



***ST. THOMAS MORE HIGH SCHOOL***  
**ACADEMY**

**STATUTORY SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**The School's Mission Statement**

*To inspire, To learn, To achieve,*

*To keep our Catholic ethos at the centre of our lives,*

*To fulfil our educational potential, welcoming all and reaching out to the wider world,*

*To truly be God's servant first.*

**Commitment to equality:**

**We are committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. We have developed a number of key policies to ensure that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in relation to human dignity and dignity in work become embedded into every aspect of school life and these policies are reviewed regularly in this regard.**

**This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy has been approved and adopted by the Local Governing Committee of St Thomas More High School in September 2023 and will be reviewed annually in September 2024.**

**Signed by Mr Daniel Cauchi, Chair of the Governing Body:**

**Signed by Headteacher:**

# SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR ST THOMAS MORE HIGH SCHOOL

## KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE SCHOOL SEPTEMBER 2023

### **DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD**

NAME: MR GEOFF MASON : Member of SLT

**CONTACT NUMBER: 01702 606771**

### **DEPUTY SAFEGUARDING LEAD**

NAME: MRS MICHELLE WALFORD

**CONTACT NUMBER: 01702 606773**

### **NOMINATED GOVERNOR FOR SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION**

NAME: DANIEL CAUCHI

### **DESIGNATED LEAD FOR LAC**

NAME: MRS ALISON LINDSAY : Member of SLT

**CONTACT NUMBER: 01702 606712**

### **EMERGENCY OUT OF HOURS CONTACT FOR STAFF :**

[gmason@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk](mailto:gmason@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk)

[mwalford@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk](mailto:mwalford@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk)

### **DIRECT OUT OF OFFICE HOURS FOR MASH+ (Single Point Contact)**

See number below for direct referral

## KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

NAME: Mr Rob Simpson (Diocesan Director of Education)

**CONTACT NUMBER: 01277 265284**

## KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

<p><b>MASH+ (Single Point of Contact)</b>  <b>Children's Social Care,</b>  <b>Southend Borough Council:</b>            Where the school has concerns for the safety and welfare of a child or young person.</p> <p><b>OUT OF OFFICE HOURS:</b>            To make URGENT referrals</p>	<p>01702 215007</p> <p><a href="mailto:mash@southend.gov.uk">mash@southend.gov.uk</a></p> <p>0345 606 1212</p>
<p><b>SAFEGUARDING &amp; CHILD PROTECTION CO-ORDINATOR and LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER (LADO):</b>            Where there are concerns/allegations in respect of people working with children</p> <p><b>SAFEGUARDING ADVISOR:</b></p>	<p>ALLISON FRANCIS            01702 534539  <a href="mailto:allisonfrancis@southend.gov.uk">allisonfrancis@southend.gov.uk</a></p> <p>SHARON LANGSTON            01702 534591  <a href="mailto:LADO@southend.gov.uk">LADO@southend.gov.uk</a></p>

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# SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR ST THOMAS MORE HIGH SCHOOL

## 1. CONTEXT

1.1 The School and its staff form part of the wider safeguarding network for the safeguarding of children. 'Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility.

**Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, the school ensures its approach is **child-centred**, in order to identify what is in the **best interests** of the child'. 'School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children and prevent concerns from escalating'.

[Keeping Children Safe in Education - DfE, September 2023](#)

1.2 This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is for all staff, parents, governors, volunteers and the wider school community. It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for our school. It should be read in conjunction with:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education - DfE, September 2023](#)- Part one of which is provided to all staff, including Annex A to staff who work directly with children.
- Staff Code of Conduct/Staff Behaviour Policy
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' \(HMG, 2015\)](#)
- The School's Behaviour Policy

This Policy should also be read in conjunction with other related policies, including:

Safer Recruitment Policy, The Use of Reasonable Force Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Educational Visit Policy, E-safety Policy - use of social media, photography, Sexual Harassment and Violence Policy (inc. Child on Child Abuse), Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy, Staff Dignity and Work Policy, Children Missing in Education Policy and Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

1.3 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, which includes everyone under the age of 18, is defined in [Keeping Children Safe in Education - DfE September 2023](#).

## 1.4 Definitions

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- 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
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

**Child protection** is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Abuse** is a form of maltreatment of a child, and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix 1 explains the different types of abuse.

**Neglect** is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

**Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes** (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery) is where children share nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams.

**Children** includes everyone under the age of 18.

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 make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The local authority (LA)
- Integrated care boards (previously known as clinical commissioning groups) for an area within the LA
- The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area

**Victim** is a widely understood and recognised term, but 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 be prepared to use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with.

**Alleged perpetrator(s)** and **perpetrator(s)** are widely used and recognised terms. However, 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.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 St Thomas More High School takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people in its care. "The welfare of the child is paramount" ([Children Act 1989](#)).

2.2

- Section 175 of the [Education Act 2011](#) places a statutory responsibility on the governing body to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils of the school.
- [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#), which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least 1 person conducting an interview to be trained in safer recruitment techniques

2.3 This policy applies to all pupils, staff, parents, governors, volunteers, students and visitors to our school.

2.4 There are three main elements to our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy:

- **Prevention**
  - By ensuring that we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of all staff and volunteers who work with children
  - Through establishing and maintaining a safe and positive environment and the teaching and pastoral support offered to pupils
  - By raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe

- **Protection** by following agreed procedures and ensuring all staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns.
- **Support** to pupils who have/may have been abused or neglected (in line with his/her Child Protection Plan, if appropriate).

