

Chulmleigh Academy Trust

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Policy approved: September 2026
Next review due: September 2027

Compassion Ambition Teamwork

Chulmleigh Academy Trust is a Trust comprising of:

- Chulmleigh College
- Chulmleigh Primary School and Nursery
- St Thomas of Canterbury CE Primary School and The Nest Nursery
- East Worlington Primary School and Early Worlies Nursery
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ME, YOU & US

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Key Personnel

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1. Safeguarding Statement

Chulmleigh Academy Trust recognises that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. We adopt a child-centered approach, ensuring that the best interests of the child are at the heart of all decision-making.

- We are committed to working in partnership with children, families and other agencies to provide help and support as soon as problems emerge and to protect children from harm, both within and outside the home, including online.
- We recognise the importance of a whole-family approach and actively involve parents, carers, and family networks wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so.
- We ensure that children's voices are heard and acted upon, and that all children are enabled to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Chulmleigh Academy Trust is committed to a strong, open and positive safeguarding culture. This means:

- staff feel confident to raise concerns
- concerns are acted on quickly
- leaders provide clear oversight
- safeguarding is embedded in all aspects of school life

2. Terminology

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

(Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026)

Child protection is part of safeguarding and refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm occurring inside or outside the home, including online.

Staff refers to all adults working for or on behalf of the school, including temporary staff, supply staff, volunteers and contractors.

Child refers to anyone under the age of 18 (or up to 25 for care leavers).

Parents refers to birth parents and other adults in a parenting role, such as step-parents, foster carers, adoptive parents and the local authority as corporate parent.

3. Safeguarding Legislation and Guidance

The following safeguarding legislation and guidance has been considered when drafting this policy:

- [Education Act 2002 Section 175 \(maintained schools only\)](#)
- [Education Act 2002 Section 157 \(Independent schools incl Academies and CTC's\)](#)
- [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#)
- [The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
- [Teachers' Standards \(Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguarding Children Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Information Sharing 2018](#)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#)
- [Filtering and monitoring standards in schools and colleges \(DfE\)](#)

4. Policy Principles, Aims and Values

- All children have an equal right to protection, safeguarding and opportunities, regardless of their characteristics or circumstances.
- All adults, including staff, volunteers and governors, share responsibility for safeguarding and must act on any concerns that a child may be at risk of harm.
- The school will provide a safe, caring and supportive environment that promotes children's wellbeing and development.
- Appropriate support will be provided to children and staff involved in safeguarding concerns.

This policy aims to:

- ensure all staff understand their responsibility to safeguard children
- provide clear guidance on how to recognise and respond to concerns
- ensure children feel safe, valued, respected and listened to
- recognise that abuse can occur in families, communities and between children
- ensure concerns are identified, recorded and acted upon promptly
- promote effective communication within school and with external agencies
- support early identification and intervention to prevent escalation
- ensure safe recruitment practices are followed

- set clear expectations for professional conduct and safe working practice

Supporting and Protecting Children:

We recognise that children who are abused or experience harm may find it difficult to seek help and may show a range of behaviours or emotional responses.

The school plays a key role in providing stability, early support and protection. Positive, trusting relationships with staff are central to this.

Chulmleigh Academy Trust will:

- provide a safe and supportive environment
- encourage children to speak to trusted adults
- listen to children and take concerns seriously
- respond with empathy and understanding
- refer to appropriate support services where needed
- work with families and partner agencies
- share information appropriately to keep children safe • teach children how to stay safe, including online and in relationships
- support children's wellbeing, confidence and independence

Chulmleigh Academy Trust community will:

- create an environment where children feel safe to talk and be heard
- ensure all children know who they can go to for help
- gather and respond to the views of children, parents and staff
- embed safeguarding across the curriculum
- teach children about risk, safety, relationships and online awareness
- ensure clear guidance on the safe use of technology is understood

5. Roles, Responsibilities and Training

We will follow the statutory guidance as set out in the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education (and associated documents and guidance), adhering to the roles, responsibilities and expectations identified for:

- Governing bodies, proprietors, and management committees.
- The headteacher
- The designated safeguarding lead
- The deputy designated safeguarding lead/s
- Staff
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

In summary these roles and responsibilities include:

Governing Bodies / Proprietors

Governing bodies and proprietors hold strategic responsibility for safeguarding.

They will ensure that:

- safeguarding arrangements are effective, compliant and regularly reviewed
- there is a whole-school approach to safeguarding
- appropriate policies (e.g. safeguarding, behaviour, staff conduct) are in place
- a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is appointed with sufficient time and resources
- safer recruitment procedures are followed, including DBS checks and Single Central Record
- staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates
- pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety
- appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place
- allegations against staff are managed in line with statutory procedures (including LADO)

They will also provide challenge and oversight and ensure safeguarding is a priority across the school.

Headteacher / Principal

The Headteacher has operational responsibility for safeguarding.

They will ensure that:

- safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented effectively
- the DSL is supported with time, training and resources
- staff receive safeguarding training and understand their responsibilities
- there is a strong safeguarding culture across the school
- systems are in place for children to raise concerns and be heard
- appropriate action is taken where concerns or allegations arise
- staff wellbeing is supported

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection

Key responsibilities include:

Managing referrals (the list below is not exhaustive)

- to Children's Social Care (Front Door)
- Police
- Channel (Prevent)
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Working with others

- act as a point of contact for safeguarding agencies
- support staff with safeguarding concerns
- work with parents/carers appropriately
- contribute to multi-agency plans

Information management

- maintain secure, accurate child protection records
- ensure information is shared appropriately

Raising awareness

- ensure safeguarding policies are understood
- promote a strong safeguarding culture

Training and development

- maintain up-to-date knowledge
- ensure staff receive safeguarding updates

Supporting staff

- provide advice and guidance
- support staff dealing with safeguarding issues

Child-centred practice

- understand and reflect the views, wishes and experiences of children

The DSL will be available during school hours and deputies trained to the same standard.

