement in receiving requests for or moving drugs and money; exposure to 'plugging'; being found in a 'trap house' or hotel room linked to drug activity; owing a 'debt bond'; and having bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing. In Sefton, My SPACE is a wraparound exploitation service for young people at risk of significant harm through CSE/CCE. If a member of staff suspects CCE, they will discuss this with the DSL, who will trigger local safeguarding procedures, including referral to CHAT, the police, and consideration of a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referral.

12.9 Serious Violence

Indicators that a child may be at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime include increased absence, changes in friendships or relationships with older individuals, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm, signs of assault or unexplained injuries, and unexplained gifts or new possessions. Risk factors include being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded, having experienced maltreatment, and prior involvement in offending.

Staff should report any concern about a child using or carrying a weapon, or expressing intent to do so, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy), who will assess the risk and take appropriate action. Where a child is believed to be in immediate danger, staff must call 999 or take the child to A&E immediately.

Where there are concerns that a child may be at risk of, or involved in, gang-related activity and exploitation, we will complete the checklist in Appendix 5, in accordance with local procedures. Early Help/Family Help can be crucial in early identification, and where information suggests a child may be at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made to Sefton CHAT.

12.10 Modern Slavery/Trafficked Children

Trafficking is where children are tricked, forced or persuaded to be moved and then exploited – for sexual or criminal exploitation, benefit fraud, forced marriage, domestic or forced labour, or committing crime such as theft or county lines. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 places a statutory duty on public authorities, including schools, to notify the National Crime Agency where there are reasonable grounds to believe a person may be a victim of slavery or trafficking. We will contact the DSL where we suspect or receive information that a parent or child may be a victim, and the DSL will consider an NRM referral with CHAT.

12.11 Homelessness

Being homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless, presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The DSL is aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority. Indicators include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour, and a family being asked to leave a property. Our school works closely with the Housing Options Team where children are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

12.12 Children and the Court System

Any child involved in legal proceedings should be made known to the DSL. Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, or affected by family court proceedings following separation. Age-appropriate guides exist for children aged 5–11 and 12–17, explaining the process and special measures available, including the use of video links.

12.13 Children with Family Members in Prison

Approximately 200,000 children have a parent sent to prison each year, and are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation, and poor mental health. NICCO provides information to support professionals working with offenders and their children. Staff must inform the DSL if they know a child has a family member in prison, and our school will offer an early help/Family Help assessment if additional support is needed.

12.14 Bullying, Including Prejudice-Based Abuse, Racist Incidents, and Cyber-bullying

Foundations for LIFE School has a separate anti-bullying policy and acknowledges that allowing or condoning bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. This includes cyber, racist, homophobic and gender-related bullying. We keep a record of known bullying incidents, shared with and analysed by the Governing Board, and recognise that children with SEND and/or perceived differences are more susceptible to being bullied.

Prejudice-based abuse or hate crime is any criminal offence perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's real or perceived disability, race, religion, gender identity, or sexual orientation, and can be evidenced by threatened or actual assault, derogatory name-calling, hate graffiti, provocative behaviour, distributing offensive literature, verbal abuse, inciting hatred, or attempts to recruit pupils to organisations that sanction violence, terrorism, or hatred.

Cyberbullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend themselves, including bullying by text or call, using phone cameras to cause distress, posting threatening or humiliating material online, and hijacking or cloning email accounts. We will consider each case individually as to any criminal act that may have been committed and pass information to the police where appropriate.

12.15 Gaming

The school will raise awareness of online gaming risks by talking to parents about the games their children play, supporting the use of parental controls and safety modes, discussing boundaries and time limits, highlighting relevant resources, and making children aware of the dangers (including grooming) and how to report concerns.

12.16 Abuse Linked to Faith and Belief

The belief that an evil force has entered and is controlling a child (sometimes described using terms such as witchcraft, black magic, or possession) can, in rare cases, lead to abuse when an attempt is made to 'exorcise' or 'deliver' the child. This belief is not confined to any particular country, culture, or

religion. Any concern about a child arising in this context must be taken seriously and referred to Sefton CHAT.

12.17 Gender-Based Violence/Violence Against Women and Girls

The government's Violence Against Women and Girls strategy addresses issues including female genital mutilation, forced marriage, honour-based abuse, and teenage relationship abuse, all of which are addressed within this policy.

12.18 So-Called 'Honour-Based' Abuse (Including FGM, Forced Marriage and Breast Ironing)

So-called honour-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including FGM, forced marriage, and breast ironing, and often involves a wider network of family or community pressure. All forms of HBA are abuse and will be handled and escalated as such; staff with a concern should speak to the DSL, who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is the ritual cutting or removal of some or all of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. Indicators that FGM may have occurred, or that a girl is at risk, include difficulty walking or sitting, spending longer than usual in the bathroom, frequent urinary or menstrual problems, avoiding PE, prolonged absence, increased emotional/psychological needs, reluctance to undergo medical examinations, a family history of FGM, talk of a 'special procedure' or a long holiday to a country where FGM is prevalent, and unexpected absence.

Any teacher who is informed by a girl under 18 that FGM has been carried out on her, or who observes physical signs that FGM has been carried out and has no reason to believe it was necessary for medical reasons, must immediately report this to the police personally – a mandatory statutory duty. They should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve CHAT as appropriate, unless specifically told not to disclose. Any other member of staff who becomes aware of FGM should speak to the DSL and follow local safeguarding procedures. This mandatory reporting duty does not apply where a child is only at risk of, or FGM is suspected but not known to have occurred; staff should not examine children.

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties, where violence, threats, or another form of coercion is used, including conduct intended to cause a child to marry before their 18th birthday even without violence or threats, and including non-binding, unofficial 'marriages'. Staff are aware of the 'one chance' rule – there may be only one opportunity to speak to a potential victim and save them. Any concern should be reported to the DSL, who will speak to the child in a secure and private place, activate local safeguarding procedures, and seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit.

12.19 Preventing Radicalisation (Prevent)

The Prevent duty
All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools' and colleges' wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads and other senior leaders should familiarise themselves with the current Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023, as updated), in particular the sections that apply to schools and education settings. The guidance is organised around leadership and partnership, capabilities (understanding risk and staff training), reducing permissive environments (including IT policies and filtering and monitoring), and managing risk and making referrals.

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

Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance that aims to negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve these results (government definition, 2024).

Terrorism is an action that:

- endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people;
- causes serious damage to property; or
- seriously interferes with or disrupts an electronic system.

The use or threat of terrorism must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Schools have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk. We will assess the risk of children in our school being drawn into terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

We will ensure that suitable internet filtering and monitoring is in place, reviewed at least once every academic year, and equip our children to stay safe online at school.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period. Some young people may be drawn to violence or to a mix of ideas without a clear or single ideology; concerns should still be reported. Staff will be alert to changes in children's behaviour.

Signs that a child is being radicalised can include:

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

It is possible to intervene to prevent children who are susceptible to, or at risk of, radicalisation from being radicalised. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may need help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who may be susceptible to or at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately, which may include the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) making a Prevent referral, which may lead to support through the Channel programme.

Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be susceptible to radicalisation. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages. Guidance on Channel ("Channel duty guidance") and Prevent awareness e-learning for staff are available on GOV.UK.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (and any deputies) are aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral. As a Channel partner, the school may be asked to attend a Channel panel to discuss the individual referred, to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. See Appendix 6 – Channel flow chart.

Further information on the school's measures to prevent radicalisation is set out in other school policies and procedures, including our online safety policy.

12.20 Parental Mental Health

The term "mental ill health" is used to cover a wide range of conditions, from eating disorders, mild depression and anxiety to psychotic illnesses such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. Parental mental illness does not necessarily have an adverse impact on a child's developmental needs, but it is essential to always assess its implications for each child in the family. It is essential that the diagnosis of a parent/carer's mental health is not seen as defining the level of risk. Similarly, the absence of a diagnosis does not mean there is little or no risk.

For children, the impact of parental mental ill health can include:

- The parent/carer's needs or illness taking precedence over the child's needs.
- The child's physical and emotional needs being neglected.
- A child acting as a young carer for a parent or a sibling.
- Having restricted social and recreational activities.
- Finding it difficult to concentrate, impacting on educational achievement.
- A child missing school regularly as they are being kept at home as a companion for a parent/carer.
- Adopting paranoid or suspicious behaviour as they believe their parent's delusions.
- Witnessing self-harming behaviour and suicide attempts (including attempts that involve the child).
- Obsessive-compulsive behaviours involving the child.

If staff become aware of any of the above indicators, or others that suggest a child is suffering due to parental mental health, the information will be shared with the DSL, who will assess the situation and seek support from Sefton CHAT or other relevant agencies.

Young carers

KCSIE 2026 includes a new section on young carers. A young carer is a child who provides or intends to provide care for another person, for example a parent or sibling who is ill, disabled, has mental ill health or misuses substances. Caring responsibilities can affect a child's attendance, learning, friendships and wellbeing, and young carers may be at greater risk of neglect or of taking on inappropriate responsibilities. Staff will share any information about a child who may be a young carer with the DSL, who will consider the support available, including requesting a young carer's needs assessment from the local authority where appropriate.

12.21 Mental Health and Self-Harm

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

concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, they will act immediately and follow this policy by speaking to the DSL or a deputy. The school's senior mental health lead works closely with the DSL.

Self-harm is a way some young people cope with difficult emotions. Young people who hurt themselves often feel that physical pain is easier to deal with than the emotional pain they are experiencing, because it is tangible. But the behaviour only provides temporary relief and fails to deal with the underlying issues that a young person is facing. For some people, self-harm may last for a short time. For others, it can become a long-term problem. Some people stop self-harming for a while and return to it months or even years later, in times of distress.

Risk factors that indicate a child or young person may be at risk of harming themselves or attempting suicide can cover a wide range of life events, such as: bereavement, bullying, cyberbullying, mental health problems including eating disorders, family problems such as domestic abuse, any form of abuse, or conflict between the child and parents. Exposure to harmful online content that promotes self-harm, suicide or eating disorders is also a risk factor.

The most common forms of self-harm are:

- Cutting.
- Biting self.
- Burning, scalding, branding.
- Picking at skin, reopening old wounds.
- Breaking bones, punching.
- Hair pulling.
- Head banging.
- Ingesting objects or toxic substances.
- Overdosing with a medicine.

Self-harm is usually a secretive behaviour, but signs may include:

- Wearing long sleeves at inappropriate times.
- Spending more time in the bathroom.
- Unexplained cuts, bruises, burns or other injuries.
- Unexplained smell of antiseptic such as Dettol or TCP.
- Low mood – seeming depressed or unhappy, low self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness.
- Any mood changes – anger, sadness.
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns.
- Losing friendships, spending more time alone, and becoming more private or defensive.
- Withdrawal from activities that used to be enjoyed.
- Misuse of alcohol and/or drugs.

Foundations for LIFE School recognises that any child who self-harms or expresses thoughts about self-harm and/or suicide must be taken seriously, and appropriate help and intervention will be offered at the earliest point. Any member of staff who is made aware that a child has self-harmed or is contemplating self-harm or suicide will record and report the matter to the DSL as soon as possible, as with any other safeguarding concern. The DSL will contact the relevant agency (for example CAMHS single point of access, or emergency services where there is immediate risk). Where a child has suffered harm or is at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made to Sefton CHAT.

12.22 Child Abduction and community Safety Incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by

people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers.

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

As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start travelling to school on their own), it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. Foundations for LIFE School provides outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers as part of PSHE lessons, and also as part of careers education in preparation for going to work or college. This is very important as our pupils with SEND can be particularly vulnerable.

Our school will deliver lessons that focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers. We will contact the nominated person in Sefton Council who deals with community safety incidents.

13. What to do if staff are concerned about a child's welfare.

If staff members have concerns about a child, they should raise these with the DSL. This also includes situations of abuse which may involve staff members.

All staff are required to report any concerns in writing. On occasions, a referral is justified by a single incident such as an injury or disclosure of abuse. More often, however, concerns accumulate over a period and are evidenced by building up a picture of harm; it is crucial that staff record and pass on their concerns in accordance with these procedures to allow the DSL to build up a picture and access support for the child in question.

Staff will be particularly alert to the potential need for additional support for children who are repeatedly removed from the classroom or who are on a part-time timetable, as well as the other groups of children identified in Part one of KCSIE 2026.

The DSL will decide whether to make a referral to Sefton CHAT, but it is important to note that where a staff member feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they may refer their concerns to Sefton CHAT directly. Alternatively, the NSPCC has a whistleblowing advice line for professionals who have concerns over how child protection issues are being handled in their own or another organisation (0800 028 0285).

Where a child and family would benefit from co-ordinated support, the DSL will consider the support available through universal services and community-based early help and, where needs are greater, a referral to the targeted early help level of Family Help (in Sefton, through an Early Help Assessment and the FAST team – see section 15). An assessment should identify what help the child and family require and prevent needs escalating to a point where statutory intervention would be needed. The assessment should be undertaken by a lead practitioner who has identified that there are additional needs and that support is required from outside agencies.

If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral should be made to Sefton CHAT immediately (and the police called on 999 if the child is in immediate danger). If the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the staff member with concerns should press for reconsideration, using the Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership escalation procedure where necessary. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.

It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. Local and national child safeguarding practice reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action. Poor practice includes failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse and neglect, poor record keeping, failing to listen to the views of the child, failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve, sharing information too slowly, and a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be acting.

14. Dealing with disclosures, listening to children, notifying parents.

The way in which a member of staff talks to a child who discloses abuse could influence the evidence that is put forward if there are subsequent proceedings, and it is important that staff do not jump to conclusions, ask leading questions or put words in a child's mouth.

If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff or other adult working in school, they should write a record of the conversation as soon as possible, stating exactly, in the child's words, what has been said, and noting any action taken in cases of possible abuse. This must be signed and include the day of the week, date, time and place of the disclosure. A body map should be used when appropriate. All records must be recorded on CPOMS and/or kept securely.

Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will evaluate the concern against the Sefton Level of Need guidance and decide whether a referral is to be made to CHAT.

If a referral needs to be made, or consultation with any other agency is deemed necessary, we recognise that it is good practice to inform parents of the actions to be taken, unless this puts the child at further risk of harm.

Sefton CHAT Tel: 0151 934 4013/4481

Staff must be aware that:

- It is not the responsibility of teachers, other staff or volunteers to investigate suspected cases of abuse.
- They should not take any action beyond that agreed in the procedures established by the school and the Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP).
- They cannot promise complete confidentiality – instead they must explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe.

Listening to children

Experience and consultation with children show that a child will talk about their concerns and problems to people they feel they can trust and feel comfortable with. This will not necessarily be a teacher. It is therefore essential that all staff and volunteers know how to respond sensitively to a child's concerns, who to approach for advice about them, and the importance of not guaranteeing complete confidentiality.

Any member of staff or volunteer in our school who is approached by a child wanting to talk will listen positively and reassure the child. They will record the discussion with the child as soon as possible and act in accordance with the school's child protection procedures.

If a child chooses to disclose, the member of staff or other adult in the school will:

- Be accessible and receptive.
- Stay calm and listen carefully at the child's pace.
- Accept what is said and take it seriously.
- Reassure the child that they are right to tell.
- Tell the child that this information must be passed on, who it will be shared with and what will happen next.
- Make a written record, which should be signed and include the time, day, date, location and your position in school.
- Pass it to the DSL or deputy without delay.

Staff or other adults will never:

- Make the child feel they are creating a problem or feel ashamed for reporting abuse.
- Take photographs or examine an injury.
- Investigate or probe, aiming to prove or disprove possible abuse, or ask leading questions.

- Make promises to children about confidentiality or keeping "secrets".
- Assume that someone else will take the necessary action.
- Jump to conclusions or react with shock, anger or horror.
- Speculate or accuse anybody.
- Confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved.
- Offer opinions about what is being said or about the person/s allegedly involved.
- Forget to record what has been said.
- Fail to pass the information on to the correct person.
- Ask a child to sign a written copy of the disclosure.

For children with communication/language difficulties or who use alternative/ augmentative communication systems, staff and other adults may need to take extra care to ensure that signs of abuse and neglect are identified and interpreted correctly, but concerns should be reported in the same manner as for other children. In some cases, it may be appropriate to seek the services of a professional interpreter.

Bear in mind that some children may:

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

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

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 contact 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, parents will not be informed, and the DSL will record the reason for that decision.
Where there are concerns about fabricated or induced illness, forced marriage or so-called honour-based abuse, parents should not be informed that a referral is being made, as to do so may place the child at significantly increased risk.

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

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

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

15. Concerns about a child about a child/support services for children: Sefton CHAT and FAST

Concerns about a pupil or a disclosure should be discussed with the DSL, who will help decide whether a referral to Sefton CHAT needs to be made. If a referral is needed, the DSL should make it. However, anyone can make a referral, and if for any reason a staff member thinks a referral is appropriate and one has not been made, they can and should consider making a referral themselves. Please refer to the Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership Level of Need Guidance (current version).

It is good practice to be open and honest with families and to seek parental consent before making a referral, including where there is a child protection (Level 4) concern. However, consent is not required to make a child protection referral, and should not be sought if doing so would (as taken from the Level of Need Guidance):

- Place a person (the individual, family member, worker or a third party) at increased risk of significant harm (if a child) or serious harm (if an adult).
- Prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime – this is likely to cover most criminal offences relating to children.
- Lead to an unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm (to a child) or serious harm (to an adult).

If a pupil is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, the police or emergency services should be contacted as a priority to ensure the child's and family's safety and wellbeing. A referral should then be made to Sefton CHAT. Anybody can make a referral. CHAT: 0151 934 4013.

Where referrals are not made by the DSL, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible.

The person making the referral should provide the following information if available (the absence of information must not delay a referral):

- Full name, any aliases, date of birth and sex of the child/children.
- Full family address and any known previous addresses.
- Identity of those with parental responsibility.
- Names, dates of birth and information about all household members, including any other children in the family, and significant people who live outside the child's household.
- Ethnicity, first language and religion of the children and parents/carers.
- Any need for an interpreter, signer or other communication aid.
- Any special educational needs, disabilities or medical conditions of the child/ren.
- Whether the child/ren are registered at, or regularly attending, a school – if so, identify the school.
- Any significant recent or historical events/incidents in the child's or family's life.
- Whether the child has recently spent time abroad or recently arrived in the area.
- Cause for concern, including details of any allegations, their sources, timing and location.
- The identity and current whereabouts of the suspected/alleged perpetrator.
- The child's current location and emotional and physical condition.
- Whether the child is currently safe or needs immediate protection because of any approaching deadlines (e.g. about to be collected by the alleged abuser).
- The child's account and the parents' response to the concerns, if known.
- The referrer's relationship with and knowledge of the child and parents/carers.
- Known current or previous involvement of other agencies/professionals.
- Information regarding parental knowledge of, and agreement to, the referral.

CHAT will, in a conversation with our school, offer help and advice where there is a Level 4 safeguarding concern for a child and it is felt there is a need for a social worker-led intervention. They will talk through the issues with the person calling and both will agree next steps, which might include arranging an assessment, directing families to Early Help/Family Help services, or signposting to general support and advice in the community. The recommendations are jointly agreed; therefore, if school does not agree with the recommendations discussed, this must be made known to the CHAT social worker and, if still unresolved, escalated using the SSCP escalation procedure. It is also expected that school will speak to families about possible outcomes (such as a Child and Family assessment or Early Help

support) when they make a referral to CHAT, to ensure continued open and honest working with families. Further information: Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) (sefton.gov.uk).

Early help and Family Help: Sefton FAST

Early help intervention can be accessed by contacting the FAST team (Family Advice and Support Team) on 0151 934 4545. FAST is dedicated to supporting the Early Help offer for Sefton children and families and is the first point of contact for accessing support and advice about Early Help. Referrals are consent-led by parents and carers. The referrer needs to provide family details and a clear understanding of the support requested to ensure families receive intervention promptly.

The FAST team works closely with Early Help services and partner agencies to achieve the best outcomes for children and their families. The team will have a discussion with the referrer/family to identify how families can get the right support at the right time. This may include help with behavioural difficulties, domestic abuse, managing family conflict, parental support, maintaining positive relationships and strategies to improve home life.

Early help is everyone's responsibility; working together gets the best outcomes for families. Please refer to the Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership Level of Need Guidance and consider Levels of Need 2 and 3 when making a referral to FAST. Information can be found at Family Advice and Support Team (sefton.gov.uk).

KCSIE 2026 uses the terms "universal services and community-based early help" and "the targeted early help level of Family Help", in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. In Sefton, FAST and Early Help Assessments are how our school accesses this support.

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

At our school we recognise that children can abuse other children. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "boys will be boys" or "part of growing up", as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children. We also recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse, and the influence of misogynistic content online. However, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the child who has been harmed and the child who is alleged to have caused the harm.

Child-on-child abuse is when children abuse other children. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of school and online. All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- Discriminatory behaviour, including racism, faith-targeted abuse and other prejudice-based incidents.
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children.
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or engage in sexual activity with a third party.
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (images and/or videos). This includes images that have been digitally altered or wholly generated using AI, sometimes described as "deepfakes". All such incidents require a safeguarding response.

- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.
- Initiation/hazing-type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Where children abuse other children online, this can take the form of, for example, abusive, harassing and misogynistic messages; the non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, especially around chat groups; and the sharing of abusive images and pornography with those who do not want to receive such content.

Child-on-child abuse can include grooming children for sexual and criminal exploitation. In areas where gangs are prevalent, older children may attempt to recruit younger children using any or all of the above methods. Children and young people suffering from criminal and sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people under threat of violence.

Response from school to the allegation

When an allegation is made by a child against another child, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a child protection/safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern:

- Our Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed.
- A factual record will be made of the allegation, but no attempt should be made at this stage to investigate the circumstances.
- Our DSL will have a conversation with CHAT. It is possible that they may already be aware of safeguarding concerns around this young person.
- The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome, and keep a copy in both children's files.
- If the allegation indicates a potential criminal offence has taken place, the police should be contacted at the earliest opportunity and parents informed (of both the child being complained about and the alleged victim).
- It may be appropriate to suspend the child being complained about for a period according to Foundations for LIFE School's behaviour policy and procedures, having regard to the DfE suspension and permanent exclusion guidance.
- Where neither Sefton CHAT nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough school investigation should take place into the matter using the school's usual disciplinary procedures.
- In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative supervision plan. This will include considering school transport as a potentially vulnerable place for a victim or alleged perpetrator(s). The plan should be monitored, and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned.
- If the incident is a criminal offence and there are delays in the criminal process, the DSL will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required) while protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator. We will ask the police if we have any questions about the investigation. Everything will be recorded on CPOMS and we will offer therapeutic support to any pupils involved.
- The DSL will take the lead role in any disciplining of the alleged perpetrator(s). We will provide support at the same time as taking any disciplinary action.

Our staff understand that, even where child-on-child abuse is not being reported, it does not mean it is not happening.

17. Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children/ harmful sexual behaviour.

Foundations for LIFE School follows Part five of KCSIE 2026, "Child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence", which has been substantially revised for 2026.

At Foundations for LIFE School we recognise that sexual violence and/or sexual harassment can happen anywhere, including educational settings. Where concerns of sexual violence or sexual harassment are witnessed, disclosed or reported to the school (including those that have happened outside of school), the concern will be taken seriously. We recognise that children's sexual behaviour exists on a continuum, from harmful sexual behaviour through to sexual violence; that sexual violence and harassment may overlap; and that they can occur online and face to face (both physical and verbal). They are never acceptable.

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

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any sex. They can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. It is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence, and that boys will be the perpetrators; however, boys can also be victims and will be supported in the same way.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable at Foundations for LIFE School. Behaviours such as making sexual remarks, grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia are not "banter" or "having a laugh" and will never be tolerated.

At our school, if a victim reports an incident, our staff will:

- Reassure the child that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A child should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment, nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Reassure victims that the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them, not criminalise them.

The school will also:

- Regularly review decisions and actions, and update policies with lessons learnt.
- Look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, and decide on a course of action where we identify any patterns.
- Consider whether there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled inappropriate behaviour to occur, and whether revising policies and/or providing extra staff training could minimise the risk of it happening again.
- Remain alert to the possible challenges of detecting signs that a child has experienced sexual violence, and show sensitivity to their needs.
- Be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with safeguarding partners.
- Support children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. We will do all we can to make sure the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed.

Foundations for LIFE School recognises that the following children can be especially vulnerable to sexual violence and sexual harassment:

- Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) or gender questioning, or who are perceived to be by their peers.
- **Sexual violence:** Sexual violence refers to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003:

- **Rape:** A person (A) commits an offence of rape if he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Assault by penetration:** A person (A) commits an offence if s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Sexual assault:** A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Consent:** Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, or with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. A child under 13 can never consent to sexual activity, and sexual activity with a child under 16 is an offence regardless of whether they agreed to it.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is "unwanted conduct of a sexual nature" that can occur online and offline. Sexual harassment is likely to violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Sexual harassment can include:

- Sexual comments, such as telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, and calling someone sexualised names.
- Sexual "jokes" or taunting.
- Physical behaviour, such as deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes, and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature.
- Online sexual harassment, which might include: non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (including AI-generated or digitally altered images); sharing unwanted explicit content; inappropriate sexual comments on social media; exploitation; coercion and threats. Online sexual harassment may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment.
- Misogynistic comments or behaviour of a sexual nature.

Harmful sexual behaviour

Children's sexual behaviours exist on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Harmful sexual behaviour refers to problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviours which are developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. For more information see the NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework (learning.nspcc.org.uk).

When considering harmful sexual behaviour, the ages and stages of development of the children are critical factors. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example because the older child is disabled. A useful tool is the Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool.

Harmful sexual behaviour will be considered in a child protection context.

Foundations for LIFE School recognises that children displaying harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced their own abuse and trauma, and they will be offered appropriate support.

Foundations for LIFE School has a clear set of values and standards, and these will be upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. The school has a Behaviour Policy and an Anti-

Bullying Policy. Our RSHE and PSHE curriculum, taught in line with the DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance in force from September 2026, covers the following issues according to the age and stage of development of the children:

- Healthy and respectful relationships, and what respectful behaviour looks like.
- Consent.
- Gender roles, stereotyping and equality.
- Body confidence and self-esteem.
- Prejudiced behaviour, including misogyny and racism.
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment are always wrong.
- Addressing cultures of sexual harassment.
- Online safety, including the risks of sharing nudes, AI-generated images and harmful online content.

Upskirting

Foundations for LIFE School will ensure that all staff and children are aware that the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 criminalises the act of "upskirting". Upskirting involves placing equipment such as a camera or mobile phone beneath a person's clothing to take a voyeuristic photograph without their permission. It is not confined to victims wearing skirts or dresses and applies equally to anyone wearing kilts, cassocks, shorts or trousers. It is often carried out in crowded public places, which can make it difficult to notice offenders. Incidents of upskirting in the school will not be tolerated.

Responding to allegations of sexual harassment and sexual violence

If staff have any concerns about sexual violence or sexual harassment, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures in section 14 and pass the concern to the DSL immediately.

Foundations for LIFE School will make decisions on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL (or a deputy) taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies such as Sefton CHAT and the police as required. Decisions will be evidence-based and recorded, including the reasons for them. The management of children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviour is complex, and Foundations for LIFE School will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community.

Our school will complete a risk and needs assessment for all reports of sexual violence that take place both on and offline. The need for a risk and needs assessment for reports of sexual harassment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The assessment will consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support.
- The alleged perpetrator, including their own support needs.
- All the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them.

See Appendix 7 – Risk assessment: sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Foundations for LIFE School will ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to safeguard and support the victim, the alleged perpetrator and the school community.