2.5 This school recognises it is an agent of referral and not of investigation.

### 3. Equality statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, both online and offline, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

- We give special consideration to children who:
- Have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or health conditions (see section 10)
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after (see section 12)
- Are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions

Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated.

### 4. SCHOOL COMMITMENT

Our school is committed to keeping children safe and aims to:

- Create a culture of vigilance where the welfare of our pupils is promoted and where timely and appropriate safeguarding action is taken.
- Establish and maintain an environment where pupils feel safe and secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensure that pupils know that there are adults within the school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- Ensure pupils receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. This includes identifying emerging problems and those children who may benefit from early help.
- Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities which equip pupils with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and to develop healthy and safe relationships.
- Include in the curriculum material which will help pupils develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills.
- Protect children from harm and to ensure that they are taught in a way that is consistent with the law and our values and to promote respect for all others.

- Facilitate understanding of wider issues within the context of learning about the values on which our society is founded and our system of democratic government.
- Provide a curriculum which actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Promote tolerance of and respect for people of all faiths (or those of no faith), races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientations.
- Make parents/carers aware of the school policies and practice for safeguarding and ensure that, wherever possible, every effort will be made to establish open and honest effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from partner agencies.
- Promote positive mental health and resilience. Positive mental health is the concern of the whole community and we recognise that schools play a key part in this. Our school wants to develop the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all pupils and staff, as well as provide specific support for those with additional needs. We understand that there are risk factors which increase someone's vulnerability and protective factors that can promote or strengthen resiliency. The more risk factors present in an individual's life, the more protective factors or supportive interventions are required to counter balance and promote further growth of resilience.

It is vital that we work in partnership with parents to support the well-being of our pupils. Parents should share any concerns about the well-being of their child with school, so appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented.

## 5. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

5.1 Section 175 of the [Education Act 2011](#) places a statutory responsibility on the governing body to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils of the school.

5.2 The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice in Southend are the responsibilities of the Southend Safeguarding Partnership, all professionals must work in accordance with the [SET Procedures May 2023](#) (Southend Essex and Thurrock Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures, 2023).

5.3 Our school works in accordance with the following legislation and statutory guidance: (this is not an exhaustive list)

- [The Children Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- 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 female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18
- [Statutory guidance on FGM](#), which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM
- [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](#), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- [Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty](#), 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 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's proportionate). This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there's evidence that they're 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 discrimination
- [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)
- [Sexual Offences Act \(2003\)](#)
- [Data Protection Act \(2018\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE September 2023](#)
- [Working Together \(HMG, 2018\)](#)
- [Education \(Pupil Registration\) Regulations 2021](#)
- [Information sharing](#) (HMG, July 2018) Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers
- [Behaviour and discipline in schools](#) (DfE September 2022) Advice for headteachers and school staff
- [Use of reasonable force](#) (July 2013) Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies
- [Searching, Screen and Confiscation- July 2023](#)
- [Filtering and Monitoring standards](#)

## 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them and to provide a safe environment in which they can learn and achieve their full potential. There are, however, key people within schools and the Local Authority who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those in our school with these specific responsibilities (the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) are shown on the cover sheet of this document.

6.2 **Safeguarding Policies and Procedures: The Governing Body** ensures that the policies, procedures and training in our school are effective and comply with the law at all times. It ensures that all required policies relating to safeguarding are in place and that the child protection policy reflects statutory and local guidance and is reviewed at least annually. In order to utilise the experiences and expertise of staff when shaping safeguarding policies, the Governing Body provides opportunities for staff to contribute to safeguarding arrangements and the child protection policy.

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



6.3 The school publishes its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy on the school website alongside [Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE September 2023](#)

6.4 **The Designated Safeguarding Governor** (named on the front cover of this document) takes a leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements in our school. The Governing Body ensures that, as well as the Designated Safeguarding Governor, there is a named **Designated Safeguarding Lead** and at least one **Deputy Safeguarding Lead** in place (also named on the front cover of this document).

6.5 **The Governing Body** ensures the school contributes to **inter-agency working**, in line with statutory and local guidance. It ensures that information is shared and stored appropriately and in accordance with statutory requirements.

6.6 The Governing Body ensures that all staff members undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction and that it is then regularly updated. All staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to keep our children safe.

6.7 The Governing Body ensures that children are taught about safeguarding, including online, ensuring that that appropriate **filters and monitoring systems** for online usage are in place. The school actively promotes online safety on its website and signpost stakeholders to information that will help keep children safe online. Our children are taught how to keep themselves safe through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. See E Safety Policy

6.8 The Governing Body and School Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring the school follows recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children. It adheres to statutory responsibilities to check adults working with children and has recruitment and selection procedures in place (see the school's 'Safer Recruitment' policy for further information). It ensures that volunteers are appropriately supervised in school- see Safer Recruitment Policy.

6.9 **The Designated Safeguarding Lead** (see page 28 'Keeping Children Safe') in school takes lead responsibility for managing child protection referrals, safeguarding training and raising awareness of all child protection policies and procedures. They ensure that everyone in school (including temporary staff, volunteers and contractors) is aware of these procedures and that they are followed at all times. They act as a source of advice and support for other staff (on child protection matters) and ensure that timely referrals to are made to Children's Services (MASH+ (Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub) or for Early Help Family Support Assessment, as appropriate (**SPC**)) in accordance with current SET procedures. They work with the Local Authority and other agencies as required.

6.10 If, for any reason, the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) will act in their absence.

6.11 **The Headteacher** works in accordance with the requirements upon all school staff. In addition, (s)he ensures that all safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body are followed by all staff.