All Staff

All staff will play a critical frontline role in safeguarding.

They will:

- read and understand KCSIE Part 1 and Annex A
- maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”
- be able to identify signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- act in the best interests of the child

Responding to concerns

Staff will:

- report concerns immediately to the DSL
- record concerns clearly and factually
- not investigate or delay action
- support children appropriately

Disclosures

Staff must:

- listen carefully
- reassure the child
- not promise confidentiality
- pass information on without delay

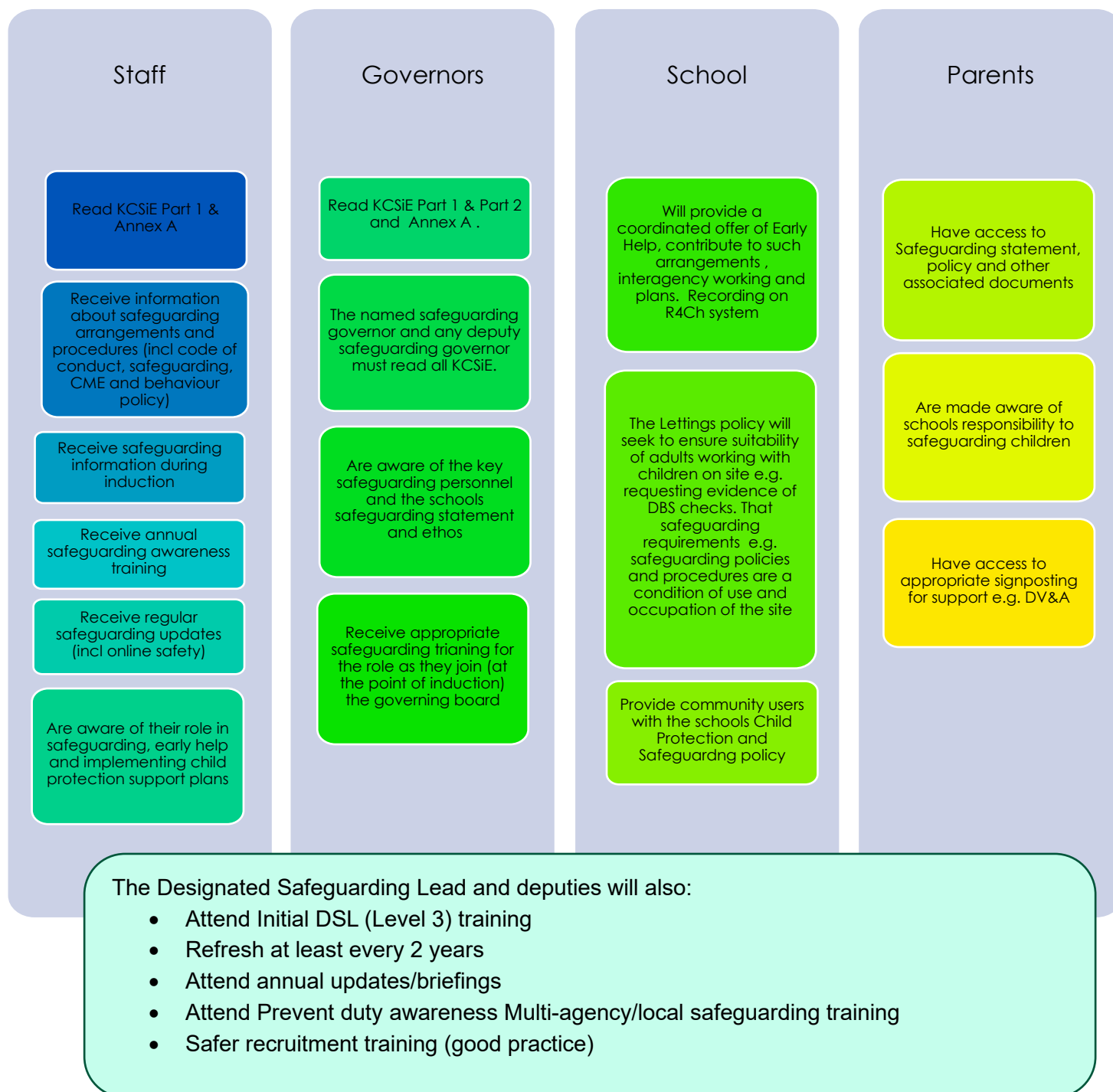
Multi-agency working

- contribute to plans where required
- share information appropriately

Safeguarding environment

- help maintain a safe and supportive learning environment
- model appropriate professional conduct

Chulmleigh Academy Trust will ensure that staff, Governors, School and parents:



6. Recognising and Responding to Safeguarding Concerns ‘It could happen here’

Recognise:

All staff should recognise that any child, in any setting, can be a victim of abuse and maintain an attitude of “it could happen here.” Safeguarding issues are often complex and overlapping, with multiple factors present rather than isolated concerns.

Abuse, neglect, and exploitation are forms of maltreatment that can occur through harm caused or failure to prevent harm. These may take place within the family, institutional, or community settings, and can involve adults or other children. Abuse can occur both offline and online, including through the use of technology to facilitate harm. Child-on-child abuse may also take place and such abuse is never acceptable, it will be taken seriously and not dismissed as ‘banter’.

Safeguarding concerns may also arise outside the home (contextual safeguarding), including risks such as sexual and criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, and radicalisation. Staff should also understand that behaviours such as substance misuse, truancy, and sexting can increase vulnerability and may be linked to child-on-child abuse.