The DSL will meet the victim's parents or carers with the victim present to discuss what arrangements are being put in place to safeguard the victim, and understand their wishes in terms of the support they may need and how the report will be progressed.

If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL should consider whether the child and/or the person who made the allegation needs help or may have been abused by

someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to Sefton CHAT may be appropriate.

If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it.

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation (Stop It Now) provides support, advice and information on preventing harmful sexual behaviour, links to organisations and helplines, and resources about harmful sexual behaviour by children, internet safety, sexual development and preventing sexual abuse: https://www.stopitnow.org.uk/

18. Partnership with parents and carers.

The school shares a purpose with parents to educate, keep children safe from harm and have their welfare promoted. We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly.

We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission, or it is necessary to do so to protect a child (see section 21).

The school will, in most circumstances, endeavour to discuss all concerns about their children with parents. There may, however, be exceptional circumstances when the school will discuss concerns with Sefton CHAT and/or the police without parental knowledge. The school will always aim to maintain a positive relationship with all parents.

This policy is published on the school website (https://foundationsforlife.co.uk/policies/) and a paper copy is available on request.

19. Working with professionals / multi-agency working.

The school recognises and is committed to its responsibility to work with other professionals and agencies, both to ensure children's needs are met and to protect them from harm. We will endeavour to identify those children and families who may benefit from the intervention and support of external professionals and will seek to enable referrals (in discussion with parents) as appropriate. Information on the Early Help Assessment process is available at: Early Help (sefton.gov.uk).

Our school is part of the "Team Around the School" initiative. With parents' consent, we will work with other professionals, for example from early help/Family Help, education and health, to identify the best package of support for the child and family.

Schools are not the investigating agency when there are child protection concerns and thus the school will pass all relevant cases to the statutory agencies, which we will support in undertaking their roles. Staff should understand that alongside this, the school may have a crucial role in supporting the child while investigations and assessments take place.

Multi-agency working: The school recognises the importance of multi-agency working and will ensure that staff are enabled to attend relevant safeguarding meetings, including Child Protection Conferences, Core Group meetings, Strategy Meetings, Child in Need meetings and Early Help/Family Help/Team Around the Family meetings. Education is a relevant agency under the local safeguarding arrangements, and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 strengthens the role of education in those arrangements. We will contribute to the Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership's arrangements as required and share information in line with the new information sharing duty (see section 21).

We will also work with local partners, families and communities in our efforts to ensure our school understands and embraces our local context and values in challenging extremist views, and to assist in broadening our children's experiences and horizons. We will help support pupils who may be vulnerable to such influences as part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities, offering support and assistance from external agencies where required.

20. Supervision

At Foundations for LIFE School, supervision provides support, coaching and training for staff and promotes the interests of children. It fosters a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.

Supervision provides opportunities for staff to:

- discuss any issues, particularly concerning children's development or wellbeing;
- identify solutions to address issues as they arise; and
- receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness.

Regular staff appraisals are carried out to review practice and ensure it improves, identify any training needs and secure opportunities for continued professional development.

Staff will be supported and supervised by the Headteacher. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be supported by the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors, and will have access to external safeguarding supervision where available.

Any member of staff affected by issues arising from concerns for a child's welfare or safety can seek support from the DSL. The DSL can put staff and parents in touch with outside agencies for professional support if they wish.

21. Confidentiality

Effective sharing of information between practitioners and local organisations and agencies is essential for early identification of need, assessment and service provision to keep children safe. Child safeguarding practice reviews have highlighted that missed opportunities to record, and to understand the significance of sharing information in a timely manner, can have severe consequences for the safety and welfare of children.

We will adopt the information sharing principles detailed in statutory safeguarding guidance contained within:

- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- HM Government Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Information sharing duty: statutory guidance (DfE, 2026)
- Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership policies and procedures.

Timely information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding. This school will share safeguarding information as appropriate in keeping with the principles outlined in the government guidance Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (DfE, 2024). This guidance supports practitioners in the decisions they take to share information, which reduces the risk of harm to children and young people and promotes their wellbeing.

The new information sharing duty

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 introduces a new information sharing duty which takes effect from 30 September 2026. It requires safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including schools, to share information proactively with each other where it is relevant to safeguarding or promoting the welfare of a child, unless sharing the information would be more detrimental to the child than not sharing it. Information shared must be relevant, necessary and proportionate. The DSL will be familiar with the Information sharing duty statutory guidance and will make sure staff understand when information should be shared, with whom, and the limited circumstances in which sharing may not be appropriate.

Safeguarding and child protection information is confidential and personal. Other than the agreed communication lines in school, it is for the DSL(s) to decide what information needs to be shared, with whom, how and when, and whether consent needs to be gained.

Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests.

If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about sexual violence or sexual harassment:

- There is no definitive answer, because even if a victim does not consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there is another legal basis under data protection law that applies.
- The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children.

The DSL should consider that:

- Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk).
- The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care (Sefton CHAT).
- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. While the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the police remains.

Regarding anonymity, all staff will:

- Be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system.
- Do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, for example by carefully considering which staff should know about the report and any support for children involved.
- Consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities.

If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the DSL (or deputy).

In KCSIE 2026, "data protection law" means the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 together. Data protection law does not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Where appropriate, practitioners can share special category personal data (such as health information) for safeguarding purposes without consent. Information which is sensitive and personal will be treated as special category personal data for the purposes of compliance with data protection law.

Legal and secure information sharing between schools, Sefton CHAT and other local agencies is essential for keeping children safe and ensuring they get the support they need. Information can be shared without consent where there is good reason to do so and sharing will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner – for example where it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot reasonably be expected that a practitioner gains consent, or gaining consent would place a child at risk.

Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of promoting the welfare and protecting the safety of children. As with all data sharing, appropriate organisational and technical safeguards will be in place.

Under data protection law, schools are permitted to withhold children's personal data where, for example, a child is in a refuge or other form of emergency accommodation and providing the information would place the child at risk.

All staff are made aware that they cannot keep secrets or offer absolute confidentiality to children, and that if a child discloses abuse or gives information that suggests they may be at risk, this MUST be passed on to the DSL as soon as possible. The child should be told who their disclosure will be shared with and what will happen next.

22. Record keeping /child protection file

Any concerns about a child will be recorded in writing as soon as possible. All records will provide a factual and evidence-based account, and there will be accurate recording of any actions. Records will be signed, dated and, where appropriate, witnessed. Where an opinion or professional judgement is recorded, this should be clearly stated as such.

At no time should an individual teacher/member of staff or the school be asked to, or consider, taking photographic evidence of any injuries or marks on a child's body; this type of behaviour could lead to the staff member being subject to managing allegations procedures. The body map should be used in accordance with the guidance (Appendices 11 and 12). Any concerns should be reported and recorded without delay to the appropriate safeguarding services, e.g. CHAT or the child's social worker if the case is already open to social care.

A chronology will be kept on the child's record. Staff, particularly pastoral staff, will record any minor concerns on the chronology and will take responsibility for alerting the Designated Safeguarding Lead should the number of concerns rise or, in their professional judgement, become significant. All information is recorded on CPOMS, with actions recorded for each concern, and reports can be downloaded and shared with the pupil's social worker if they already have one, or with the appropriate safeguarding team from the authority for the area in which the pupil lives.

Child protection file

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that child protection files are kept up to date. Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child. Records should include:

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

The DSL should ensure the file is only accessed by those who need to see it, and where the file or its content is shared, this happens in line with the information sharing advice set out in KCSIE 2026.

Where children leave the school (including in-year transfers), the DSL should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. When we receive a child protection file, the DSL will ensure key staff such as the SENCO are aware as required.

Where there is an existing risk management plan/assessment in place for behaviours that are deemed potentially harmful to the pupil or others (i.e. self-harming or harmful sexual behaviour), this information must be shared with the destination provision before the pupil starts, so that appropriate care and control measures can be put in place to reduce the risk of further harm. The DSL will also consider whether it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving, for example before a transition programme.

Why recording is important

Our staff will be encouraged to understand why it is important that recording is comprehensive and accurate, and what the messages from child safeguarding practice reviews are in terms of recording and sharing information. It is often when a chronology of information is pieced together that the level of concern escalates or the whole or wider picture becomes known.

We acknowledge that without information being recorded it can be lost. This could be crucial information, the importance of which is not always apparent at the time. On occasions, this information could be crucial evidence to safeguard a child or be evidence in future criminal proceedings.

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. Original notes will be retained (but clearly identified as such) as this is a contemporaneous account; they may be important in any criminal proceedings arising from current or historical allegations of abuse or neglect.

A record will be made of all incidents where pupils have expressed racist, faith-targeted, homophobic, misogynistic, extremist or radical views, which will be monitored at a senior level.

A record of the number of children open to and subject to Early Help/Family Help, Child Protection, Child in Need and Looked After Children plans is maintained and shared with the governing body annually. A record of the cohort of children who have or have had a social worker and social care involvement will be maintained.

Our school will keep and store records where a concern about a child has been identified in accordance with KCSIE 2026 and data protection law.

Our school will ensure all our files will be available for external scrutiny, for example by a regulatory agency or as part of a child safeguarding practice review or audit.

23. Managing Allegations or safeguarding concerns against a member of staff or person in school.

These procedures follow Part four of KCSIE 2026 and must be followed in any case in which it is alleged that a member of staff (including supply staff, trainee teachers and contractors), governor, visiting professional or volunteer has met the harm test. This includes where an adult has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children. (This includes any behaviour that may have happened outside of school that might make the individual unsuitable to work with children. This is known as transferable risk.)

All adults working in school have a duty to disclose to the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors/Proprietor where appropriate) where their relationships and associations, both within and outside of the workplace (including online), may have implications for safeguarding children in school.

Examples of behaviours that would warrant an allegation or safeguarding concern about a member of staff could include:

- Physical, for example intentional use of force as a punishment, slapping, use of objects to hit with, throwing objects or rough physical handling (see section 25).
- Emotional, for example intimidation, belittling, scapegoating, sarcasm, lack of respect for children's rights, and attitudes which discriminate on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sex, disability or sexuality.
- Sexual, for example sexualised behaviour towards pupils, grooming, sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, and sending inappropriate messages through social media and other technologies.
- Neglect, which may include failing to act to protect a child or children, failing to seek medical attention, or failure to carry out an appropriate risk assessment.

A safeguarding complaint that meets the above criteria must be reported to the Headteacher immediately. If the complaint involves the Headteacher, then the next most senior member of staff must be informed – this is Ross Flanagan, Deputy Headteacher – and the Chair of Governors and the Proprietor of the school must also be informed. In our school, Helen Webster is the DSL, Bill Doherty is the Chair of Governors and Alex Aresti is the Proprietor. They will follow the processes outlined in this section.

Where the Headteacher determines that a safeguarding concern does not meet the harm threshold in line with the criteria above, they will refer the matter to be managed in line with Part four of KCSIE 2026 as a low-level concern, by a designated manager with appropriate safeguarding training. It is important for the Headteacher to carefully consider who in school is best placed to manage concerns that do not meet the harm threshold, and to ensure appropriate action is taken, given the sensitive and confidential nature of the information relating to staff over time. In many cases the Headteacher may decide to retain this role if they have appropriate safeguarding training.

Low-level concerns

All staff must fully understand that any adult behaviours that deviate from the Guidance for Safer Working Practice, our staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, are a concern, even if they are low-level. Staff in our school can share low-level concerns confidentially, and staff are encouraged to self-refer where they find themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted or might appear compromising.

Low-level concerns are concerns that do not meet the harm test/allegations threshold. Examples of such behaviour, as outlined in KCSIE 2026, include:

- Being over-friendly with children.
- Having favourites.
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy.
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or
- Humiliating pupils.

If we are in any doubt as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold, we will consult our Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Procedure

The case manager should ensure that the child is not at risk and, where appropriate, ensure that the child is referred to Sefton CHAT.

The case manager should gather as much information about the alleged incident as necessary to establish whether there is substance to the allegation. Where the case manager determines that the harm test has not been met, they must ensure that there is a clear record of the incident, including any actions taken to address the concern (including whether any Schools Personnel/HR advice has been sought and actioned). This will be completed on the low-level concerns form (see Appendix 8).

This record must be kept confidential, stored securely and comply with data protection law. All low-level concern records will be kept at least until the individual leaves the school's employment. Records will be reviewed so that any patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified; where a pattern is identified, the school will decide on a course of action, which may include referral to the LADO.

Where the case manager has sufficient information to suggest that the harm test/allegations threshold has been met, the case manager must use the LADO notification form (see Appendix 9) to assess the level of concern before contacting the LADO. As part of this initial consideration, the case manager should consult the school's HR adviser/provider or, in the case of a supply member of staff, the supply agency's safeguarding lead/senior manager. The completed LADO notification form must be sent to SafeguardingUnitAdmin@sefton.gov.uk within one working day of the allegation being made. This will assist the case manager and HR/supply agency senior manager, in consultation with the LADO, to decide on the most appropriate course of action, including when to inform the member of staff of the concerns raised.

Parents or carers of the child or children involved should be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it (having first agreed this with the LADO and, where involved, the police and children's social care).

The case manager must not carry out an investigation or directly interview an individual about whom there is a concern until the above process has been completed and relevant partners have been consulted.

A multi-agency allegations management strategy meeting may be arranged to look at the allegation in its widest context. The case manager must attend this meeting, which will be arranged by the LADO. All issues must be recorded, and the outcome reached must be noted to ensure closure.

In many cases it may be appropriate to provide further training and support to staff/volunteers and ensure that they are clear about the expectations for their conduct.

In more serious cases, allegations may be investigated under the formal disciplinary procedures and, where allegations are upheld, formal warnings issued as well as specific training and support. In cases where children may be at further risk and/or evidence/witnesses may be compromised and/or the allegations are so serious that they may, if upheld, constitute gross misconduct, suspension of the member of staff/volunteer may be appropriate and should be considered in line with the school's Disciplinary Policy. Suspension is not a default position and alternatives will be considered first.