6.12 The Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead, provides an annual report for the Governing Body detailing any changes to the policy and procedures, training undertaken by all staff and governors and other relevant issues.

6.13 The Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead and Designated Governor will undertake an annual Safeguarding Audit in line with their responsibilities under S.175 of the [Education Act 2011](#)

6.14 **All Staff** in our school have a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment in which our children can learn. All staff members are prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help and understand their role within this process. This includes identifying any emerging problems so appropriate support may be provided and liaising with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to report any concerns. All staff members are aware of and follow school processes (as set out in this policy) and are aware of how to make a referral to Social Care and/or the Police, if there is a need to do so. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately and speak with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), and if necessary make a referral. They should not assume that others have taken action.

## 7. PROCEDURES

7.1 Our school works with key local partners to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help assessment when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans which provide support through statutory services (a 'child in need' or a 'child protection' plan).

7.2 All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance and advice:

- The [SET Procedures May 2023](#), a copy of which is also available Designated Safeguarding Leads office and published on line <http://www.safeguardingsouthend.co.uk/>
- The Early Help Family Support Practitioner Toolkit (Threshold Document), which can be downloaded from <http://www.southendchildren.org>
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE September 2023](#) and [Disqualification under the Childcare Act, 2006 \(DfE, Aug 18\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(HMG July 2018\)](#) (updated July 2022)
- [The Prevent duty Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers \(DfE, June 2015\)](#)
- [Revised Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales' \(HMG, July 2015\)](#), paras 57-76
- [Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation \(HMG, July 2020\)](#)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' \(HMG, 2015\)](#)
- [Information sharing](#) Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (HMG, July 2018)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies \(DfE, July 2023\)](#)
- [Use of reasonable force Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies \(DfE July 2013\)](#)

- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying \(DfE, July 2017\)](#)
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges \(DfE, Sept 2021\)](#) - Withdrawn, now incorporated into KCSIE Sept 2023- Part 5
- [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)

7.3 When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our school they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They are given a copy of our school's Child Protection Policy, advised who our Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy/ies) is/are and informed of their role and how to share concerns with them. Staff are also given a copy of the Staff Code of Conduct/Staff Behaviour Policy, the School's Behaviour Policy and made aware of the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education.

7.4 Staff are also given access to [Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE September 2023](#) 'Statutory guidance for schools and colleges' both a paper copy and on line, which includes Annex A: Further information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues (for staff who work directly with children), Annex B and access to 'What To Do If You're Worried a Child is Being Abused' (HMG, March 2015), which gives helpful advice about how to respond to child protection concerns or disclosures.

7.5 All staff members have a duty to identify and respond to children who may be in need of help or protection. All Staff are kept informed about safeguarding and child protection responsibilities and procedures through induction, briefings and regular awareness training, as required, but at least annually.

7.6 Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure of abuse, suspects that abuse may have occurred, or is concerned about a child's welfare, **must** report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or, in their absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead so that discussion can take place regarding whether any support for the child can be managed internally via the school's own pastoral support process, or if an early help assessment is indicated, or a referral to Children's Social Care and/or the Police.

7.7 The contact details for the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/s are prominently displayed in the school to ensure that all members of the school community have unfettered access to safeguarding support.

In the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff. If, for any reason, nobody is available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Any individual may refer to Social Care/Police where there is suspected or actual risk of harm to a child.

7.8 The Designated Safeguarding Lead, or the Deputy, will immediately refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to Children's Social Care (MASH + (Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub-SPC)), Southend Borough Council (contact numbers are on the cover sheet of this document) and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the [SET Procedures May 2023](#)

7.9 A telephone referral to Children's Social Care will be confirmed in writing within 48 hours.

7.10 The Early Help Family Support Assessment (EHFSA) should be used to support a child protection referral. (The EHFSA form and guidance is available on

www.southendchildrenspartnership.org.uk and on the Southend Safeguarding Partnership website and Southend Learning Network. A completed EHFS form contains all the information required for a child protection referral and should be sent to MASH+. In cases where there have been mounting concerns about a child, it is likely that an EHFS form will already have been completed prior to a child protection referral. A telephone referral to MASH+ – in cases where there are immediate safeguarding concerns - should be confirmed in writing within 48 hours, using the EHFS form to provide the information required. Essential information will include the pupil's name, address, date of birth, family composition, the reason for the referral, whether the child's parents are aware of the referral, the name of person who initially received the disclosure, plus any advice given. This written confirmation will be signed and dated by the referrer.

7.11 If the child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care and/or the Police immediately.

7.12 Whilst all staff should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) with regard to any concerns about **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**, there is a specific legal duty on teachers. If a teacher discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher has a statutory duty to report this personally to the Police. See 13.12, below, and Annex A [Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE September 2023](#) for more details.

7.13 The school will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Social Care with the parents or carers, unless to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On these occasions advice will be taken from Children's Social Care or Essex Police about when it is appropriate to share information with parents/carers.

7.14 If a member of staff continues to have concerns about a child and feels the situation is not being addressed, or does not appear to be improving, the staff member concerned should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will press for re-consideration of the case to ensure that the child's situation improves.

7.15 Parents and Carers are informed about our school's duties and responsibilities under child protection procedures on admission, in the school brochure and on the school website.

## 8. TRAINING AND SUPPORT

8.1 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and any Deputies) undergoes updated Child Protection training specifically for Designated Safeguarding Leads at least every two years, in accordance with [Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE September 2023](#). In addition to formal training, the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) will keep up to date with safeguarding developments and refresh their knowledge and skills regularly, but at least annually.