Further details on the categories of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect), indicators of harm, and specific safeguarding concerns are provided in the relevant appendices and statutory guidance, including *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

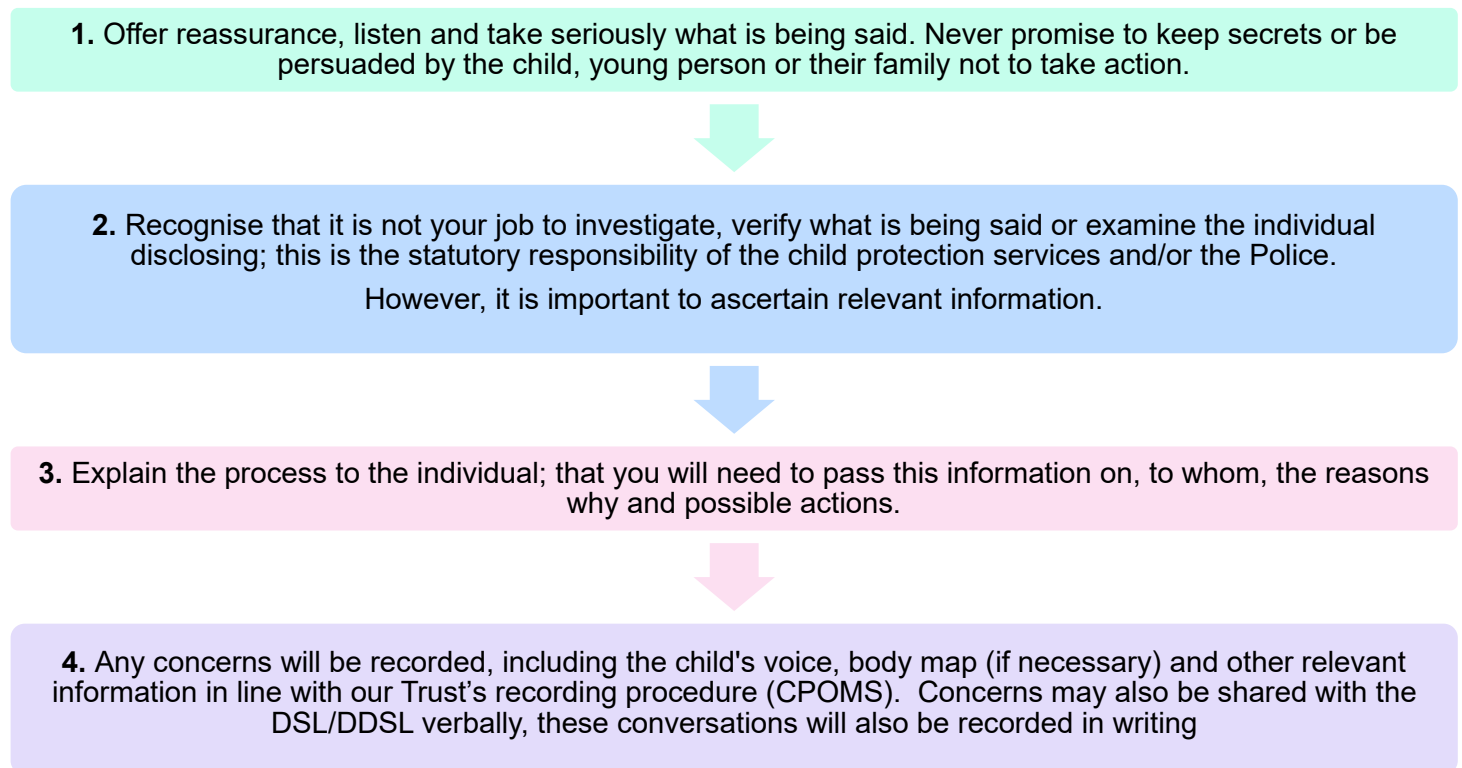
• Child missing or absent from education • Child missing from home or care • Child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE) • Bullying including cyberbullying • Domestic abuse • Drugs • Fabricated or induced illness • Faith abuse • Female genital mutilation (FGM) • Forced marriage • Gangs and youth violence	• Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG) • Mental health difficulties • Private fostering • Radicalisation • Youth produced sexual imagery (sexting) • Teenage relationship abuse • Trafficking • Child on child abuse • Upskirting • Serious violence • Sexual harassment
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Staff may sometimes suspect a pupil is at risk without clear evidence, noticing changes in behaviour, unusual work, or signs of distress. While these indicators may be linked to everyday life events (such as family changes, bereavement, or illness), they could also signal abuse or safeguarding concerns. Staff will be professionally curious around such situations they will also explore barriers to attendance. In such situations, staff will provide the pupil and/or their parents with an opportunity to talk and offer support, for example by asking if they are okay or how they can help.

Responding:

- Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL and put them in writing, see FLOW CHART A.
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.
- If the pupil does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice in FLOW CHART A and in the table below 'pupil making a disclosure'.
- All concerns however small must be recorded and shared with the DSL as this information could provide the 'missing' piece of the bigger picture of the lived experience for the child.

FLOW CHART A



If a pupil discloses to a member of staff

- We recognise that disclosure takes courage; children may feel fear, shame, guilt or may not understand they are being abused.
- A child's first experience of sharing concerns must be positive, as they may need to repeat their account to other professionals.

During their conversation with the pupil staff will

- Listen carefully and allow the child to speak freely.
- Remain calm, not show shock, and take the disclosure seriously.
- Reassure the child it is not their fault and they have done the right thing.
- Use open questions, avoid leading questions or assumptions.
- Allow silence and avoid pressure, judgement, or criticism.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- Explain what will happen next and that information cannot be kept secret.

Notifying Parents

- Concerns will usually be discussed with parents by the DSL/DDSL.
- If informing parents may increase risk, advice will be sought from the Local Authority Safeguarding Hub first.
- Parents will not be informed in cases such as forced marriage or honour-based abuse where this could increase harm; police involvement may be necessary.

Making a referral

- All concerns or disclosures must be reported immediately to the DSL.
- The DSL will decide if a referral to the Local Authority Safeguarding Hub or other support is required.
- Any staff member can make a referral if necessary.
- Parents and the child will usually be informed unless this increases risk.
- If a child remains at risk or their situation does not improve, further action should be taken.
- Immediate danger requires urgent referral to the Safeguarding Hub and/or police.
- The DSL must be informed of all referrals.