The school has a legal duty to refer to the DBS any staff member or volunteer who is dismissed, or removed from working in regulated activity, for harming or posing a risk of harm to children. Similarly, where the school has a reasonable belief that the member of staff/volunteer would have been dismissed had they not resigned or left, they will be referred to the DBS. The school will keep written records of all of the above. Where a teacher has been dismissed, or would have been had they not left, and a prohibition order may be appropriate, the school will consider a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).

LADO contact: Tracey Holyhead, 0151 934 3783

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline, which is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns about child protection failures internally: 0800 028 0285 (8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday) or help@nspcc.org.uk.

24. Whistleblowing

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult, it is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Adults working in the school may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express their concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues, or for fear of harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Staff must remember that it is often the most vulnerable children who are targeted. These children need adults they can trust to safeguard their welfare.

Reasons for whistleblowing:

- Everyone has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- To protect or reduce risks to others.
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

What stops people from whistleblowing?

- Fear of starting a chain of events which spirals out of control.
- Disrupting the work or project.
- Fear of getting it wrong.
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers.

- Fear of not being believed.

How to raise a concern:

- Voice concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as possible. The earlier a concern is expressed, the easier and sooner action can be taken.
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is causing concern and why.
- Approach the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Helen Webster.
- If the concern relates to the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors should be contacted or, if it is felt that the issue needs to be reported to someone outside the school, contact Sefton CHAT or, for concerns about an adult, the LADO.
- Staff should ensure they get a satisfactory response – do not let matters rest. If a staff member feels their genuine concerns are not being addressed, the issue should be referred to Sefton CHAT or the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline (0800 028 0285).
- Ideally, concerns should be put in writing, outlining the background and history, and giving names, dates and places wherever possible.

A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

What happens next?

- The individual reporting the concern will be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries.
- The employer has a responsibility to protect individual members of staff from harassment or victimisation.
- No action will be taken against an individual if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Malicious allegations may be considered a disciplinary offence.

Self-reporting: There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered. While such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

Further advice and support: It is recognised that whistleblowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support are available from senior leaders, the HR provider and/or your professional association or trade union. The school's Whistleblowing Procedure can be found at https://foundationsforlife.co.uk/policies/

25. Restrictive Interventions including the use of reasonable force.

Please see our Behaviour Policy and Positive Handling/Restrictive Interventions Policy for further information: https://foundationsforlife.co.uk/policies/

From 1 April 2026, the DfE guidance "Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools" replaced the 2013 "Use of reasonable force" guidance, and this is reflected in KCSIE 2026. The guidance covers all restrictive interventions – physical restraint, non-physical restraint and seclusion – and treats them as a safeguarding matter as well as a behaviour matter.

The term "reasonable force" covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. "Reasonable" in these circumstances means "using no more force than is needed". The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils

or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact, such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom.

At our school, restrictive interventions will only ever be used as a last resort, when necessary and proportionate to keep the pupil or others safe, for the shortest time possible, and in the child's best interests. Force, restraint or seclusion will never be used as a punishment, as a form of discipline, or to secure compliance.

When considering any restrictive intervention in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), mental health needs or medical conditions, our school will consider the risks and carefully recognise the additional vulnerability of these groups. We will also consider our duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to making reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

At our school we are committed to planning positive and proactive behaviour management and support, with the emphasis on prevention, early support and de-escalation. Each pupil has their own behaviour support plan, which is produced in conjunction with the pupil's form tutor, the behaviour manager and the pupil, and is then shared with and discussed with the pupil's parent or carer. Plans will be reviewed after any incident involving a restrictive intervention.

Staff are trained in PRICE, which focuses on de-escalation as a priorty. Details are included in our Behaviour Management Policy.

26. Recording and reporting. The school has a statutory duty to record every significant incident involving the use of force, and every incident of seclusion or non-physical restraint, and to report these to the pupil's parents or carers. We record everything on CPOMS and also keep a folder specifically for any incident involving physical intervention of any kind. Parents and carers are always informed on the same day by a member of the senior leadership team and always offered a copy of the report. Pupils are asked if they would like to make a complaint, and staff involved have a debrief with pupils, although this may not always be on the same day if the pupil is not ready to talk about the incident. We aim to debrief within 48 hours. Where an incident gives rise to a safeguarding concern, including any injury, it will also be reported to the DSL, and any concern about a member of staff's use of force will be managed under section 23. Governors will receive regular data on restrictive interventions so they can monitor patterns and challenge practice.

27. Use of School Premises for Non-School activities.

When services or activities are provided by the governing body of our school under the direct supervision or management of our staff, all arrangements for child protection and safeguarding will apply.

Our school will seek assurance that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe, including a child protection policy, when the premises are hired, leased or rented out to organisations who provide activities and services and who are not part of the school, having regard to the DfE non-statutory guidance "Keeping children safe during community activities, after-school clubs and tuition".

If our school receives an allegation relating to an incident where an individual or organisation was using the school premises to run an activity for children, we will follow our child protection/safeguarding policies and procedures, informing the LADO, as we would with any safeguarding allegation. Procedures set out in section 23 of this policy will be followed.

We will inspect all associated documentation and ensure the organisation will liaise with the school when any concerns are raised. We will ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement) as a condition of use and occupation of the premises, and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.

28. Complaints

Our school has a published complaints procedure available to parents/carers and anyone across the school community who wishes to report concerns. Any concerns related to an allegation against a

member of staff, including volunteers and contractors, will be dealt with under the managing allegations procedures in section 23.

29. Useful contacts

Name	Telephone number / email
Sefton CHAT	0151 934 4013
Sefton FAST	0151 934 4545
Out of Hours Service	0151 934 3555
Prevent (single point of contact) – Chris White	0151 934 3370
Anti-Terrorist Hotline	0800 789 321
Merseyside Police	101 / Emergency 999
Local Authority Designated Officer – Tracey Holyhead	0151 934 3783
Education Safeguarding – Tracy McKeating	0151 934 3359
Children Missing Education Co-ordinator – Clare Johannsen	0151 934 3181
CAMHS (single point of access)	0151 282 4527
Bully Busters	0800 169 6928
Sefton Women & Children's Aid (SWACA)	0151 922 8606
Operation Encompass – Pippa Wilcox	Phillippa.Wilcox@merseyside.police.uk
Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA)	0151 934 5142
VENUS	0151 474 4744
Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre (RASA) Sefton	0151 558 1801
Parenting 2000	01704 380047 / 0151 932 1163
Housing Options	0151 934 3541
Change Grow Live drug and alcohol service (Bootle/Southport)	0151 203 9755 / Sefton.Services@cgl.org.uk
Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership Business Manager – Tracy Overs	0151 934 4706
Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership Administrator – Donna Atkinson	0151 934 4706
SENDIASS (Barnardo's)	0333 323 8003 / sefton.sendiass@barnardos.org.uk
Forced Marriage Unit	020 7008 0151 / fmu@fcdo.gov.uk
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	0800 028 0285 / help@nspcc.org.uk

Contacts for children who attend school in Sefton but live in neighbouring local authorities

Local authority	Telephone number	Out of hours
Liverpool Careline	0151 233 3700	0151 233 3700 (same as Careline)
Knowsley MASH	0151 443 2600	0151 443 2600 (same as MASH)
Lancashire Care Connect	0300 123 6720	0300 123 6722

APPENDIX 1: STATUTORY FRAMEWORK – KEY STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY GUIDANCE

In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, Foundations for LIFE School will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and the Governance Handbook.
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (HM Government, 2015).
- Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.
- Part 1 of the schedule to the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015, which places a duty on non-maintained special schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.
- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children.
- The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, including the new information sharing duty (from 30 September 2026), and the Information sharing duty: statutory guidance (DfE, 2026).
- The Crime and Policing Act 2026, which removed the "supervision exemption" from the definition of regulated activity with children (see Appendix 2).
- The Data Protection Act 2018, the UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 (together, "data protection law"), and Information sharing: advice for practitioners (DfE, 2024).
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.
- Statutory multi-agency guidance on FGM, which sets out responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM.
- The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 and the Forced Marriage Unit's statutory guidance and multi-agency practice guidelines.
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children.
- Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended by the Crime and Policing Act 2026), which defines "regulated activity" in relation to children.
- Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023, as updated), which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.
- The Human Rights Act 1998, which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).
- The Equality Act 2010, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and race). This means our governors and Headteacher should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils with regard to these characteristics. The Act allows our school to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils (where we can show it is proportionate). This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there is evidence that they are being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment.

- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence; homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying; or racial or faith-based discrimination.
- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (Safer Recruitment Consortium, latest edition).
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (UK Council for Internet Safety, latest edition).
- Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (DfE, in force from 1 April 2026).
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance (in force from 1 September 2026).
- DfE guidance on mobile phones in schools, filtering and monitoring standards (Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges) and Generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education.
- Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, statutory guidance) and Children Missing Education – statutory guidance for local authorities (DfE).
- When to call the police – guidance for schools and colleges (NPCC, 2020).
- Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021.
- Keeping children safe during community activities, after-school clubs and tuition: non-statutory guidance for providers running out-of-school settings (GOV.UK).
- Schools and colleges are under a statutory duty to cooperate with the published Sefton safeguarding arrangements (Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership).

APPENDIX 2: SAFER RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT VETTING

The school aims to create a culture of safer recruitment by adopting procedures that help deter, reject or identify people who may be a risk to the safety of children. These procedures follow Part three of KCSIE 2026.

Changes to regulated activity from 2026

The Crime and Policing Act 2026 removed the "supervision exemption" from regulated activity. As a result, anyone who volunteers in a role that involves teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children is now in regulated activity if they do so regularly (for example, on more than three days in any 30-day period, or overnight), even if they are supervised by another member of staff. These volunteers require an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information. We have reviewed all volunteer roles and our single central record to reflect this.

Teacher sanctions and restrictions from outside the UK

From 1 January 2021, the TRA Teacher Services system no longer maintains a list of teachers who have been sanctioned in EEA member states. We will carry out the overseas checks described below instead.

Advert to recruit

Our advert will state:

- Our school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- That safeguarding checks will be undertaken, including online searches for shortlisted candidates.
- The safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of the role, such as the extent to which the role will involve contact with children.
- Whether or not the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020. If the role is exempt, certain spent convictions and cautions are "protected", so they do not need to be disclosed, and if they are disclosed, we cannot take them into account.

Application forms

Our application forms will include:

- A statement saying that it is an offence to apply for the role if an applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children (where the role involves this type of regulated activity).
- A copy of, or link to, our child protection and safeguarding policy and our policy on the employment of ex-offenders.

Shortlisting

When shortlisting candidates, our process will:

- Involve at least two people.
- Consider any inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment and the reasons given for them.
- Explore all potential concerns.

All shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children, so that they can share relevant information and discuss it at interview. The information we will ask for includes:

- Whether they have a criminal history.
- Whether they are included on the barred list.
- Whether they are prohibited from teaching.
- Information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales.
- Any relevant overseas information.
- A signed declaration confirming the information they have provided is true.

We will inform shortlisted candidates that our school will carry out online searches as part of due diligence, to help identify any incidents or issues that have happened and are publicly available online, which we may explore with them at interview (KCSIE 2026 Part three).

Employment history and obtaining references

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

When seeking references, we will:

- Not accept open references.
- Liaise directly with referees and verify any information contained within references with the referees.
- Ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer and completed by a senior person. Where the referee is school-based, we will ask for the reference to be confirmed by the headteacher/principal as accurate in respect of disciplinary investigations.

- Obtain verification of the candidate's most recent relevant period of employment if they are not currently employed.
- Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the candidate worked with children if they are not currently working with children.
- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any inconsistencies with the candidate.
- Resolve any concerns before any appointment is confirmed.

Interview and selection

When interviewing candidates, we will:

- Probe any gaps in employment, or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, and ask candidates to explain this.
- Explore any potential areas of concern to determine the candidate's suitability to work with children.
- Record all information considered and decisions made.

Pre-appointment vetting checks

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

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

- Verify their identity.
- Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity. We will obtain the certificate before, or as soon as practicable after, appointment, including when using the DBS update service. We will not keep a copy of the certificate for longer than 6 months, but when the copy is destroyed we may still keep a record of the fact that vetting took place, the result of the check and the recruitment decision taken.
- No staff will start school without a current DBS certificate that is on the update service.
- Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities.
- Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards.
- Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate.
- Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher.

We will undertake additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside the UK. These could include, where available:

- For all staff, including teaching positions: criminal records checks for overseas applicants.
- For teaching positions: obtaining a letter from the professional regulating authority in the country where the applicant has worked, confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions on that person, and/or are not aware of any reason why that person may be unsuitable to teach.

Copies of documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work and required qualifications should be kept in their personnel file.

We will check that candidates taking up a management position are not subject to a prohibition from management (section 128) direction made by the Secretary of State. Management positions are most likely to include, but are not limited to, headteachers, principals and deputy/assistant headteachers.

Regulated activity (see Annex C of KCSIE 2026) includes a person who will be:

- Responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children (whether or not they are themselves supervised); or
- Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children; or
- Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not.

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

- There are concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children; or
- An individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is; or
- There has been a break in service of 12 weeks or more.

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

- We believe the individual has engaged in relevant conduct; or
- We believe the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009; or
- We believe the "harm test" is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm); and
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left.

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

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

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

We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors, and the school will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months. Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances. We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.

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

Trainee/student teachers. Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out. Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that

the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children. In both cases, this includes checks to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006.

Volunteers. We will:

- Never allow an unchecked volunteer in school.
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity, remembering that since the Crime and Policing Act 2026 this includes supervised volunteers who regularly teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children.
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment.
- Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment, including our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Governors and proprietor. All governors and the proprietor will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information. They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity. The Chair of Governors will have their DBS check countersigned by the Secretary of State. All governors will also have the following checks:

- Identity.
- Right to work in the UK.
- Other checks deemed necessary if they have lived or worked outside the UK.