8.2 The Headteacher, all staff members and Governors, who have contact with children and young people, receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, which is regularly updated in line with advice from the Southend-on-Sea Local Safeguarding Partnership. In addition, all staff members receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, and at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Records are kept of all child protection training and certificates sent to attendees.

8.3 The school will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and any Deputies) also undertakes training in inter-agency working and other matters, as appropriate.

8.4 The Headteacher, in the first instance, will provide support and supervision to staff involved in child protection issues.

8.5 All staff are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are referred to in the Staff Code of Conduct.

## 9. PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENTIALITY

9.1 Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child. A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a pupil, nor should they agree with a pupil to keep a secret as, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities.

9.2 Staff will be informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases regarding child protection on a 'need to know basis' only. Any information shared with a member of staff in this way must be held and treated confidentially.

## 10. RECORDS AND MONITORING

10.1 Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concern about a child or children within our school, the status of such records and when these records should be shared with other agencies.

10.2 Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the [Data Protection Act \(2018\)](#) places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, **it is not a barrier to sharing information** where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing where there are safeguarding concerns. The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information **must not** be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect.

10.3 Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse, or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, must make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen (if appropriate using a body map to record), putting the event in context, and giving the date, time and location of the incident. The source of the information should be recorded, as well as a note of other people involved, for example, as witnesses, and there should be a clear distinction between fact and professional opinion. All records will be dated and signed, detailing the name and position of the person making the record, and include the action taken. This information will be presented to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) who will then decide on appropriate action.

10.4 All discussions and decisions made, and the reason for those decisions, should also be recorded in writing.

10.5 Any records related to Child Protection, which includes:-

- 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

are kept in a confidential child protection file, which is separate from the pupil file. All child protection records are stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and confidentially in Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads office and are accessible through the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy). Digital records are password protected. Child protection records will be retained for 25 years after the pupil's date of birth, or until they transfer to another school/educational setting.

10.6 If a pupil transfers from our school to another setting, their child protection records will be forwarded to the new educational setting without delay, separate from their main pupil file. Care will be taken to ensure confidentiality is maintained and the transfer process is as safe as possible. We keep a copy of the child protection file until we have confirmation from the receiving school that they have received it. Once we have this confirmation, our copy is shredded, unless there is a specific reason to keep a copy of a students file. We will also keep a record of having received confirmation from the receiving school and of the date when we shredded our copy.

When a pupil joins our school, we will request child protection records from the previous educational establishment (if none are received).

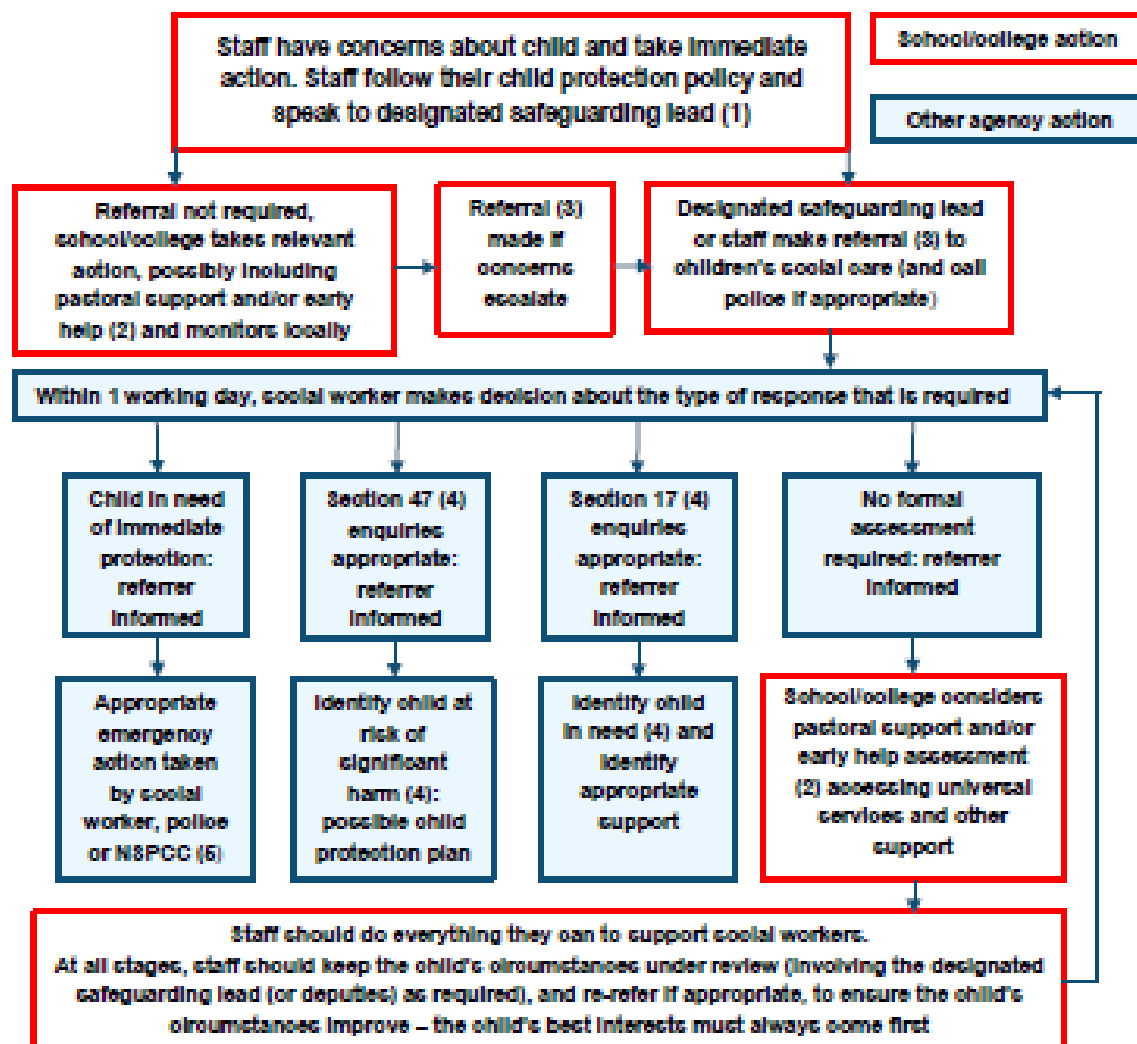
## **11. INTERAGENCY WORKING AND ATTENDANCE AT CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES, CORE GROUP MEETINGS OR CHILD IN NEED MEETINGS**

