

Bethany School Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

September 2024

Table of Contents

<u>SAFEGUARDING POLICY</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>SCHOOL STATEMENT</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>GOVERNORS AND LEADERS RESPONSIBILITIES</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>ALL STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND PARENTS</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>EARLY HELP</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>SAFER WORKING PRACTICES</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>KEY TRAINING AREAS</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>IMPORTANT CONTACT DETAILS</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>CHILD PROTECTION</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>THE PREVENT DUTY</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>CHANNEL</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>THE ROLE OF THE CURRICULUM</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>SIGNIFICANT HARM and INDICATORS OF ABUSE NEGLECT AND EXPLOITATION</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT THAT ABUSE MAY HAVE OCCURRED</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL INJURY OR NEGLECT</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>HOW TO RESPOND TO A CHILD WANTING TO TALK ABOUT ABUSE</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>WHAT TO DO ONCE A CHILD HAS TALKED TO YOU ABOUT ABUSE</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>POLICY ON SUSPICIONS/ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE INVOLVING SCHOOL STAFF</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>DUTY TO REPORT CONCERNS ABOUT AN INDIVIDUAL'S SUITABILITY TO WORK WITH CHILDREN</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>ALLEGATIONS AGAINST PUPILS</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>OTHER SAFEGUARDING ISSUES</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>PHYSICAL INTERVENTION</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>PHOTOGRAPHY AND IMAGES</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>VISITORS</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>REPORTS AND SAFETY MATTERS</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>APPENDICES</u>	<u>28</u>

BETHANY SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Incorporating Child Protection

September 2024

This document has been reviewed with reference to the documents Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (Appendix 1), The Prevent Duty, Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers, July 2015, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, Guidance For Safer Working Practice For Those Working With Children and Young People in Education Settings 2022 (Appendix 2), and The Children Act 2004. These documents are kept on file in the school.

This policy should be read alongside departmental advice:
What to do if you're worried a child is being abused, DfE (March 2015),
Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners, DfE (July 2018)

Further detailed guidance can be found on the sheffield childrens safeguarding Partnership website here [Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership - Professionals & Volunteers](#)

This policy is written in line with our:

- Staff Recruitment Policy
- Online Safety Policy and ICT Acceptable Use Agreement
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Good Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- SEND Policy
- Mental health and Wellbeing policy
- Attendance Policy (incorporating 'children absent from education')
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy (incorporating 'Low level concerns')
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These are all available on request from the school office or via the school website

This Policy includes our 'Child missing education' and 'Sharing of nudes and semi-nude images' procedures.

SCHOOL STATEMENT

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

The terms 'child' and 'children' includes everyone under the age of 18.

Bethany school strongly believes that as precious gifts from God (Psalm 127 v 3), our children's welfare is paramount. We take seriously the Biblical command to 'learn to do right, seek justice, defend the oppressed' (Isaiah 1v17) and we recognise that "the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." (James 5:16). We commit ourselves to regular prayer, in our homes and in Bethany School, regarding child protection issues, and will take action to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in our school.

We **will** invoke child protection procedures where necessary. We are committed to safeguarding children and young people, and creating a culture of vigilance where everyone who works in our school shares this commitment. We acknowledge that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All adults in our school take welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and young people to talk to us about anything that worries them. Our concern is to always act in the best interest of the child.

Commented [1]: previously 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; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

GOVERNORS AND LEADERS RESPONSIBILITIES

The Bethany School Governors take seriously their responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to the school's care. The Governors will ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and actively promote the well-being of pupils according to section 10(2) of the Children Act 2004(a).

The Governors will ensure that appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are distributed, adopted, implemented and monitored. They will also ensure that if there is no trained Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on site, a senior member of staff will be identified to lead on safeguarding issues.

Our Head Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead is Mr David Charles. He provides support and direction to staff members to carry out their safeguarding duties and to liaise closely with other services such as the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the police, and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), when managing referrals (see Appendix 3 for role of the DSL and DSD). His role in Safer Recruitment is to ensure that the school operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff and volunteers who work with the children.

Our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are Mrs Sarah Walker and Mrs Emma Ireland. Their role is to provide support to the Lead and be available if the Lead is unavailable. Mrs Anna Daniels is the SENDCo and also DSD.

Our Chair of Governors and Safeguarding Governor is Ben Udejiofo. His role in Safeguarding is to take leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements and take the lead in dealing with allegations of abuse made against the Head Teacher.