Supporting our Staff

- We recognise safeguarding cases can be distressing for staff.
- Support is provided through the DSL and access to further guidance as needed.

7. Early Help and Families First

Devon adopts a graduated approach to help, including universal services, Family Help (targeted early help) and statutory intervention.

Staff will identify children and families who may benefit from early intervention and will work with the DSL to initiate appropriate support, including the use of early help assessments and multi-agency planning.

Early help aims to prevent escalation of need and improve outcomes for children by addressing concerns at the earliest possible stage.

School recognise that some children may have additional vulnerabilities due to e.g. specific need, previous childhood trauma and staff will always be professionally curious and approach such situations in a relational manner. Seeking to identify the child and families needs and strengths to improve safeguarding outcomes and lived experience.

Any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential 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 showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups.
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, care or from home. (CME)
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves.
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation.
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse.
- Has returned home to their family from care.
- Is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect and/or exploitation.
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
- Is a privately fostered child.
- Has an imprisoned parent.
- Is experiencing mental health, wellbeing difficulties.
- Is persistently absent from education (including persistently absent for part of the school day).
- Is a child missing education (CME)
- Has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit.
- Is at risk of 'honour' based abuse such as FGM or forced marriage.
- LGBTQ+, Gender questioning and gender diverse children.

This list is not exhaustive

8. Recording, Confidentiality, Information Sharing and

The school recognises that effective safeguarding relies on timely, appropriate information sharing and accurate record-keeping. We work in line with *Working Together to Safeguard Children, Keeping Children Safe in Education*, and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- Safeguarding information is highly sensitive and shared only on a strict need-to-know basis, as determined by the DSL or Headteacher.
- All staff have a professional duty to share information to protect children; GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent sharing where a child is at risk.
- Staff must not promise confidentiality to a child if it could compromise their safety.
- Concerns should normally be discussed with the DSL, Headteacher, or Chair of Governors, who will decide on further sharing. However, any staff member can make a referral if necessary.
- Parents will usually be informed of referrals unless doing so would increase risk or impede a criminal investigation.
- Information should be shared early to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns.
- All information sharing must be:
 - Necessary and proportionate
 - Relevant and adequate
 - Accurate
 - Timely
 - Secure

Recording Safeguarding Concerns

All staff must:

- Use the school's agreed recording system.
- Record information factually, clearly, and promptly, including dates, times, and context.
- Include body maps where appropriate.
- Report concerns to the DSL immediately (verbally if urgent), followed by written records.
- Document decision-making, including thresholds, rationale, actions taken, support offered, and outcomes.
- Ensure the voice of the child is clearly captured.

Storage and Transfer of Records

- Safeguarding records are kept secure, confidential, and separate from pupil files.
- Records are managed in line with GDPR and statutory guidance.
- When a pupil transfers school, safeguarding files are shared securely and promptly (within 5 working days), with consideration for earlier information sharing where appropriate to support the child.

Inter-Agency Working

- The school will work collaboratively with external agencies and share relevant information to safeguard children effectively.
- Where appropriate, receiving settings may be involved in meetings (with consent) to support continuity of care.

9. Whistleblowing and allegations against staff

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of safeguarding and child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues, poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding arrangements. If it becomes necessary to consult outside the school, they should speak in the first instance, to the LADO following the Whistleblowing Policy and Allegations against Staff (including low-level concerns) Policy.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Staff should follow the schools agreed process if they have a concern for the Headteacher
All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents/carers to be conducted in view of other adults. Guidance about conduct and safe practice, including safe use of mobile phones by staff and volunteers will be given at induction. All staff must adhere to the school's **Staff Code of Conduct** and safer working practice guidance.

This includes:

- Maintaining professional boundaries
- Using technology appropriately
- Avoiding behaviour that could be misinterpreted

1. All employees and volunteers must record in writing, any concerns they have about the practice or behaviour of a member of staff and share it with the Headteacher (or equivalent senior member of staff).



2. The Headteacher will make an assessment to determine if the matter is a 'low level concern' or an 'allegation' (this means that the concern may meet the harm threshold).



3. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted for all 'allegations' and the relevant guidance will be followed. If the Headteacher needs advice or guidance they should contact the LADO. If the allegation is against the Headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will contact the LADO or Chair of Governors directly.



4. Where concerns are considered to be 'low level' by the Headteacher, they should be managed in-line with part 4 of KCSiE and the wider school policies and procedures. The Designated Safeguarding Lead may be involved in this process.



5. If the concern relates to the Headteacher, the person receiving the information will immediately inform the Chair of Governors/Chair of the management committee/proprietor of an independent school [delete as appropriate] who will consult the LADO as above, without notifying the Headteacher first. [NB where the Headteacher is also the sole proprietor of an independent school the concerns should be reported directly to the LADO].



6. In the event of an allegation against the Headteacher, the decision to suspend will be made by the Chair of Governors with advice from the LADO.

Suspension of the member of staff, against whom an allegation has been made, needs careful consideration, and the Headteacher will seek the advice of the LADO and an HR Consultant in making this decision.

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

School will ensure that pupils are aware of how they can raise a concern should they be worried about a member of staff conduct. This may be for example by talking to a trusted adult.

10. Physical Intervention

- Physical intervention will only be used as a last resort, where a child is at risk of harming themselves or others, and only the minimum force necessary will be applied.
- All incidents must be recorded and witnessed and should be recorded on CPOMS.
- Staff likely to use physical intervention will receive appropriate training.
- For children who may require planned physical intervention such plans will be agreed with pupils, parents and staff and included in care plans and/or risk assessments.
- Any intervention causing injury or distress may be subject to safeguarding or disciplinary procedures.
- Appropriate professional touch is recognised, and staff follow 'Safe Practice' guidance to maintain clear boundaries.
- Further guidance can be found in our Trust's 'Use of Reasonable Force' Policy.