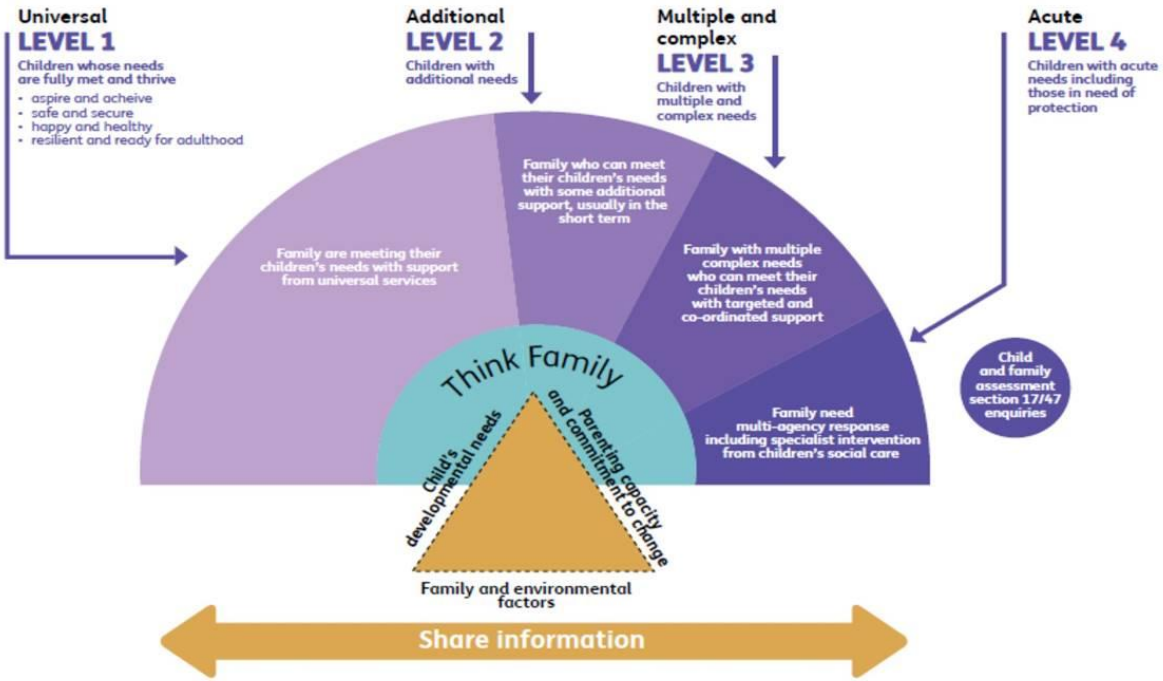
Alternative provision. Where we place a pupil with an alternative provision provider, we retain responsibility for the pupil's safeguarding. We will carry out our own due diligence and quality assurance to ensure the provision is appropriate for meeting each child's individual needs, having regard to the DfE voluntary national standards for non-school alternative provision. We obtain written confirmation from the provider that they have carried out the appropriate safeguarding checks on individuals working there that we would otherwise perform. We will keep arrangements under regular review, including attendance and safeguarding information sharing. Current providers: CTS Northwest, Mode Training, Shy Lowen Horse and Pony Sanctuary, STAR – SLA.

Adults who supervise pupils on work experience. When organising work experience, we will ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm. We will also consider whether it is necessary for barred list checks to be carried out on the individuals who supervise a pupil under 16 on work experience. This will depend on the specific circumstances of the work experience, including the nature of the supervision, the frequency of the activity being supervised, and whether the work is regulated activity.

Pupils staying with host families. Where the school arranges for pupils to be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to which they are not related (for example, during a foreign exchange visit), we will request enhanced DBS checks with barred list information on those people. Where the school is organising such hosting arrangements overseas and host families cannot be checked in the same way, we will work with our partner schools abroad to ensure that similar assurances are undertaken prior to the visit.

The Safeguarding Windscreen

The safeguarding "windscreen" illustrates that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and takes place across the continuum of need, from universal services through to statutory interventions. Understanding needs across the continuum, and how they relate to the appropriate action to be taken, ensures that the response to identified needs supports children to achieve their potential, at the right time and in the right way.



APPENDIX 3: SUMMARY OF SEFTON LEVELS OF NEED

Levels of Need – Level Descriptors (REMEMBER: Levels of Need descriptors are to be used as guidance only).

Where need is identified, an appropriate response must be taken. As every child and family is unique, the descriptors of need provided are not prescriptive or exhaustive. All needs must be considered on a case-by-case basis and decisions should be made using professional judgement.

Level	Description	Voice of the child
Level 1 – Children whose needs are fully met and who thrive	Needs met through universal services.	"Mum knows where to get help if she needs it and so I stay safe and warm in her womb."
Level 2 – Children with additional needs	Consider Early Help Assessment (universal services and community-based early help).	"Most of the time I feel happy but sometimes my family need help from other people to keep me safe."
Level 3 – Children with multiple and complex needs	Initiate Early Help Assessment (targeted early help level of Family Help).	"I'm struggling. I need help with many things. I need more help than my family can provide."

Level	Description	Voice of the child
Level 4 – Children with acute needs, including those in need of protection	Social worker-led specialist intervention required.	"I am frightened when I go home, but if I don't go back something will happen to mum or my brother. Someone make it stop."

Where a professional is unsure of the most appropriate response to identified needs, discussion with a manager or a designated safeguarding lead must take place to ensure that appropriate actions are taken.

APPENDIX 4: DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE

1. Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example as a result of maternal substance misuse. 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 caregivers);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment;
- provide suitable education.

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

The following may be indicators of neglect (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- Constant hunger.
- Stealing, scavenging and/or hoarding food.
- Frequent tiredness or listlessness.
- Frequently dirty or unkempt.

- Often poorly or inappropriately clad for the weather.
- Poor school attendance or often late for school.
- Poor concentration.
- Affection or attention-seeking behaviour.
- Illnesses or injuries that are left untreated, or repeatedly missed health or dental appointments.
- Failure to achieve developmental milestones, for example growth and weight.
- Failure to develop intellectually or socially.
- Responsibility for activity that is not age-appropriate, such as cooking, ironing or caring for siblings.
- The child is regularly not collected or received from school.
- The child is left at home alone or with inappropriate carers.

2. 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.

The following may be indicators of physical abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- Multiple bruises in clusters, or of uniform shape.
- Bruises that carry an imprint, such as a hand or a belt.
- Bite marks.
- Round burn marks.
- Multiple burn marks and burns on unusual areas of the body such as the back, shoulders or buttocks.
- An injury that is not consistent with the account given.
- Changing or different accounts of how an injury occurred.
- Bald patches.
- Symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication or poisoning.
- Unaccountable covering of limbs, even in hot weather.
- Fear of going home or of parents being contacted.
- Fear of medical help.
- Fear of changing for PE.
- Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance.
- Violence or aggression towards others, including bullying.
- Isolation from peers.
- Any bruising or injury in a baby or non-mobile child.

3. Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing, causing or inciting a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including acts of penetration with part of a person's body or an object (for example rape or assault by penetration), and non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching over clothing. It may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can happen online as well as offline, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. It is not solely perpetrated by adult males: women can also commit acts of sexual abuse,

as can other children. Children can be sexually abused within the family, an institution or a community setting, and are more likely to know their abuser than not. Children under 13 can never legally consent to sexual activity, and sexual activity with a child under 16 is an offence regardless of whether they agreed to it.

The following may be indicators of sexual abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- Sexually explicit play or behaviour, or age-inappropriate knowledge.
- Anal or vaginal discharge, soreness or scratching.
- Reluctance to go home.
- Inability to concentrate, tiredness.
- Refusal to communicate.
- Thrush, persistent complaints of stomach disorders or pains.
- Eating disorders, for example anorexia nervosa and bulimia.
- Attention-seeking behaviour, self-harm, substance misuse.
- Aggressive behaviour including sexual harassment or molestation.
- Unusual compliance.
- Regressive behaviour, enuresis, soiling.
- Frequent or open masturbation, touching others inappropriately.
- Depression, withdrawal, isolation from peer group.
- Reluctance to undress for PE or swimming.
- Bruises or scratches in the genital area.

4. 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 children 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 the 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 also involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- The child consistently describes themselves in very negative ways – as stupid, naughty, hopeless, ugly.
- Over-reaction to mistakes.
- Delayed physical, mental or emotional development.
- Sudden speech or sensory disorders.
- Inappropriate emotional responses, fantasies.
- Behaviours such as rocking, banging head, regression, tics and twitches.
- Self-harming, drug or solvent misuse.
- Fear of parents being contacted.
- Running away.
- Compulsive stealing.
- Appetite disorders – anorexia nervosa, bulimia.

- Soiling, smearing faeces, enuresis.

NB: Some situations where children stop communicating suddenly (known as "traumatic mutism") can indicate maltreatment.

5. Disabled children

When working with children with disabilities, practitioners need to be aware of additional vulnerabilities to abuse and neglect, such as:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
- Children with SEND can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs.
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.
- Being more prone to peer group isolation or prejudice-based bullying than other children.

Possible indicators of abuse and/or neglect may also include:

- A bruise in a site that might not be of concern on an ambulant child, such as the shin, might be of concern on a non-mobile child.
- Not getting enough help with feeding, leading to malnourishment.
- Poor toileting arrangements.
- Lack of stimulation.
- Unjustified and/or excessive use of restraint or seclusion.
- Rough handling, extreme behaviour modification such as deprivation of medication, food or clothing, disabling wheelchair batteries.
- Unwillingness to try to learn a child's means of communication.
- Ill-fitting equipment, for example callipers, sleep boards, inappropriate splinting.
- Misappropriation of a child's finances.
- Inappropriate invasive procedures.

6. Responses from parents

Research and experience indicate that the following responses from parents may suggest a cause for concern across all four categories:

- Delay in seeking treatment that is obviously needed.
- Unawareness or denial of any injury, pain or loss of function (for example, a fractured limb).
- Incompatible explanations offered, several different explanations, or the child said to have acted in a way that is inappropriate to their age and development.
- Reluctance to give information or failure to mention other known relevant injuries.
- Frequent presentation of minor injuries.
- A persistently negative attitude towards the child.
- Unrealistic expectations or constant complaints about the child.
- Alcohol misuse or other drug/substance misuse.
- Parents requesting removal of the child from home.
- Violence between adults in the household.

APPENDIX 5: CHILD EXPLOITATION (CE) – MULTI-AGENCY EXPLOITATION SCREENING TOOL

Sefton Council

Team:
Tel:
Email:

Multi-Agency Exploitation Screening Tool	
Details of Child:	
Family Name	
Actual DOB	
Ethnicity	
Primary Address	
Secondary Address	

Multi-Agency Exploitation Screening Tool

The purpose of the tool is to enable professionals to identify indicators which suggest a child is, or is at risk, of Exploitation, in a consistent way which facilitates sound judgement. The screening tool can be used for all children (male and female) at any point in the child's journey and with young people up to 21yrs. It can be used by any practitioner working with and supporting children or young people where there is a concern a child may be exploited.

Important points to remember when considering Exploitation:

- ✓ Both girls and boys can be victims of exploitation and are equally vulnerable. The coercer(s) and perpetrator(s) are usually adult(s), but children and young people can also act in an exploitative, abusive way towards other young people or exert power e.g., group/gang members of either gender.
- ✓ Children and young people may exchange or sell sex because of constrained choices such as poverty, isolation, and historic abuse.
- ✓ Although it is rare, parents/carers may be involved in the exploitation of their children.
- ✓ Groups of children and multiple perpetrators may be involved (organised abuse).
- ✓ No child under 13 years should be assessed as Low Risk if behaviours indicate a risk of Exploitation.
- ✓ Children with additional needs require special consideration up to the age of 21 years.
- ✓ No child with a learning disability or additional learning needs should be assessed as Low Risk if behaviours indicate involvement in or risk of exploitation.
- ✓ Be aware: disclosure of information by the child may take time and evident risks may only emerge during ongoing assessment, support, and interventions with the child and/or family.

Guidance on the use of the screening tool

- ✓ Completion of the Screening Tool should always involve liaison with other agencies to ensure multi-agency Information sharing and support.
- ✓ The screening tool is intended to assist professional judgment by considering a range of features and indications of exploitation and associated behaviours. Professionals are encouraged to go beyond the child's presenting behaviour e.g., missing or challenging behavioural to explore what else might be going on for this child/young person. This often requires a prediction of harm.
- ✓ If a child presents with one indicator, action is required. Early intervention improves the chances of positive outcomes. One indicator is unlikely to require Children's Social Work Services or specialist services intervention unless it is a Significant Risk category. Early help and prevention services within the community should always be considered.
- ✓ Assessing or screening for child exploitation should not be seen as a one- off event. Young people can move very quickly between risk categories; therefore regular assessments should be undertaken using the Screening Tool. Any escalation of risk should be referred to the named Children's Services worker or Sefton CHAT (0151 934 4013.
- ✓ Using the Screening tool will determine which the level of intervention is required dependent on the assessed level of risk. If in doubt, please contact the CHAT team on 0151 934 4013 .
- ✓ Disruption and prosecution of the perpetrator/s is also of significant importance therefore, any information which comes to light about the victim/s or perpetrator/s (however insignificant this may seem) should be passed on to the Police.

IMMEDIATE SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS:

If you are concerned that a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm, then you should dial '999' and tell the Police. If you have information which might help protect a child, you should dial 101.

To report any 'intelligence' that does not require immediate action, you can use the Merseyside Police Reporting form via this **link.**

Personal Details:	
Date form completed:	
Details of Person completing the Screening Tool:	
Name:	
Organisation/role:	
Telephone No:	
Email address:	
Young Person's Information:	
Full name	
Gender	
DoB	
LL ID Number	
Address:	
School/Education Setting	
EHCP?	Yes/No/Unknown*
*If unknown, when is it going to be obtained?	
Social Care Case Level	CP/Cared For/CIN/Not open at time of referral/YOT/Early Help
Ethnicity	
Age at time of assessment	

Alleged Perpetrators' Details (if known)

Family Name	First Name(s)	Middle Name(s)	Alternative Name:	Date of Birth:	Gender:	Ethnicity:	Age:

Risk Assessment	
Did the Child/Young Person participate in this assessment?	Yes/No*
*If yes, what are their views?	
*If no, why not?	