The Governors recognise the need to build constructive links with statutory childcare authorities, and will work with social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

The Governors are committed to:

- Listening to, relating effectively and valuing children and young people whilst ensuring their protection within school activities.
- Ensuring safeguarding is taught 'as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum', including online safety.
- Employing the expertise of the staff when reviewing safeguarding policies and providing opportunities for staff to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and the child protection policy.
- Encouraging and supporting parents/carers.
- Ensuring that staff members are given support and training.
- Ensuring all staff have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm - behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, serious (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, can be signs that children are at risk.
- Having a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.
- Maintaining good links with the statutory childcare authorities.
- Ensuring the DSL and staff are aware of and follow local safeguarding partnership arrangements so that the school contributes to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- Following Safer Recruitment practices laid out in the school's 'Staff Recruitment Policy' to comply with best safe recruitment procedures. This includes safe recruitment practices and supervision

Commented [2]: previously Ensuring all staff have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm - behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting put children in danger.

and training for teachers, parents and other adults who work in the school in line with nationally published guidelines (KCSIE). All Governors and Leaders will undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check via 'Thirty-one eight,' right to work check, managers list section 128 check and will complete child protection training. The Governor's names and photographs will be published on the school website.

ALL STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND PARENTS

We recognise that **everyone** who encounters children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. Anyone working in the school (from this point called 'staff members', but also including volunteers) is particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children, to prevent concerns from escalating; they form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. For a description of this system, see Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023.

Where a child is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so, action will be taken to protect that child. Action will also be taken to promote the welfare of a child in need of additional support, even if they are not suffering harm or are at immediate risk.

Everyone involved with Bethany School understands that children are God's gift to families (Psalm 127:3). Children are 'wonderfully made' (Psalm 139:14) and parents recognise a duty to bring them up in the 'nurture and admonition of the Lord' (Ephesians 6:4). This involves parents lovingly training their children to do what is right and protecting them from anything that would cause them harm. All parents are members of Bethany School and are therefore bound by the Safeguarding Policy. Parents are given safeguarding information, covering issues of child protection, online safety and the school safeguarding policy in "new parents training", as an annual update in parents meetings and via email handouts. Our safeguarding and online safety policies are available via the school website and in the school office, and links to KCSIE and other helpful resources are provided.

All staff members have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn. They have a responsibility to identify children who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, vulnerable, or are likely to suffer significant harm. Staff have a responsibility to review and monitor these students on a regular basis and all staff members then have a responsibility to take appropriate action, working with other services as needed, including Early Help.

Staff members are advised to maintain an '**it could happen here**' attitude in relation to safeguarding issues. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child.

A **concern** is when you are troubled about a child's welfare and you have reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. It involves the child's safety and well-being.

All staff members should make themselves aware of the systems within the school that support safeguarding, which are explained in the staff induction. This includes the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; the Staff Code of Conduct; and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Staff members should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside of the home, and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Staff members should be aware of any signs of extremist views of any kind in our school, whether from internal sources – students, staff or Governors, or external sources - school community, external agencies, or individuals. We encourage pupils to see our school as a safe place where they can explore controversial issues safely and where our teachers encourage and facilitate this – we have a duty to ensure this happens.

A child going missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff members should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children who go missing, particularly on

repeat occasions (see later in this policy for details). More information about children who run away or go missing from home or care can be found here.

[Safeguarding Children Missing from Home or Care, or Away from Placement without Authorisation](#)

All school staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

If staff members have concerns about a child, they should raise these with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, **immediately**. This also includes situations of abuse that may involve other staff members. The Safeguarding lead will usually decide whether to make a referral to children's social care, although any staff member can refer their concerns to children's social care directly. Where a child and family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one agency (for example education, health, housing, police) an inter-agency assessment will be conducted. These assessments, undertaken by a lead professional (a teacher, special educational needs co-ordinator, General Practitioner (GP), family support worker, and/or health visitor), will identify what help the child and family require to prevent needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.

If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, the DSL should be informed immediately, who will make a referral to children's social care instantly. However, anybody can make a referral in a serious situation, but please inform the DSL if you do so. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.

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

In all cases, if staff members are unsure, they should always speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy.

EARLY HELP

All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later.

If staff members have concerns about a child, they should raise these with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead. If early help is appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or Deputy/SEND/CO) will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to children's social care for assessment for statutory services if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.