11. Online Safety

Chulmleigh Academy Trust recognises that online safety is a key component of safeguarding and that risks to children can occur both online and offline. Such risks can also include the use of Artificial Intelligence.

- Online safety is a whole-school responsibility and part of the safeguarding culture.
- Risks may include content, contact, conduct, and commerce harms.
- Children should be supported to use technology safely, respectfully, and responsibly.

The DSL will ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place to safeguard pupils and with the support of the Governing Board hold regular review of systems to ensure effectiveness (as a minimum annually).

Should incidents/online concerns be reported they will be treated as a disclosure of concern/safeguarding issue: recorded, investigated and supported.

In addition, staff will:

- Receive regular training on online safety risks
- Model safe and appropriate use of technology

Further detail on schools' response to online and AI risks can be found in the Trust and ICT AI policies.

12. Alternative Provision, Off-Site Safeguarding

Where pupils attend alternative provision or off-site settings, the school will ensure that:

- Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place
- Providers have suitable safeguarding policies and procedures

- Staff working with children are appropriately vetted
- There is clear communication between the school and the provider

The school retains overall responsibility for safeguarding pupils placed in alternative provision.

13. Safeguarding through the Curriculum

The school recognises that safeguarding is not only about response, but also prevention through education. Pupils are taught how to recognise risks, develop resilience, and keep themselves safe.

- Safeguarding education is embedded across the curriculum (e.g. RSHE, PSHE, Computing, assemblies).
- Learning is age-appropriate, inclusive, and progressive.
- Pupils are supported to develop knowledge, skills, and confidence to stay safe in a range of contexts.

In line with statutory guidance, pupils are taught about:

Personal Safety and Wellbeing

- Healthy and respectful relationships
- Consent, boundaries, and recognising abuse
- Mental health, wellbeing, and seeking support

Online Safety

- Safe and responsible use of technology
- Risks such as cyberbullying, grooming, exploitation, and harmful content
- Digital footprints and privacy

Risk and Vulnerability

- Exploitation (criminal and sexual)
- Child-on-Child abuse
- Substance misuse and risky behaviours
- Radicalisation and extremism (Prevent duty)

Wider Safeguarding Issues

- Domestic abuse
- FGM, forced marriage, honour-based abuse (as age-appropriate)
- County lines and serious youth violence

Skills and Protective Behaviours

Pupils are taught to:

- Recognise unsafe situations and warning signs
- Identify trusted adults and know how to seek help
- Report concerns confidently
- Make informed and safe decisions

Pupil Voice and Participation

- Pupils are encouraged to share worries and concerns
- Systems are in place to ensure pupils feel listened to and supported

- Feedback from pupils helps shape safeguarding practice

Staff Responsibilities

- All staff understand their role in reinforcing safeguarding messages
- Teaching is delivered by trained staff and supported through regular safeguarding updates
- Staff respond appropriately to any concerns arising from learning

Partnership with Parents and Agencies

- The school works with parents to promote safeguarding messages at home
- External agencies may support delivery (e.g. police, health professionals)

14. Devon Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements

The school works in accordance with the **Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership (Devon SCP)** multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

These arrangements are led by the three statutory safeguarding partners:

- Devon County Council
- NHS Devon
- Devon & Cornwall Police

The school will:

- Follow the Devon SCP policies and procedures and the Southwest Child Protection Procedures
- Apply the Devon Levels of Need framework to support decision-making and referrals
- Make referrals through the Children's Front Door (Request for Support) in line with local procedures
- Participate fully in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups and strategy discussions
- Share information appropriately to safeguard children
- Follow the Devon SCP escalation protocol where there are professional disagreements to ensure that children's safety is prioritised
- Engage with and implement learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and local safeguarding learning

15. Escalation and Professional Challenge

We recognise the importance of professional curiosity and challenge in safeguarding children.

If a member of staff feels that:

- A safeguarding concern has not been taken seriously
- Appropriate action has not been taken
- A child remains at risk

They must:

- Escalate their concern to the DSL or senior leader
- Follow the school's escalation procedures
- Refer directly to children's social care if necessary

The school will support staff to challenge decisions and will follow local escalation (professional challenge) procedures where there are disagreements between agencies

16. Policy Links

This policy should be read alongside:

• Behaviour • Staff Behaviour Policy / Code of Conduct • Whistleblowing • Anti-bullying • Health & Safety • Allegations against staff (Within safeguarding policy) • Attendance • Complaints • Curriculum guidance incl. PSHE	• Administration of medicines • Drug Education • Relationships and Sex Education • Reasonable Force • ICT, including staff use of mobile phones • Risk Assessments • Recruitment and Selection • Intimate Care • Data Protection/GDPR Guidance
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Children's Front Door



If you are concerned that a child is being abused, or to request Targeted Early Help (L3) support you can

call: 0345 155 1071 **or**

complete the Request for Support online form available at:

<https://devoncountycouncil.outsystemsenterprise.com/MASH/homepage>

The DevonSCP Children's Front Door **consultation line** for **professionals only**: to request number email devonscp@devon.gov.uk.

Emergency Duty Team out of hours **0345 6000 388**

Police non-emergency 101

For all LADO enquiries Exeter (01392) 384964

ladosecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

Further info:

[Managing allegations - Devon Children and Families Partnership \(dcfp.org.uk\)](http://dcfp.org.uk)

Early Help

Locality Early Help Mailbox

North: earlyhelpnorthsecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

Mid & East: earlyhelpmideastsecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

South & West: earlyhelpsouthsecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

Exeter: earlyhelpexetersecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

For emergencies outside of office hours please call:

0345 6000 388

Appendix A – Local Safeguarding Contacts and Resources (Devon)

- **Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP)**

Website: <https://www.devonscp.org.uk/>

The Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP) provides local safeguarding procedures, multi-agency guidance, learning from reviews, training opportunities and safeguarding resources for schools and professionals.