Significant Risk - Select all appropriate options

- ○ Previous victim of CE
- ○ Unexplained gifts or additional mobile phone/Simcard
- ○ Visiting hotels with adults/ or other young people
- ○ Visiting nightclubs with adults
- ○ Recruiting others into exploitative situations
- ○ Meeting known or unknown adults inappropriately
- ○ Being groomed to meet via the internet
- ○ Transported from town to town for sexual /or criminal activity with adults (including purchase of train tickets and taxi fares)
- ○ New Clothes / phones / money / jewellery / drugs / cigarettes
- ○ Over sexualised appearance
- ○ Associating with known CE perpetrators/ drug dealers or other victims of exploitation
- ○ Presence at hotspot CE areas such as taxi ranks, bus stations, off licences and take-aways
- ○ Information of direct involvement in exploitation
- ○ Engaging in sexual activity with adults or with peers at young age
- ○ Presence or frequenting red light areas
- ○ Other
- ○ No factors identified

Please provide further information:	

Strong Indicators of exploitation - Select all appropriate options

○ Considerable change in school performance / attendance / behaviour ○ Multiple callers to address ○ Receiving calls/text from unknown person / additional unexplained mobile phone or other mobile device ○ Self-harming and/or suicide tendencies / Substance misuse ○ Association with other victims of exploitation ○ Multiple Perceived boyfriends/girlfriends ○ Involvement in crime or anti-social behaviour	○ Regular STI's or Emergency Contraception ○ Forming relationships via internet ○ Missing or Absent from home episodes ○ Entering or leaving unknown vehicles ○ Found in areas with no known connection ○ Overly sexualised behaviour for age ○ Victim of exploitative relationships	○ Involved in gang type activity. Possessing large amount of unexplained cash. Suspicious bank account activity ○ Association with risky adults ○ Pregnancy and/or termination ○ Unexplained relationships with adults ○ Evidence of self-harming ○ Older boyfriend/girlfriend or friendship groups ○ Unexplained physical injuries	○ Exclusion from school due to behaviour – may not have been excluded - reduced timetable/alternative provision ○ Change in physical appearance - weight loss/ weight gain / external signs such as extreme fatigue or sudden increase in make-up, tattoos, piercings etc ○ Other ○ No factors identified

Please provide further information:	

Early Indicators of Child Sexual Exploitation - Select all appropriate options

○ Absent/truanting from school ○ Detached from age related activities ○ Lack of interest in education ○ Physically aggressive to other family members	○ Frequent poor behaviour ○ Secretive relationships ○ Returning home late ○ Secretive behaviour	○ Becoming estranged from family ○ Mood swings ○ Hostility towards other family members ○ Secretive about internet use	○ Change in appearance – including sudden increase in make-up or tattoos or piercings etc ○ Change in sporting or leisure activities/ interests (e.g. no longer interested in football / dancing when they used to be) ○ Other ○ No factors identified

Please provide further information:	

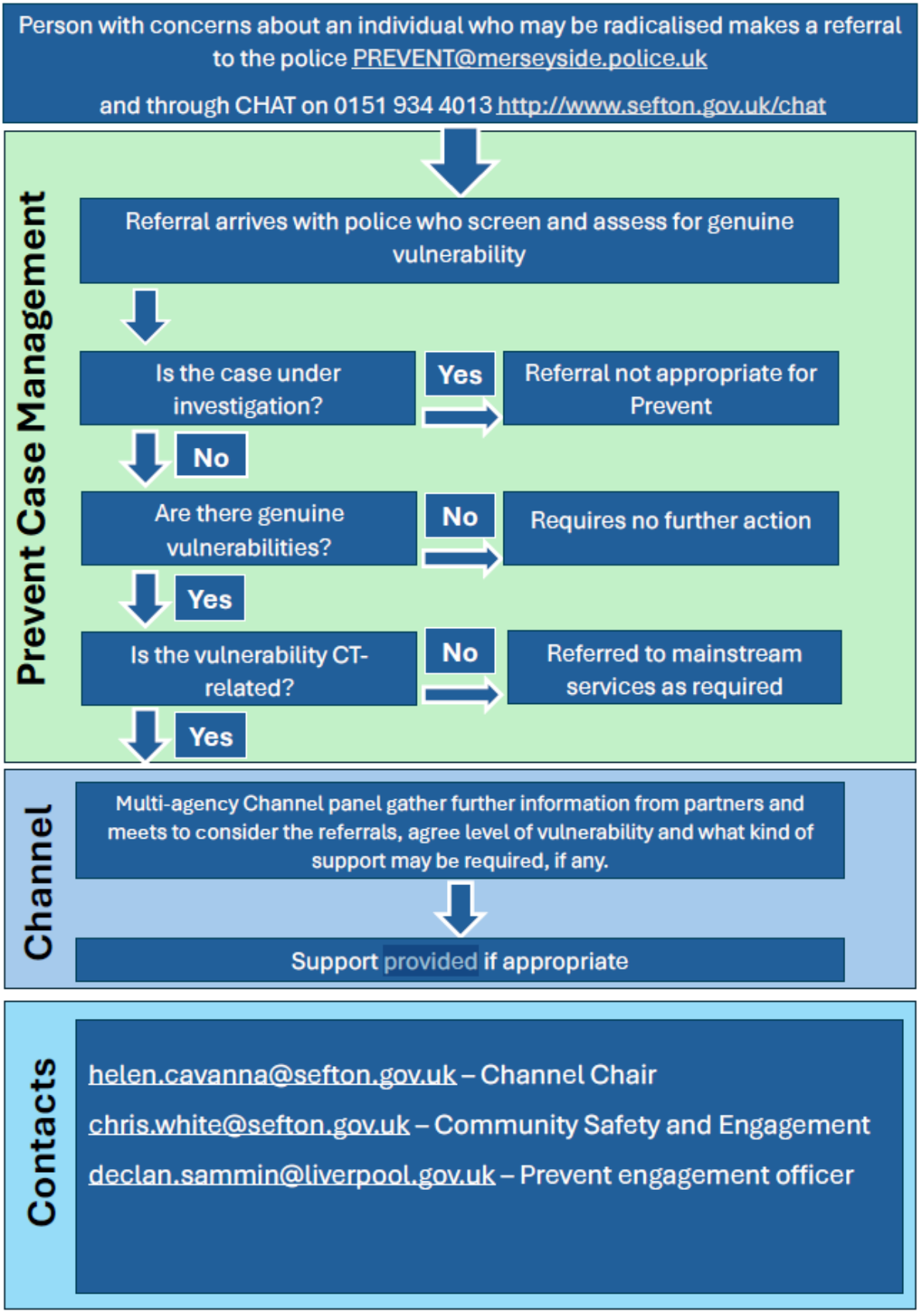
Vulnerability Factors - Select all appropriate options

○ Live in a chaotic or dysfunctional family ○ Low self-esteem or confidence ○ Parents/carers with mental health problems ○ Live in residential or foster care or unstable adoptive placement ○ Drugs or alcohol abuse	○ Mental health problems ○ Sexually active ○ Subject of bullying ○ History of sexual abuse within the family ○ Social or learning difficulties	○ Recent bereavement or loss ○ Homeless ○ Parents/carers with drugs or alcohol abuse ○ Migrant, refugee or asylum seeker ○ Unsure of their sexual orientation/ difficulties with identity	○ Previous victim of CE ○ Lack of protective factors within family unit ○ History of domestic abuse within the family ○ Other ○ No factors identified

Please provide further information:	
Additional Comments:	
Name(s) and Signature(s) of Professional(s) making this assessment	
Name:	
Organisation/role:	
Add professional? (yes/no)	
Choose the manager to authorise this form:	
Management oversight:	

Please provide your oversight:	
Child Exploitation Team Decision:	
Progress to Child Exploitation?	**Yes/No**
Is the Child/Young Person:	**Suffering significant harm through exploitation? *** **At risk of suffering significant harm through exploitation?**** ***Start Exploitation process managed by Child Exploitation.** ****Start Exploitation process and re-assign to Social Work Team Manager.**
Please provide comments:	

APPENDIX 6: PREVENT CHANNEL FLOW CHART


Person with concerns about an individual who may be radicalised makes a referral to the police PREVENT@merseyside.police.uk
and through CHAT on 0151 934 4013 http://www.sefton.gov.uk/chat
Prevent Case Management
Referral arrives with police who screen and assess for genuine vulnerability
Is the case under investigation?
Yes
Referral not appropriate for Prevent
No
Are there genuine vulnerabilities?
No
Requires no further action
Yes
Is the vulnerability CT-related?
No
Referred to mainstream services as required
Yes
Channel
Multi-agency Channel panel gather further information from partners and meets to consider the referrals, agree level of vulnerability and what kind of support may be required, if any.
Support provided if appropriate
Contacts
helen.cavanna@sefton.gov.uk – Channel Chair
chris.white@sefton.gov.uk – Community Safety and Engagement
declan.sammin@liverpool.gov.uk – Prevent engagement officer

APPENDIX 7: RISK ASSESSMENT – SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

This risk assessment should be completed with reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Part five: Child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Considerations	Risk (consider victim, alleged perpetrator, other pupils and staff)	Risk level (high/medium/low)	Actions to reduce risk	Revised risk level (high/medium/low)
What was the nature of the incident? Was it a crime? Did it involve images, including AI-generated or altered images?				
Is it necessary to limit contact between the children involved?				
Is there an actual or perceived threat from the alleged perpetrator to the victim and/or others?				
Is either the victim or the alleged perpetrator at risk of physical harm as a result of this incident (for example, bullying or "retribution" by peers)?				
Do they share classes? Do they share break times? Do they share transport to/from school?				
Are they likely to come into contact with each other (or anyone else involved in/with knowledge of the incident) outside of school? How can such contact be limited?				
Is there a risk of harm from social				

Considerations	Risk (consider victim, alleged perpetrator, other pupils and staff)	Risk level (high/medium/low)	Actions to reduce risk	Revised risk level (high/medium/low)
media and gossip?				
What are the support needs of the victim and of the alleged perpetrator? What are the victim's wishes?				

Further action taken by the school:

Action	Yes/No	Date
Police informed		
Referral to CHAT/FAST		
Referral to external support services		
Referral to internal support services		
Referral to CAMHS		
Referral to early help/Family Help		
Other		

APPENDIX 8: LOW-LEVEL CONCERN FORM

Please use this form to share any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a "nagging doubt" – that an adult may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the school's staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegation threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

You should provide a concise record – including brief context in which the low-level concern arose, and details which are chronological and as precise and accurate as possible – of any such concern and relevant incident. The record should be signed, timed and dated. Staff may also use this form to self-refer.

Field	Details
Name of staff member	

Field	Details
Concern	
Signed	
Name	
Date and time	
Received by	
Date	
Time	
Action taken	
Signed	
Date	

APPENDIX 9: LADO NOTIFICATION FORM

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST AN ADULT WHO WORKS WITH CHILDREN

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

THE CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT ARE NOT TO BE REPRODUCED, COPIED OR DIVULGED IN ANY WAY. INFORMATION IS NOT TO BE DISCUSSED WITH, OR REVEALED TO, PERSONS WHO ARE NOT REQUIRED IN THE INTERESTS OF A CHILD TO HAVE SUCH INFORMATION. ALL ENQUIRIES FOR THE USE OF ANY SUCH INFORMATION SHOULD BE MADE TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER

REFERRAL FORM

To be completed by the Senior Manager (or other designated person to provide the information) of the employing agency for the adult concerned. To be emailed directly to the SafeguardingUnitAdmin@sefton.gov.uk within one working day of the allegation being made. **Form should be completed in detail, all yellow sections are mandatory.**

DATE ALLEGED INCIDENT HAPPENED	
DATE ALLEGATION RECEIVED BY REFERRING AGENCY	
DATE ALLEGED INCIDENT REFERRED TO CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING UNIT	

1. ADULT AGAINST WHOM THE ALLEGATION HAS BEEN MADE

NAME					
DOB		**GENDER**		**ETHNICITY**	
HOME ADDRESS					
CONTACT DETAILS	**TEL:**		**EMAIL:**		
JOB TITLE					
EMPLOYER					
EMPLOYER ADDRESS &CONTACT DETAILS					
	TEL:		**EMAIL:**		

EMPLOYING AGENCY OF THE ADULT CONCERNED (WHERE ALLEGATION/INCIDENT OCCURRED)									
SOCIAL CARE		**HEALTH**		**EDUCATION**		**RESIDENTIAL**		**FOSTER CARERS**	
POLICE		**YOT**		**EARLY YEARS**		**SPORT**		**MILITARY CADETS**	
FAITH GROUP		**NSPCC**		**TRANSPORT**		**VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION**			
OTHER		**IF OTHER OR VOL. ORG. PLEASE STATE WHICH**							

2. HAVE THERE BEEN ANY PREVIOUS ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE ADULT?: YES/NO

If YES please provide details including dates and any previous referrals to the Children's Safeguarding Unit:

3. REFERRER

NAME	
JOB TITLE	
ORGANISATION	
CONTACT DETAILS (incl. Address, E-Mail & Telephone number)	

4. SENIOR MANAGER

IS THE SENIOR MANAGER OF EMPLOYING AGENCY OF THE ADULT CONCERNED AWARE OF THE ALLEGATION?
If no, please give reason why not:

5. CHILD'S DETAILS

NAME					
DATE OF BIRTH		**GENDER**		**ETHNICITY**	

CURRENT ADDRESS (inc. post code)				
CONTACT DETAILS	**TEL**		**EMAIL**	
PARENTS/CARERS				
PARENTS/CARERS ADDRESS (inc. post code)				
CONTACT DETAILS	**TEL**		**EMAIL**	

DOES THE CHILD HAVE ANY COMMUNICATION NEEDS? If so please state what:			
IS THE CHILD KNOWN TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE?		**ICS ID NO.**	
IF YES PLEASE INDICATE IN WHAT CAPACITY (Please tick):			
FAMILY SUPPORT		**CHILD PROTECTION PLAN**		**LOOKED AFTER CHILD (see below also)**	
LEGAL STATUS IF LOOKED AFTER CHILD(Please tick):			
S.20 ACCOMMODATION		**INTERIM CARE ORDER**		**CARE ORDER**		**PLACEMENT ORDER**		**SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP**	
CHILD'S SOCIAL WORKER			
CONTACT DETAILS	**TEL**		**EMAIL**	
HAS THE CHILD'S SOCIAL WORKER BEEN INFORMED? YES/NO			
If not please give reasons why not:			

6. ARE THERE ANY OTHER CHILDREN INVOLVED IN THE ALLEGATION?
(Please provide details below)

NAME & ICS No.	DATE OF BIRTH	ADDRESS & CONTACT DETAILS	PARENTS (Inc. address & contact details if different from child)

7. DOES THE ADULT CONCERNED HAVE CONTACT WITH ANY OTHER CHILDREN? YES/NO (Including their own children, grandchildren or via extended family networks/friends/youth groups/other employment etc)

NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	RELATIONSHIP TO ADULT CONCERNED	ADDRESS & CONTACT DETAILS

8. NATURE AND DETAILS OF ALLEGATION

Please indicate the nature of the allegation (Please tick):							
PHYSICAL		**SEXUAL**		**EMOTIONAL**		**NEGLECT**	
DOES THE ALLEGATION INVOLVE THE USE OF COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY?							
IF YES PLEASE INDICATE THE FORM OF COMMUNICATION USED: ie. mobile phone imagery, text, social networking site, internet etc.							