11.1 It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that the school is represented at any Child Protection Conference called for children on the school roll, or previously known to them. A report will be made available to the Conference Chair, 48 working hours in advance of the Conference, and shared with the parents/carers before the day of the Conference. Whoever attends the Conference will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the school has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions at the Conference and express a view, at the end of the meeting, as to whether the child(ren) should be made subject to a Child Protection Plan.

11.2 If a child is made subject to a Child Protection Plan, or a Child in Need Plan, it is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure the child is monitored regarding their school attendance, progress, welfare and presentation. If the school is part of the Core Group, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that the school is represented and provides appropriate information and contributes to the plan at these meetings. Any concerns about the Child Protection plan and/or the child's welfare will be discussed and recorded at the Core Group Meeting, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of significant harm. In this case the Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the child's Key Worker **immediately** and then record that they have done so and the actions agreed.

If there is an unexplained absence of, or injury to a child subject to a Child Protection Plan, the child's Key Worker must be notified **immediately**.

## Actions where there are concerns about a child



(1) In cases which also involve a concern or an allegation of abuse against a staff member, see Part Four of this guidance.

(2) Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. Where a child would benefit from co-ordinated early help, an early help inter-agency assessment should be arranged. Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) provides detailed guidance on the early help process.

(3) Referrals should follow the process set out in the local threshold document and local protocol for assessment. Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).

(4) Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, it has a duty to make enquiries to decide whether to take action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Full details are in Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).

(5) This could include applying for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO).



## 12. SUPPORTING PUPILS AT RISK

12.1 Our school is committed to ensuring that our pupils receive the **RIGHT HELP, RIGHT SERVICE, RIGHT TIME – MAKING CHILDREN’S LIVES BETTER – SOUTHEND SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP, THRESHOLD DOCUMENT.**

Staff are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children and prevent concerns from escalating.

12.2 Our school may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of children at risk of, or who have suffered, harm. Nevertheless, whilst at school, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may be withdrawn, or display abusive behaviours towards other children.

Our school recognises that some children may abuse their peers and any incidents of child-on-child abuse will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and will follow the same procedures.

12.3 Our school will endeavour to support all pupils through:

- The curriculum; to encourage our pupils to stay safe and to develop healthy relationships, self-esteem and self-motivation.
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued.
- The implementation of the school’s behaviour management policies.
- A consistent approach from all staff which will endeavour to ensure that our pupils know that some behaviour is unacceptable, but that s/he is valued.
- Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies that support the pupils and their families.
- A commitment to develop open, honest and supportive relationships with parents, always with the child’s best interest as paramount.
- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group, trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.
- Recognition that children with behavioural difficulties and special educational needs and/or disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. Therefore, staff who work in any capacity with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behavioural problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.
- Recognition that, in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, children are vulnerable and may be in need of support or protection.

## 13. TYPES OF ABUSE & SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

13.1 [Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE September 2023](#) defines abuse as the 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 (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.’

13.2 The four main types of abuse referred to in ‘Keeping children safe in education’ are:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual and
- Neglect



## **'Keeping Children Safe In Education Sept 2023' further identifies Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) as further forms of abuse.**

13.3 Our school is aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so we are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. All staff are aware that wider environmental factors may impact on a child's welfare and safety and understand safeguarding in the wider context (contextual safeguarding). Staff are aware of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm and understand that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting put children in danger.

### **13.4 SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES.**

**Our school recognises that there are a number of specific safeguarding issues** about which staff need to be aware, including: Child abduction and community safety incidents, Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child County lines, Children and the court system, Children missing from education, Children with family members in prison, Cybercrime, Domestic abuse, Homelessness, Mental Health, Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism, Preventing radicalisation, The Prevent duty, Channel, Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools, Serious Violence, So-called 'honour-based' abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage), FGM, FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers, Forced marriage, Child on Child/child on child abuse and Upskirting.

Further information regarding some of these issues (as indicated \*) can be found below and these issues are also addressed in **Annex B** of [Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE September 2023](#)

13.5 Whilst the school will ensure that staff avail themselves of opportunities to raise their awareness and gain knowledge regarding these areas, we recognise that expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support in relation to these issues. Government guidance is available on the GOV.UK website and links are provided from [Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE September 2023](#). Other organisations also provide specialist information such as:

NSPCC <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/>

TES <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resources> and

MindEd <https://www.minded.org.uk/course/view.php?id=402>

### **13.6 CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE.**

Our school recognises that some children may abuse their peers and any incidents of child on-child abuse will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and will follow the same procedures.

Child-on-child abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This **can** include (but is not limited to): bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying); abuse within intimate partner relationships; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexual violence and sexual harassment; consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos; causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party; upskirting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) **can** be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. **Child-on-child abuse will never be tolerated** or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Our school understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse and recognises that statistically girls are more likely to be victims and boys perpetrators.