- **Devon SCP Procedures Manual**

<https://swcpp-devon.trixonline.co.uk/>

This manual contains Devon and South West child protection procedures, referral guidance, information sharing protocols, assessment processes and multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

- **Reporting a Safeguarding Concern** <https://www.devonscp.org.uk/reporting-a-safeguarding-concern/>

For reporting concerns where a child may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

- **Devon County Council Safeguarding Support for Schools** <https://www.devon.gov.uk/support-schools-settings/safeguarding/>

Provides safeguarding advice, guidance, training, updates and support specifically for education settings.

- **Devon Early Help** <https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/early-help/>

Information about Early Help services, Early Help Assessment and coordinated support for children and families.

- **Devon Early Help Connector** <https://www.devonscp.org.uk/early-help/>

Guidance, pathways and resources to support families at the earliest opportunity.

- **Devon Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** <https://www.devonscp.org.uk/policy-hub/policies-and-procedures/lado-service/>

The LADO provides advice and guidance where concerns or allegations are made about adults working with children. Contact: 01392 384964.

Appendix B – Devon Safeguarding One Minute Guides

The Devon One Minute Guides provide concise guidance on safeguarding topics relevant to schools.

Access all guides here: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/support-schools-settings/safeguarding/guidance-policy-and-tools2/safeguarding-one-minute-guides/>

Topics include:

- Neglect
- Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)
- Child-on-Child Abuse
- Contextual Safeguarding
- Serious Violence
- County Lines
- Modern Slavery
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Prevent Duty
- Making a Prevent Referral
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced Marriage
- Honour Based Abuse
- Domestic Abuse
- Operation Encompass
- Children Missing Education (CME)
- Early Help
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Information Sharing

- Online Safety and Sexting
- Transfer of Child Protection Records
- Governor Safeguarding Monitoring
- Disguised Compliance
- Elective Home Education
- Private Fostering
- Initial Child Protection Conferences
- MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

Appendix C – Statutory and National Guidance

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (Current Statutory Guidance)** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2>

The key statutory safeguarding guidance for schools and colleges in England. All staff should be familiar with Part One or Annex A as determined by the school.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 Draft Consultation

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/keeping-children-safe-in-educationproposed-revisions-2026>

- **Working Together to Safeguard Children** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children-2>

The statutory multi-agency safeguarding guidance for all organisations working with children.

- **Children Act 1989** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>
- **Children Act 2004** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>
- **Education Act 2002 (Section 175)** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents>

Appendix D – Child Protection and Safeguarding Support Services

- **NSPCC**
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk>
National safeguarding charity providing resources, training and advice.
- **Childline** <https://www.childline.org.uk>
Confidential support service for children and young people.
- **CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection)** <https://www.ceop.police.uk>
Online child protection reporting service.
- **Internet Matters** <https://www.internetmatters.org>
Resources supporting online safety for children, parents and schools.
- **UK Safer Internet Centre** <https://saferinternet.org.uk>
Online safety guidance, resources and reporting tools.
- **Childnet** <https://www.childnet.com>
Educational resources supporting safe and responsible use of digital technology.
- **Educate Against Hate** <https://educateagainsthate.com>
Government-supported advice regarding radicalisation and extremism.

Appendix E – Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

- **YoungMinds**
<https://www.youngminds.org.uk>
Mental health information and support for young people, families and professionals.

Papyrus Prevention of Young Suicide

- <https://www.papyrus-uk.org>
Suicide prevention charity supporting young people at risk of suicide.

- **NHS Mental Health Services** <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/>
Mental health support and access to local services.
 - **Kooth** <https://www.kooth.com>
Digital emotional wellbeing and mental health support service.
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Appendix F – Online Safety and Emerging Technology

- **National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)** <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk>
- **UK Safer Internet Centre** <https://saferinternet.org.uk>

Internet Matters

- <https://www.internetmatters.org>
 - **CEOP Safety Centre** <https://www.ceop.police.uk>
 - **Childnet** <https://www.childnet.com>
 - **NSPCC Online Safety Hub**
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>
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Appendix G – Contextual Safeguarding, Exploitation and Adolescent Risk

- **Devon Adolescent Safety Framework (ASF)** <https://www.devonscp.org.uk/working-with-children/contextual-safeguarding/adolescentsafety-framework/>

Devon's approach to contextual safeguarding and exploitation risk assessment using the Safer Me framework. Supports professionals to assess risks associated with exploitation, peer groups, locations and wider contextual harm.

- **Devon ASF One Minute Guide** <https://www.devon.gov.uk/support-schools-settings/safeguarding/guidance-policy-andtools-2/safeguarding-one-minute-guides/no-43-adolescent-safety-framework-asf/>

Practical guidance for schools regarding contextual safeguarding, county lines, exploitation, gangs, modern slavery and peer-on-peer abuse.

- **Devon Contextual Safeguarding** <https://www.devonscp.org.uk/working-with-children/contextual-safeguarding/>

Information regarding contextual safeguarding, exploitation, missing children and adolescent safety.

- **Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE)**

MACE arrangements form part of Devon's contextual safeguarding response to child exploitation concerns and are linked to the Adolescent Safety Framework and Safer Me processes. Schools may refer concerns through the appropriate contextual safeguarding pathways.

- **Child Exploitation Information for Professionals** <https://www.devonscp.org.uk/working-with-children/contextual-safeguarding/childexploitation-information-for-professionals/>

Guidance relating to criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, county lines and contextual safeguarding.