PLEASE PROVIDE FACTUAL DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT HAS BEEN SEEN OR HEARD AND BY WHOM:

9. DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIONS

RECORD OF DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS

10. DECISION

DOES THIS MATTER MEET THE CRITERIA FOR INVESTIGATION UNDER LADO PROCEDURES IN WORKING TOGETHER?	**YES/NO**
ARE ENQUIRIES BEING MADE UNDER S.47 OF THE CHILDREN ACT (1989)?	**YES/NO**
STRATEGY MEETING TO BE CONVENED	**YES/NO**
STRATEGY DISCUSSION ONLY (PLEASE TICK)	

11. ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION PROVIDED / REQUIRED

12. PERSON RECEIVING INFORMATION

MEMBER OF STAFF RECEIVING INFORMATION		**DATE:**	

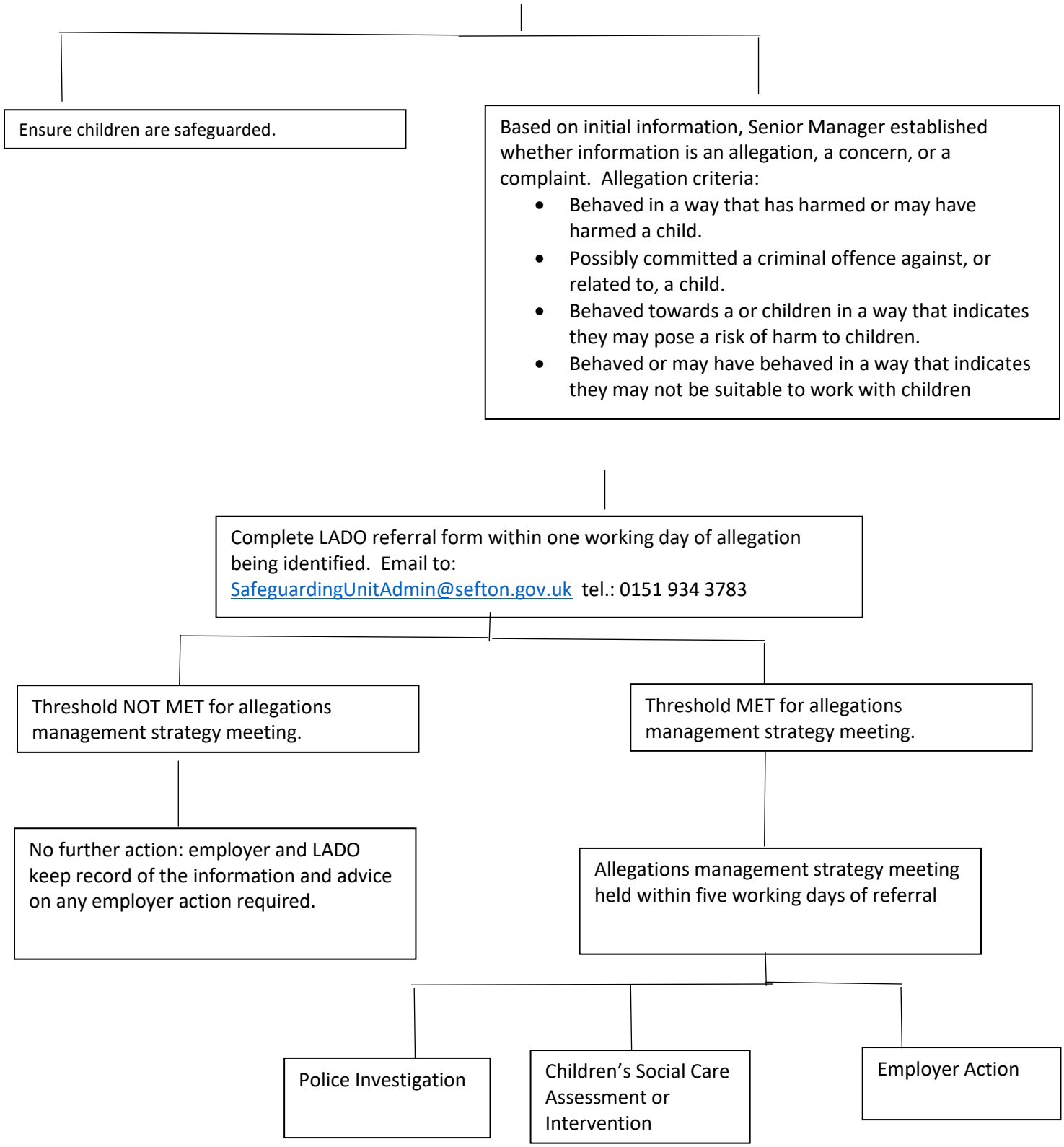
MEMBER OF STAFF COMPLETING THIS FORM		**DATE:**	

Please return the form, preferable via email to:

LADO
3rd Floor Magdalen House
Trinity Road
Bootle L20 3NJ
0151 934-3783
07814059604

SafeguardingUnitAdmin@sefton.gov.uk

APPENDIX 10: FLOWCHART FOR MANAGING ALLEGATIONS – INFORMATION FOR ALL STAFF



Text version of the above flowchart.

- Allegation made regarding a member of staff. Reported to the named senior manager (named in the employer's procedures) for consideration. Ensure children are safeguarded.
- Based on initial information, the senior manager establishes whether the information is an allegation, a concern or a complaint. Allegation criteria:
    - Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child.
    - Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child.
    - Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
    - Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
- Complete the LADO referral form within one working day of the allegation being identified. Email to SafeguardingUnitAdmin@sefton.gov.uk; tel: 0151 934 3783.
- Threshold NOT MET for an allegations management strategy meeting: no further action; employer and LADO keep a record of the information and advice on any employer action required (consider whether it should be managed as a low-level concern).
- Threshold MET: allegations management strategy meeting held within five working days of referral, leading to one or more of: police investigation; children's social care assessment or intervention; employer action.

APPENDIX 11: BODY MAP GUIDANCE

Medical assistance should be sought where appropriate.

Body maps should be used to document and illustrate visible signs of harm and physical injuries. Always use a black pen (never a pencil) and do not use correction fluid or any other eraser. Do not remove clothing for the purpose of the examination unless the injury site is freely available because of treatment.

At no time should an individual teacher/member of staff or the school be asked to, or consider, taking photographic evidence of any injuries or marks on a child or young person; this type of behaviour could lead to the staff member being subject to managing allegations procedures. The body map should be used in accordance with recording guidance. Any concerns should be reported and recorded without delay to the appropriate safeguarding services, e.g. CHAT or the child's social worker if the case is already open to children's social care.

When you notice an injury to a child, try to record the following information in respect of each mark identified (e.g. red areas, swelling, bruising, cuts, lacerations and wounds, scalds and burns):

- Exact site of injury on the body, e.g. upper outer arm/left cheek.
- Size of injury, in centimetres or inches.
- Approximate shape of injury, e.g. round/square or straight line.
- Colour of injury – if more than one colour, say so.
- Is the skin broken?
- Is there any swelling at the site of the injury, or elsewhere?
- Is there a scab/any blistering/any bleeding?
- Is the injury clean or is there grit/fluff etc.?
- Is mobility restricted as a result of the injury?
- Does the site of the injury feel hot?
- Does the child feel hot?
- Does the child feel pain?
- Has the child's body shape changed/are they holding themselves differently?

Importantly, the date and time of the recording must be stated, as well as the name and designation of the person making the record. Add any further comments as required. Ensure first aid is provided where required and recorded. A copy of the body map should be kept on the child's child protection file.

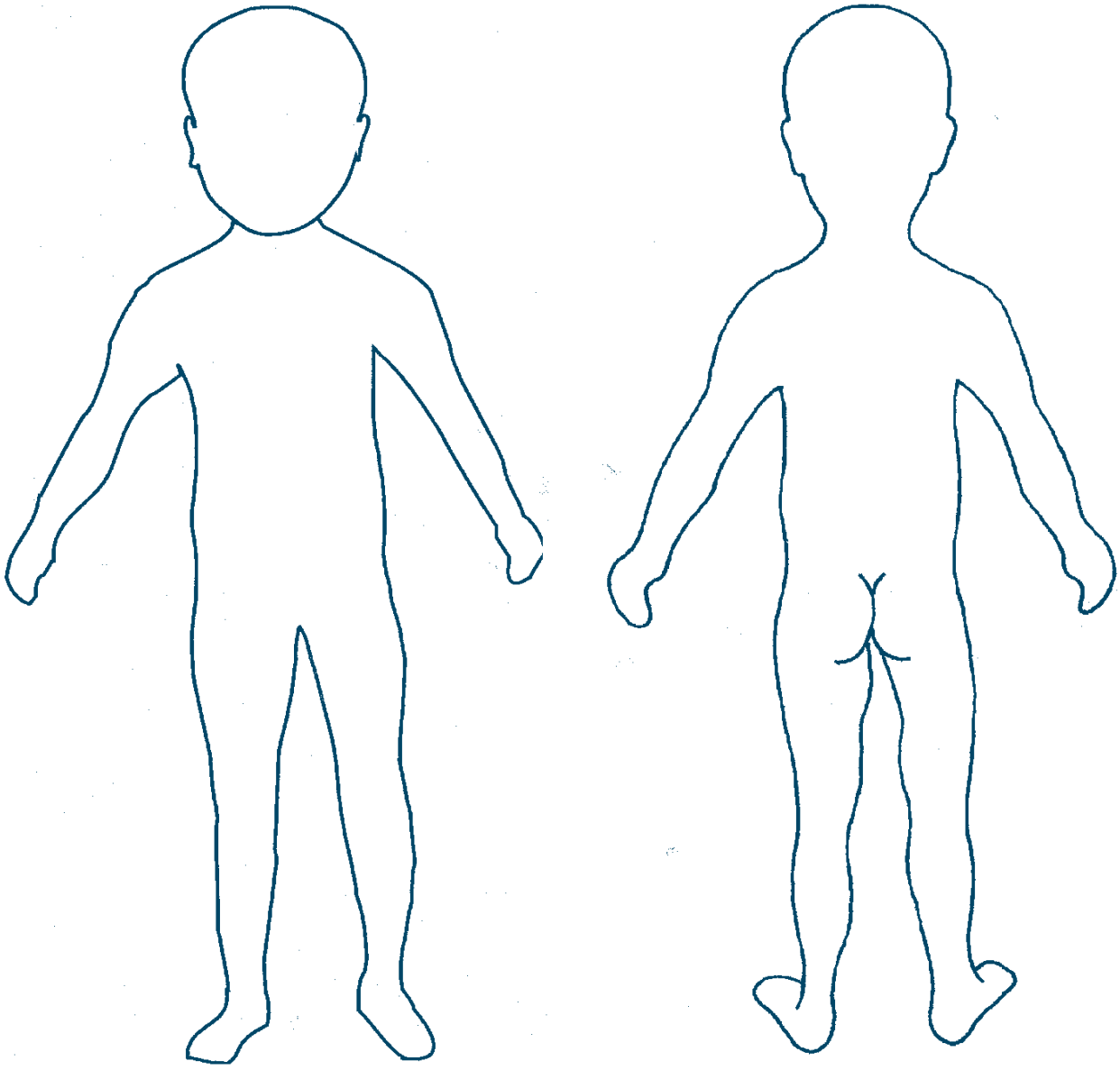
APPENDIX 12: BODY MAP

This must be completed at time of observation

Name of Pupil: ..... Date of Birth: .....