The school ensures that staff and students are educated in child-on-child abuse as part of the curriculum, visiting speakers and assemblies and is covered in other related safeguarding policies

such as the **Anti-Bullying Policy and the Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Bullying Policy and E. Safety Policy.**

The school will use the guidance set out in:

[Preventing and tackling bullying](#) Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (DfE, July 2017)

[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people-Dec 2020](#) and

[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges \(DfE, Sept 2021\)](#)

- Withdrawn, now incorporated into KCSIE Sept 2023- Part 5

### **13.7 SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT BETWEEN CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS**

The school acknowledges sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age. It can occur online. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. It is essential the school will ensure that **all** victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor will a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. Staff are made aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. The school understands that girls and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and LGBTQ+ children are at greater risk. Staff are made aware of the importance of:

- challenging inappropriate behaviours;
- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
- challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

The school has a separate Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Policy to ensure safeguarding procedures are followed (KCSIE 2023).

#### **Upskirting.**

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

#### **The response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment.**

The school understands that the initial response to a report from a child is incredibly important. How the school responds to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment to report or come forward. Not recognising, acknowledging or understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and/or downplaying of some behaviours can actually lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual

violence or sexual harassment. Nor will a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

### **13.8 CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES.**

Our school understands that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children.

This can include:

- 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.

### **13.9 CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION.**

All staff should be aware that children being absent from school, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of 145 substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of the schools procedures for unauthorised absence or if they are missing in education.

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have are entitled to a full-time education. Our school recognises that a child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and will follow the school procedures for unauthorised absence and for children missing education. Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency (Missing Education and Child Employment Service, Social Care or Police).

Our school complies with Children missing education (DfE, September 2016) and Southend on Sea Borough Council Early Help and Family Support Children Missing Education Guidance (November 2016). Our school must inform the Local Authority of any pupil who has been absent for a continuous period of 10 days or more without a good reason, and the school has satisfied all avenues of enquiry and is unsuccessful tracing the pupil. The school also refers DfE guidance documents- Working Together to improve School Education DfE Sept 2022 and School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures (School Attendance and Behaviour)-January 2015.

### **13.10 CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE) AND CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE) CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE).**

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

It is understood that a significant number of children who are victims of CSE go missing from home, care and education at some point. Our school is alert to the signs and indicators of a child becoming at risk of, or subject to, CSE and will take appropriate action to respond to any concerns. The

Designated Safeguarding Lead is the named CSE Lead in school on these issues and will work with other agencies as appropriate

Our school is committed to raising awareness of CSE and will use the guidance set out in [Child sexual exploitation Definition and a guide for practitioners \(DfE, February 2017\)](#)

We have an identified CSE Champion, Mrs Michelle Walford who has received training in this area and attends the LSCB Champions' Forum. Our school uses the Southend Partnership Risk Assessment Toolkit <http://cse-toolbox.uk/> and reports any information to Essex Police on a report form, as well as referring to MASH+ or for Early Help Family Support Assessment, as appropriate.

Child criminal exploitation CCE.

Child criminal exploitation is a geographically widespread form of harm which is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity (county lines is when drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas and seaside towns). Our school works with key partners locally to prevent and respond to child criminal exploitation.

### 13.11 SERIOUS VIOLENCE.

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

**All** staff should be aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

### Additional information and support

Departmental advice What to Do if You Are Worried a Child is Being Abused -Advice for Practitioners provides more information on understanding and identifying abuse and neglect. Examples of potential indicators of abuse and neglect are highlighted throughout the advice and will be particularly helpful for school and college staff. The NSPCC website also provides useful additional information on abuse and neglect and what to look out for.

**Annex B** contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. School and college leaders and those staff who work directly with children should read the annex.

### 13.12 DOMESTIC ABUSE.

Domestic abuse can take many forms, including psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional. Our school recognises that exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious, long-term emotional and psychological impact on children. We work with other key partners and will share relevant information where there are concerns that domestic abuse may be an issue for a child or family or be placing a child at risk of harm.

### 13.13 FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM).

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse.

As of October 2015, the [Serious Crime Act 2015](#) (Home Office, 2015) introduced a duty on teachers (and other professionals) to notify the police personally of known cases of female genital mutilation where it appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. Our school will operate in

accordance with the statutory requirements relating to this issue, and in line with 'Multi-Agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation' (HMG, April 2016) and existing local safeguarding procedures.

Our staff are alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), or already having suffered FGM. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Staff should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found in the [SET Procedures May 2022](#) and in the above guidance that can be found on the GOV.UK website.

### 13.14 FORCED MARRIAGE.

A forced marriage is one entered into without the full consent of one or both parties. It is where violence, threats or other forms of coercion is used and is a crime. Our staff understand how to report concerns where this may be an issue. [The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

Since February 2023 it is a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### 13.15 PREVENTION OF RADICALISATION.

As of July 2015, the [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\)](#) placed a new duty on schools and other education providers. Under section 26 of the Act, schools are required, 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.

It requires schools to:

- teach a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life and must promote community cohesion
- be safe spaces in which children / young people can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas
- be mindful of their existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues

CHANNEL is a national programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

Our school works in accordance with local procedures for Prevent and with other agencies, sharing information and concerns, as appropriate.

[The Prevent duty](#) (DfE, June 2015) and the [Revised Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales' \(HMG, July 2015\)](#).