Appendix H – Radicalisation and Extremism

- **Prevent Duty Guidance** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>
- **Prevent Referral Information** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/make-a-referral-to-prevent>
- **Educate Against Hate** <https://educateagainsthate.com>
- **ACT Early**
<https://actearly.uk>

Appendix I – Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls

- **Refuge**
<https://refuge.org.uk>
 - **Women's Aid** <https://www.womensaid.org.uk>
 - **Respect**
<https://respect.uk.net>
 - **ManKind Initiative** <https://mankind.org.uk>
 - **Devon Domestic Abuse Alliance** <https://www.domesticabusealliance.org.uk>
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Appendix J – Child Exploitation, Missing Children and Modern Slavery

- **Missing People** <https://www.missingpeople.org.uk>
 - **National Crime Agency** <https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk>
 - **Modern Slavery Helpline** <https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org>
 - **The Children's Society – Child Exploitation Resources** <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk>
 - **Catch22** <https://www.catch-22.org.uk>
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Appendix K – Specific Safeguarding Issues

- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-femalegenital-mutilation>
- **Forced Marriage Unit** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage>

- **Honour Based Abuse** <https://karmanirvana.org.uk>
 - **Private Fostering** <https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/child-protection/private-fostering/>
 - **Children Missing Education** <https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/children-missingeducation/>
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Appendix L – Whistleblowing

- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line** 0800 028 0285
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicatedhelplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>
 - **GOV.UK Whistleblowing Guidance** <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>
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Appendix M – Key Emergency Contacts

- **Devon Children’s Front Door/ Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Telephone:** 0345 155 1071
- **Emergency Services**
999
- **NSPCC Helpline**
0808 800 5000
- **Childline**
0800 1111

Appendix N – Social Media

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 recognises that all employees and volunteers of schools are in a position of trust in relation to young people. Social Media, Messaging Apps and online text messaging allows any person who would harm a young person a platform for doing so. Contacting children and young adults via these mediums allows a perpetrator to be covert and Chulmleigh Academy Trust recognises its responsibility in keeping children and young adults safe from this risk. The Trust has also has a responsibility to provide guidance to staff and volunteers on safe use of social media and messaging platforms in relation to young people and children.

Chulmleigh Academy Trust recognises that the culture of social media and messaging that exists may create a situation where staff and volunteers enter innocent relationships or contact with young adults or children. However, there is not a situation where the Trust can endorse such relationships, they are inappropriate and not consistent with the position of trust our employees and volunteers occupy. Such contact and liaison is likely to raise questions regarding the member of staff's/volunteer's motivation in seeking or endorsing a liaison with a young person who they have been a position of trust towards. Such online interactions leave staff open to malicious accusations or questions regarding their conduct.

A key principle for the Trust is the absolute professionalism of its staff and volunteers and appropriate professional boundaries between adults and children/young people. The definition of this boundary is distorted when an online or messaging relationship exists.

The Trust has established the following framework to safeguard children, young adults and staff/volunteers.

1. Prohibition of Contact on Social Media and Messaging Apps / Other forms of Online or Text contact with:
 - a. Pupils of the Trust;
 - b. Ex-Pupils of the Trust under the age of 25*;
 - c. Ex-Pupils of the Trust where a sibling (to be defined as full, half or step) remains a pupil of the Trust; and
 - d. Ex-Pupils of the Trust where they are deemed to be a vulnerable adult (to be defined).
2. Permitted Contact on Social Media and Messaging Apps – Sports & Other Organised Groups Exemption
 - a. Only permitted as part of a sports club that is affiliated to the recognised national governing body of the sport in question (e.g. Amateur Swimming Association for aquatic sports – the purpose of this requirement is that all nationally recognised governing bodies have their own safeguarding procedures that should be adhered to);
 - b. Only permitted as part of an organised grouping for non-sports purposes where express written permission for the existence of the Group has been granted by the Trust (e.g. Ten Tors; Cadets etc) and only for a limited duration for a specific event (e.g. training sessions and the completion of the event in question).
 - c. Passive contact only permitted, as part of a communications group that has at least four other adults (neither of whom are vulnerable adults) within the group and where the sole

or predominant purpose is for the arrangement of sporting fixtures and / or associated communications, and providing:

- i. Communications are limited to where absolutely necessary for the purpose of confirming attendance at or other arrangements for (e.g. transportation) fixtures and other club events;
- ii. No personal information is shared;
- iii. Participation in the group shall be terminated if the content of the group is of a nature (whether an individual communication or a pattern of such communications) that would be inappropriate for any reason, to include but not limited to:
 1. Discriminatory content;
 2. Sexually explicit or suggestive content;
 3. Other content that is likely to adversely impact the standing of the member of staff and / or the reputation of the Trust by virtue of the member of staff's involvement in the group (whether active or passive (i.e. being seen to have not taken any action to address the wrongdoing of others)).

Where social media or messaging contact is made in this way, the member of staff must be cautious and circumspect in its use and must keep records of any interactions.

3. Permitted Contact on Social Media and Messaging Apps – Family Exemption

- a. Full, half, stepchildren or other children in respect of which you have parental responsibility;
- b. Nieces, nephews, first cousins;

4. Permitted Contact with pupils aged below 25

No contact must be instigated other than that outlined above. If a pupil contacts a member of staff or volunteer the following should apply:

- a. Any contact received to be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and a record made (but the contact is not responded to)
- b. All contact must be directed through the College email system to allow traceability if there is a request for academic support, references, advice etc.

*Schools are obliged to retain safeguarding information on pupils until the year in which they reach the age of 25. This age has been chosen on the basis that this is the point at which the relationship with school ends; that the ex-pupil is sufficiently mature to manage a relationship with a member of school staff without parental support and sibling or friendship connections with current or recent pupils are less likely to exist.

Appendix O: Allegations Against Staff (including low-level concerns) Policy

Section 1: allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff, including a supply teacher, trainee teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place both inside and outside of school

If we're in any doubt as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold, we will consult our local authority designated officer (LADO).