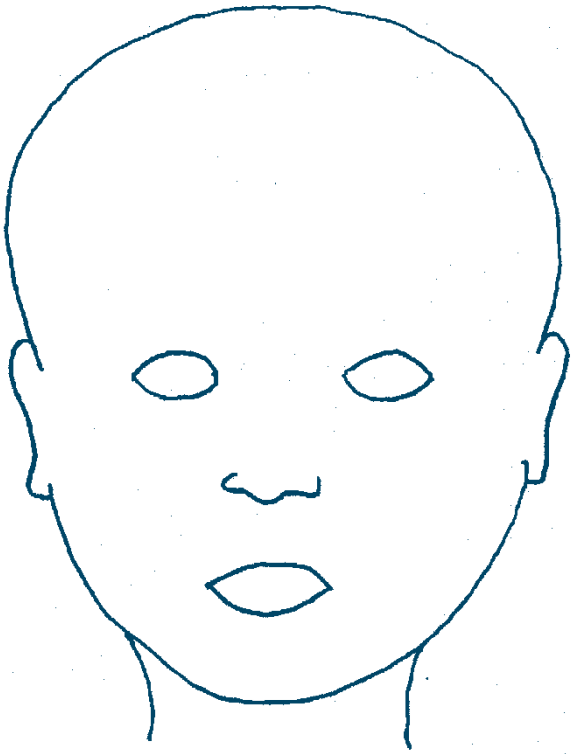
Name of Staff: ..... Job title: .....

Date and time of observation: .....

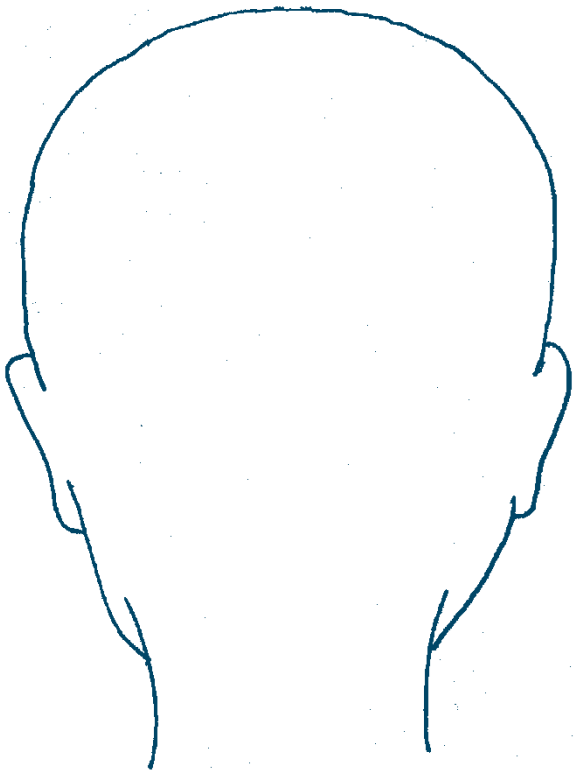


Name of pupil: .....

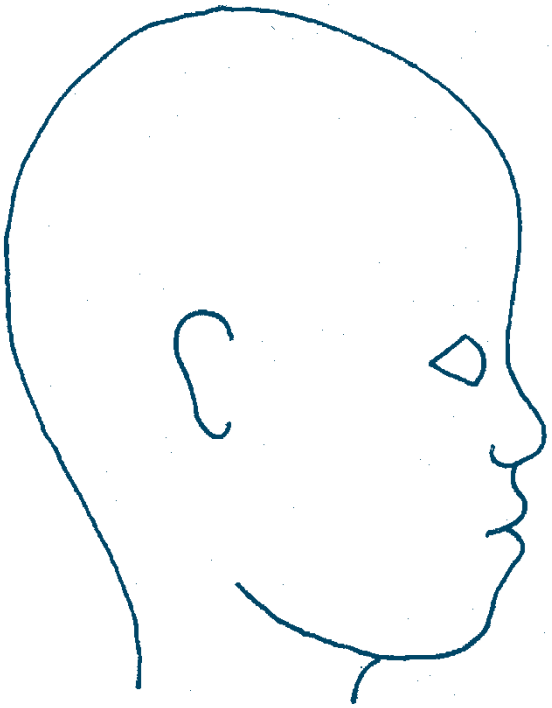
Date and time of observation: .....



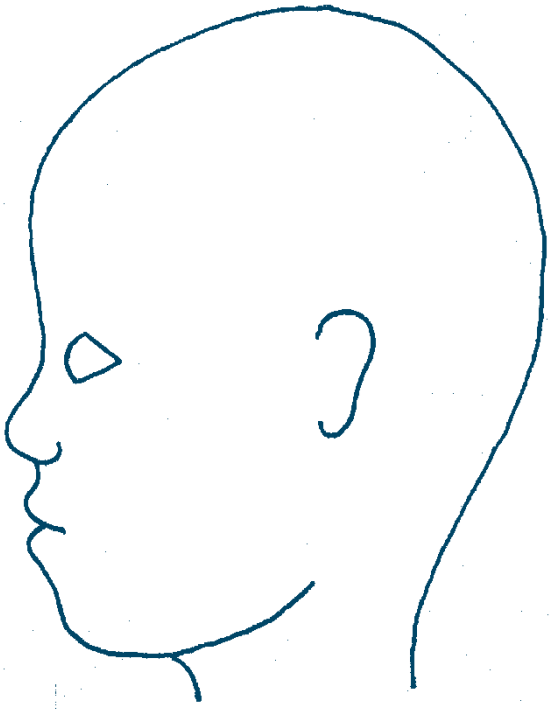
FRONT



BACK



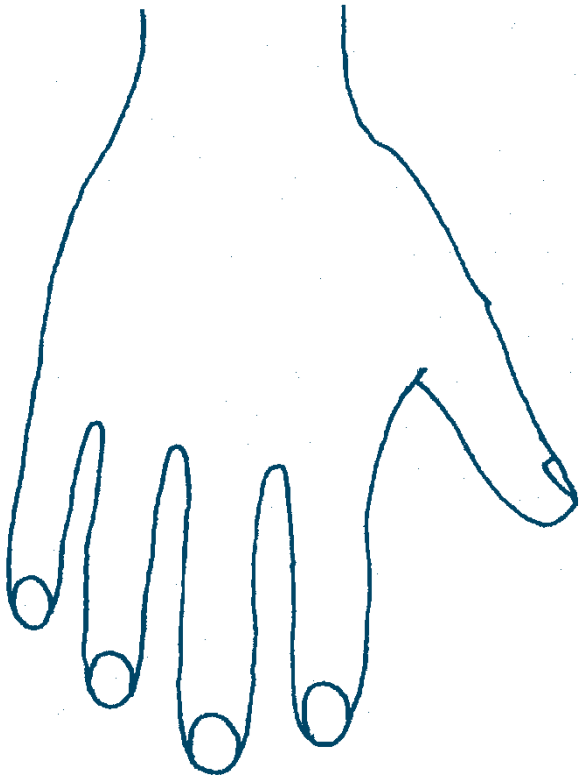
RIGHT



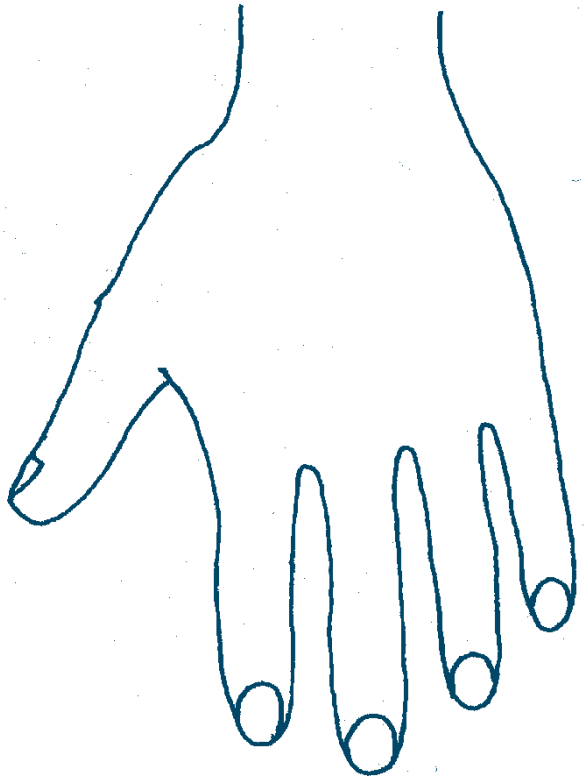
LEFT

Name of pupil: .....

Date and time of observation: .....



R



L

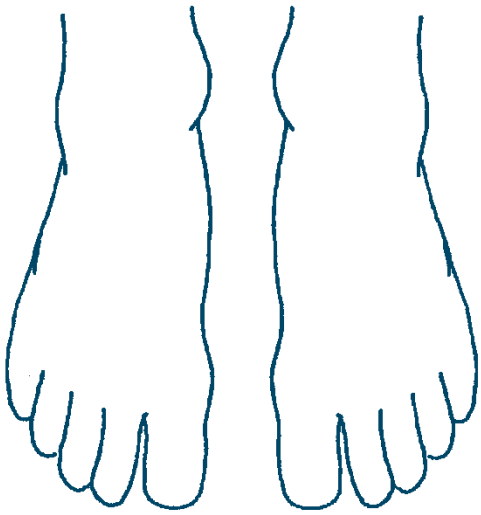
BACK



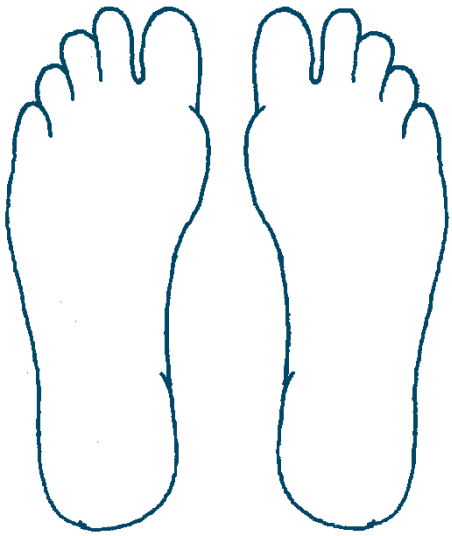


Name of Pupil: .....

Date and time of observation: .....



R TOP L



R BOTTOM L



R

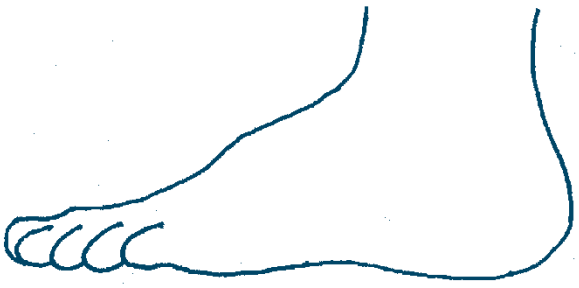


L

INNER



R



L

OUTER

Printed Name, Signature
and Job title of staff:

.....

.....

APPENDIX 13: RECORD OF CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD/YOUNG PERSON'S SAFETY AND WELFARE

Part 1 (for use by any staff – must be handwritten and legible)

Pupil's name:	Date of birth:	Class/Form:
Date & time of incident:	Date & time (of writing):	
Name (print): ..... Job title: Signature:		
Record the following factually: Nature of concern, e.g. disclosure, change in behaviour, demeanour, appearance, injury, witnesses etc *(please include as much detail in this section as possible Remember – the quality of your information will inform the level of intervention initiated Attach additional sheets if necessary*		
What is the pupil's perspective?		
Professional opinion, where relevant *(how and why might this have happened?)*		
Any other relevant information Previous concerns etc *(distinguish between fact and opinion)*		
Note actions, including names of anyone to whom your information was passed and when		

Check to make sure your report is clear to someone else reading it

Please pass this form to your DSL without delay

Part 2 (for use by DSL)

Information received by DSL:	Date:	Time completed:	From whom:		
Any advice **sought**, if applicable	Date:	Time completed:	From: name/organisation:		
	Advice received:				
Action taken with reasons recorded *(e.g. referral to CHAT / FAST made, monitoring advice given to appropriate staff,*	Date:	Time completed:	By whom:		
Outcome	Date:	Time completed:	By whom:		
Parent/carer informed?	**Y**	Who has been spoken to?	Date:	Time:	By whom:
	N	Detail reason:			
Is any additional detail held, if so where?					
Prior safeguarding history	No of previous records of concern:				
	Has the child been subject of Early Help assessment/ *Family Help*?				
	Any prejudice-based, discriminatory or misogynistic element? Y/N				
	Currently on CP Plan (CPP) / in Need Plan (CiN)				
	Previously on CP Plan (CPP) / in Need Plan (CiN)				
	Is known to other agencies?	Y / N			
Name of DSL:		Signature:			

APPENDIX 14: CHILD SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE REVIEWS – KEY FINDINGS AND LESSONS

Key findings

- Limited evidence of professional curiosity.
- Failure to recognise the impact on the children of the hostility and aggression displayed within the family.
- Shortcomings in single and multi-agency practice, with a tendency to focus on what was observable rather than taking a more analytical approach.
- The lived experience of the children was not understood.
- Early recognition and identification of the signs of neglect was lacking.
- Little exploration of the link between the individual child and the joint histories of the adults involved in the children's lives.
- Communication between different professionals, agencies and organisations was variable.
- The risk of harm to the children was not effectively assessed.
- The impact of the family's and children's social isolation was not recognised.
- Insufficient information was gathered about important aspects of the family's living arrangements and daily life experiences.
- Relationships between family members were not understood.
- Professionals did not consider an array of missed health appointments as an indicator of neglect.
- No evidence of formal professional challenge when decisions reached were not collectively agreed within the child protection process.
- Differing expectations between professionals of what information can be shared between agencies.

Lessons

- Actions agreed at strategy meetings should be understood in relation to child protection enquiries.
- Using the Graded Care Profile (GCP) assessment tool will support the early recognition and identification of signs of neglect.
- Partner agencies must contribute to the decision-making process before a Child in Need (CiN) plan is ended.
- Professionals should follow the SSCP Escalation Procedure for formal challenge.
- Information should be shared between agencies willingly and legally, in line with the new information sharing duty.
- The impact of drug misuse is a significant aspect of the assessment of need and risk of abuse or neglect.
- Professionals must consider the link between children's tooth decay and/or missed medical appointments as an alert for neglect.
- Professionals must follow their duties and responsibilities in responding specifically to the needs of an individual where (learning) disability is known.
- Professionals must take time and be given the opportunity, to reflect on their practice through professional supervision