### 13.16 PRIVATE FOSTERING.

As a school we must make sure that privately fostered children are properly and safely cared for. Local Authorities are under a legal duty to ensure the welfare of a privately fostered child is being promoted and safeguarded and are therefore required to undertake assessments of proposed or actual private fostering arrangements. As such, we will always inform the Local Authority when we are notified about such an arrangement or become aware of one.

"A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (that is to say without the involvement of a Local Authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. Private



foster carers may be from the extended family such as a cousin or great aunt. However a person who is a relative under the Children Act 1989, i.e., a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of full blood or half blood or by marriage) or step-parent will not be a private foster carer. A private foster carer may be a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child, or someone previously unknown to the child's family who is willing to privately foster a child."

### 13.17 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC).

Our school has a Designated Teacher for pupils who are LAC. The Designated Teacher attends LAC Reviews, PEP meetings and liaises with the child's Social Worker and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and with the Local Authority Virtual School Headteacher, who is responsible for the progress of children looked after. A previously looked after child remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe.

### 13.18 ON LINE SAFETY AND THE USE OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

To address this, our school aims to:

- Have robust processes (including filtering and monitoring systems) in place to ensure the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers and governors
- Protect and educate the whole school community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (which we refer to as 'mobile phones')
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole school community
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate

### THE SCHOOL HAS A SEPARATE E SAFETY POLICY WHICH OUTLINES HOW ON LINE SAFETY INCLUDING FILTERING AND MONITORING IS ADDRESSED.

#### The 4 key categories of risk

- Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following categories of risk:
- **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation and extremism
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes
- **Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams

### 13.19 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

The school recognises that AI has many uses, including enhancing teaching and learning, and in helping to protect and safeguard pupils. However, AI may also have the potential to facilitate

abuse (e.g. bullying and grooming) and/or expose pupils to harmful content. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

St Thomas More will treat any use of AI to access harmful content or bully pupils in line with this policy and our Anti-bullying/Behaviour Policy.

Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools whilst they are still being developed and should carry out risk assessments for any new AI tool being used by the school.

#### **14. ALLEGATIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT A MEMBER OF STAFF**

The school recognises that the new KCSIE guidance Part 4, 2023 refers to two levels of allegation/concern:-

1. Allegations that may meet the harms threshold
2. Allegation/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold- referred to as 'low level concerns'

##### **Section One: Allegations that may meet the harms threshold**

Definition- this is the managing of cases of allegation that might indicate a person may pose a risk of harm if they continued to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children in school under the age of 18 years. This includes supply teachers, volunteers and contractors if they have:-

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

Bullet point 4 includes behaviour that may have occurred outside of school which is deemed a transferable risk making an individual unsuitable to work with children

##### **Section Two: Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold**

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out at paragraph 338. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

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

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

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- asking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

The school ensures that the staff code of conduct, behaviour policies and safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented effectively, and ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely

manner to safeguard children and facilitate a whole school or college approach to dealing with **any** concerns.

The school achieves this by:

- ensuring their staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others;
- empowering staff to share any low-level safeguarding concerns with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy);
- addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage;
- providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised; and,
- helping identify any weakness in the school or colleges safeguarding system.

**The school has a separate Allegations against Staff Policy which outlines procedures in relation to either a part one high level concern or part two low level concern.**

14.1 All staff members are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct/Staff Behaviour Policy.

14.2 It is essential that the high standards of concern and professional responsibility adopted with regard to alleged child abuse by parents are similarly displayed when allegations are made about members of staff.

14.3 The school works in accordance with statutory guidance and the SET Procedures [May 2023](#) in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity). Section 7 of the current SET procedures provides detailed information regarding this.

14.4 The school has processes in place for reporting any concerns about a member of staff (or any adult working with children). Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff will be referred to the Headteacher (or the Deputy Headteacher in their absence). This role is distinct from the Designated Child Protection Lead as the named person should have sufficient status and authority in the school to manage employment procedures. Staffing matters are confidential and the school must operate within statutory guidance around Data Protection.

Where the concern involves the Headteacher, it should be reported direct to the Chair of Governors.

14.5 The SET procedures require that, where an allegation against a member of staff has been received, the Headteacher, senior named person, or the Chair of Governors must inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (see cover sheet of this document for contact details) within one working day. Where the allegation is against the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will consult with the LADO.

14.6 The LADO has overall responsibility for oversight of the procedures for dealing with allegations against staff members. Wherever possible, contact with the LADO should be made immediately, as she will then advise on how to proceed and whether the matter requires Police involvement. This will include advice on speaking to pupils and parents and HR. The school will manage these



procedures alongside the school's disciplinary process, if appropriate, in liaison with the school's HR Advisor.

14.7 In accordance with [Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE September 2023](#) details of allegations that are found to have been malicious should be removed from personnel records. However, for all other allegations, the record should be retained at least until the accused has reached normal pension age, or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer. However, cases in which an allegation was proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious should not be included in employer references.

## 15. USE OF REASONABLE FORCE

### [Use of reasonable force](#)

The term 'reasonable force' covers a broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. The Department for Education believes that the adoption of a 'no contact policy' at a school can leave staff unable to fully support and protect their pupils and students. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people, such as guiding a child to safety or breaking up a fight. 'Reasonable' means using no more force than is needed. Our school works in accordance with statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context.

## 16. WHISTLEBLOWING

16.1 Whistleblowing is 'making a disclosure in the public interest' and occurs when a worker (or member of the wider school community) raises a concern about danger or illegality that affects others, for example pupils in the school or members of the public.

16.2 All staff must be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues in line with the school's **Code of Conduct/Whistleblowing policy**. Staff are also reminded during Safeguarding training at the beginning of the academic year.