We will deal with any allegation of abuse quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of trustees where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation. The case manager will be identified at the earliest opportunity.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

If we receive an allegation of an incident happening while an individual or organisation was using the school premises to run activities for children, we will follow our safeguarding policies and procedures and inform our LADO.

Suspension of the accused until the case is resolved

Suspension of the accused will not be the default position and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that there might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- Redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned
- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children
- Redeploying the individual to alternative work in the school so that they do not have unsupervised access to children
- Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents/carers have been consulted

- › Temporarily redeploying the individual to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school or other work for the trust.

If in doubt, the case manager will seek views from the school's personnel adviser and the designated officer at the local authority, as well as the police and local authority children's social care where they have been involved.

Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- › **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- › **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive, or to cause harm to the subject of the allegation
- › **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- › **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)
- › **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis that supports the allegation being made

Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the case manager will take the following steps:

- › Conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation before carrying on with the steps below
- › Discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the local authority. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or local authority children's social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police before consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police)
- › Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or local authority children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or local authority children's social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies
- › Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or local authority children's social care services, as appropriate
- › Where the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the individual's family, they will discuss these concerns with the DSL and make a risk assessment of the situation. If necessary, the DSL may make a referral to local authority children's social care

- › **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details
- › **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation
- › **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or local authority children's social care services as appropriate
- › Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate.
- › Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with local authority children's social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice
- › Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case (only in relation to their child – no information will be shared regarding the staff member)
- › Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child

Early years providers:

We will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), and any action taken in respect of the allegations. This notification will be made as soon as reasonably possible and always within 14 days of the allegations being made.

If the school is made aware that the secretary of state has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the school will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the school's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

Additional considerations for supply teachers, trainee teachers, and all contracted staff

If there are concerns or an allegation is made against someone not directly employed by the school, such as a supply teacher, trainee teacher, or contracted staff member provided by an agency, the

school shares safeguarding responsibilities with the employment agency or business. We will take the actions below in addition to our standard procedures.

- › We will not decide to stop using an individual due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with our LADO to determine a suitable outcome
- › The governing board will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the individual, or redeploy them to another part of the school, while the school carries out the investigation
- › We will involve the agency fully, but the school will take the lead in collecting the necessary information and providing it to the LADO as required
- › We will address issues such as information sharing, to ensure any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account (we will do this, for example, as part of the allegations management meeting or by liaising directly with the agency where necessary)

When using an agency, we will inform them of our process for managing allegations, and keep them updated about our policies as necessary, and will invite the agency's HR manager or equivalent to meetings as appropriate. Teacher training providers are expected to follow the same procedures as supply agencies.

Timescales

We will deal with all allegations as quickly and effectively as possible and will endeavour to comply with the following timescales, where reasonably practicable:

- › Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious should be resolved within 1 week
- › If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, appropriate action should be taken within 3 working days
- › If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, this should be held within 15 working days

However, these are objectives only and where they are not met, we will endeavour to take the required action as soon as possible thereafter.

Specific actions

Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution

The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or local authority children's social care services.

Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the school will make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the school will consider whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

Individuals returning to work after suspension

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.

The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the school.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports

If a report is:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to local authority children's social care may be appropriate
- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegations

If an allegation is:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO and case manager will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to local authority children's social care may be appropriate
- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it

Confidentiality and information sharing

The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The case manager will take advice from the LADO, police and local authority children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises

Record-keeping

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case.

The records of any allegation that, following an investigation, is found to be malicious or false will be deleted from the individual's personnel file (unless the individual consents for the records to be retained on the file).

For all other allegations (which are not found to be malicious or false), the following information will be kept on the file of the individual concerned:

- › A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- › Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- › Notes of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome
- › A declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference

In these cases, the school will provide a copy to the individual, in agreement with local authority children's social care or the police as appropriate.

We will retain all records at least until the accused individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

References

When providing employer references, we will:

- › Not refer to any allegation that has been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any repeated allegations that have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious
- › Include substantiated allegations, provided that the information is factual and does not include opinions

Learning lessons

After any cases where the allegations are substantiated, the case manager will review the circumstances of the case with the LADO to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- › Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- › The duration of the suspension
- › Whether or not the suspension was justified
- › The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual

For all other cases, the case manager will consider the facts and determine whether any improvements can be made.

Non-recent allegations

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

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

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

Section 2: concerns that do not meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors, which do not meet the harm threshold set out in section 1 above.

Concerns may arise through, for example:

- Suspicion
- Complaint
- Safeguarding concern or allegation from another member of staff
- Disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside the school
- Pre-employment vetting checks

We recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns in a timely manner to safeguard the welfare of children.

Definition of low-level concerns

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

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, **and**
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the designated officer at the local authority

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

- Being overly friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Humiliating pupils

Sharing low-level concerns

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to confidentially share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.

We will create this culture by:

- › Ensuring 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 concerns (With their Headteacher or DSLs).
- › Empowering staff to self-refer
- › 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
- › Helping to identify any weakness in the school's safeguarding system

Responding to low-level concerns

If the concern is raised via a third party, the headteacher will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

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

The headteacher will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action, in line with the Trust's staff behaviour policy / code of conduct. The headteacher will be the ultimate decision-maker in respect of all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL.

Record keeping

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. In addition to details of the concern raised, records will include the context in which the concern arose, any action taken and the rationale for decisions and action taken.

Records will be:

- › Kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018, Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, and the UK GDPR
- › Reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, we will decide on a course of action, either through our disciplinary procedures or, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harm threshold as described in section 1 of this appendix, we will refer it to the designated officer at the local authority
- › Retained at least until the individual leaves employment at the school

Where a low-level concern relates to a supply teacher or contractor, we will notify the individual's employer, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

References

We will not include low-level concerns in references unless:

- The concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the designated officer at the local authority and is found to be substantiated; and/or
- The concern (or group of concerns) relates to issues that would ordinarily be included in a reference, such as misconduct or poor performance