16.3 We want everyone to feel able to report any child protection / safeguarding concerns. However, for members of staff who feel unable to raise these concerns internally, they can call the the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

Parents or others in the wider school community with concerns can contact the NSPCC general helpline on: 0808 800 5000 (24 hour helpline) or email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

## 17.SAFE SCHOOL, SAFE STAFF

17.1 It is essential that the high standards of concern and professional responsibility adopted with regard to alleged child abuse by parents are similarly demonstrated when members of staff are accused of abuse.

17.2 Recognition of abuse and information regarding the types of abuse are given to staff during their Child Protection Training in school. Notes on the type of abuse taken from the DfE "Keeping Children Safe", can be seen in section 1 for reference and information on specific safeguarding issues can also be found in the appendix A, listing the key web sites for information.

17.3 A flow diagram showing the actions where there are concerns about a child can be seen in KCSIE Sept 2023 on page 22.

17.4 Only authorised agencies may investigate child abuse allegations (Social Care Services, the Police or in some areas, the NSPCC). Whilst it is permissible to ask the child(ren) simple, non-leading questions to ascertain the facts of the allegation, formal interviews and the taking of statements is not.

17.5 The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff is set out within Module 7 of the SET procedures.

17.6 The Head Teacher or another Senior Leader should in the first instance, contact the Local Authority Child Protection and Safeguarding Co-Ordinator (Tel. 01702 534539). Through discussion and consultation, a decision will be made whether to make a referral to Specialist Services. If the complaint concerns alleged abuse by the Head Teacher, this should be brought to the attention of the Chairman of the Governors, who will contact Mr Rob Simpson (Director of Education, Brentwood Diocese) and the Local Authority Child Protection and Safeguarding Co-Ordinator.

17.7 If for any reason it is decided that a referral to Specialist Services is not appropriate, it will be necessary to address matters in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures in liaison with the school's HR Advisor.

## **18. STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT**

18.1 All members of staff (paid and voluntary) are expected to adhere to the Mission Statement values in respect of their contact with students and their families. Children are to be treated with respect and dignity and no punishment, detention, restraint, sanctions or rewards are allowed outside those detailed in the school's Behaviour Code of Conduct or Pupil Support Manual. Whilst it would be unrealistic and undesirable to preclude all physical contact between adults and children, staff are expected to exercise caution and avoid placing themselves in a position where their actions may be open to criticism or misinterpretation. Where incidents occur which might otherwise be misconstrued or where it becomes necessary to physically restrain students for their own safety, this will be appropriately recorded and reported to the Head Teacher and parents.

18.2 **First Aid** will only be administered by qualified first-aiders and, if it is necessary for the child to remove clothing for this treatment, there will be another adult present. All first-aid treatment and non-routine changing or personal care will be recorded.

18.3 For their own safety and protection, staff should exercise caution in situations where they are **alone with students**. Other than in formal teaching situations, musical instrument tuition, for example, the door to the room in which the counselling or meeting is taking place should be left open unless there is a glass panel in the door and the room is in an open part of the building. Where this is not practicable, for example, because of the need for confidentiality, another member of staff will be asked to maintain a presence nearby and a record will be kept of the circumstances of the meeting. Particular care must be paid when out of school hours yet still in school, for instance during detentions. Arrangements should be made, for instance, to put single detainees together.

18.4 School staff should also be alert to the possible risks which might arise from contact with students out of school. Home visits to students or contact with pupils out of school should only take place with the knowledge and approval of the Head Teacher. **Ideally**, school staff should not give lifts to students, without parental permission, and should not be alone in a car with a single student. **Students should be seated in the back.**

18.5 For the protection of staff and students, glass panels are to be fitted to the doors of all classrooms in this school. The glass panels are to be kept free of posters. No internal doors to classrooms will be locked whilst pupils are present in these rooms.

18.6 Entry to the school premises will be controlled by doors which are secured physically or by constant staff supervision. The school has implemented a 'lock down' procedure. Authorised visitors to the school will be logged into and out of the premises and will be asked to wear identity badges or be issued with school visitor badges. Unidentified visitors will be challenged by staff or reported to the Head Teacher or school office.

18.7 Visitors coming into the school will be issued with an information pamphlet outlining safety procedures. No visitors are allowed on the school site unsupervised unless they have previously been DBS'd by the school.

18.8 Staff should be familiar with and adhere to the guidance given in the school's **E-Safety Policy**, particularly with reference to the use of social media, both in and out of school and when communicating with present and former students. (**See Appendix H- Use of Mobile Phones and Social Media Guidance Policy**).

18.9 All staff are required to read and sign off the Child Protection, E Safety, Physical Restraint and Code of Conduct (Dignity and Work) Policies at the beginning of each academic year.

## **19. USE OF THE SCHOOL PREMISES BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

19.1 Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, using the school premises, the Governing Body will seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place in regard to safeguarding children and child protection.

**We recognise there are a number of policies that are relevant to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare. These include the following Policy or Procedure:**

Anti-Bullying

Attendance and CME

Behaviour management

Code of Conduct (Dignity at work-staff)

Complaints

Disability and Equality

Drugs and Substance Misuse

Educating Children with medical needs

Equality and Equity Compliance

E Safety

First Aid

Health and Safety

Looked After Children

Management of Allegations made against Staff

PHSE curriculum

Racial Equality

Recruitment and Selection

Residential trips and schools visits, including exchange visits

Sex & Relationships Education

Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Bullying

Use of Reasonable Force  
Visitors' Policy  
Use of Photographs/video  
Whistleblowing  
Work Placement/Work Experience