Bethany school staff are aware that **any** child may benefit from early help, however all school staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who has SEND or mental health needs, is a young carer, is at risk of being drawn into criminal behaviour or radicalisation, frequently is missing from education, home or care and others listed in KCSIE.

More information on Early Help is set out in Part one of KCSIE with full details of the early help process in Chapter one of Working Together to Safeguard Children.

CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to local authority children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately. Referrals should follow the local referral process.

It is important that schools and colleges provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process as local authority children's social care assessments should consider where children are being harmed in contexts outside the home. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm.

Additional information is available here: [Contextual Safeguarding Network](#)

The online tool [Report child abuse to a local council - GOV.UK](#) directs to the relevant local authority children's social care contact number.

SAFER WORKING PRACTICES

The school has regard to the *Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings 2022* underpinning principles as follows:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Staff should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Staff should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way including self-reporting if their conduct or behaviour falls short of these guiding principles.
- Staff should acknowledge that deliberately invented/malicious allegations are extremely rare and that all concerns should be reported and recorded.
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from the Head Teacher if they have acted in a way which may give rise to concern.
- Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief, and sexual orientation.
- Staff should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance, including prescribed medication, which may affect their ability to care for children.
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action, and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct prohibition from teaching by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).
- Staff and managers should continually monitor and review practice to ensure this guidance is followed.
- Staff should be aware of and understand their establishment's child protection policy, arrangements for managing allegations against staff, staff behaviour policy, whistle blowing procedure and their local authority safeguarding procedures.
- Staff should make themselves familiar with the relevant school documents and policies.

KEY TRAINING AREAS

All staff will undertake a safeguarding induction and e-learning course ([Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership - E-learning](#)) when they begin working at Bethany School. They will attend annual update training delivered by the DSL/DSD on our Safeguarding Policy and be required to read Part 1 and

Annexe B of KCSIE each year (see Appendix 1). Bethany School follows Sheffield Children's Safeguarding Partnership Professional Development Pathway which requires, amongst other things, 3 yearly Basic Safeguarding Children training delivered by Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board. Training will highlight the signs and symptoms of abuse to look out for, contextual safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm, how to raise concerns (including low level concerns about adults), understanding the difference between identifying a safeguarding concern, identifying a vulnerable learner and identifying a child in immediate danger, the staff code of conduct including online guidance, safer working practices and the role of the DSL.

Online safety training is an increasingly integral part of the whole school safeguarding approach and will be undertaken regularly (see 'online safety' policy for details). Relevant updates will be given throughout the year as needed in staff meetings and via email safeguarding bulletin/online safety newsletter. There is also a wealth of information, with links, to help schools and parents keep children safe online in KCSIE 2024.

Regular volunteers (including those who are parents) will also be required to read Part 1 and Annexe B, "Information for all schools and college staff" of KCSIE each year. Signed record sheets will be kept demonstrating that this has taken place, overseen by the DSD (see volunteer file/parent training records).

The DSL and DSDs will undergo updated child protection training every year to follow the Sheffield Safeguarding children in education training pathway.

IMPORTANT CONTACT DETAILS:

Safeguarding incidents could happen anywhere, and staff should be alert to possible concerns being raised in this school.

Safeguarding concerns about adults in the school should be made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Head teacher

Safeguarding concerns about independent school proprietors should go straight to the Local Authority Designated Officer - the LADO.

To contact the following safeguarding staff members please call the school office in the first instance, and see posters displayed around the school and found in the safeguarding induction pack 'how our setting safeguards students'.

Our Head Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mr David Charles, 0114 2726994

Our Designated Safeguarding Deputies are: Mrs Sarah Walker and Mrs Emma Ireland, 0114 2726994

Our SENDCO and DSD is: Mrs Anna Daniels, 0114 2726994

Our Chair of Governors and Safeguarding Governor is: Ben Udejiofo

Commented [3]: The new safeguarding governor is Ben udejiofo, Anna Daniels has been added to the team

All staff members may raise concerns directly with Children's Social Care services via the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub on 0114 2734855

The school will work with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as deemed appropriate. The LADO provides advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations that have concerns about a person working or volunteering with children and young people who may have behaved inappropriately, or you have received information that may constitute an allegation.

For further advice or help contact:

- Thirty-one Eight: 0845 1204550
- Sheffield Safeguarding Hub: 0114 273 4855
- Sheffield Social services Duty Social Worker: 0114 273 4491/273 4855
- The NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

- The NSPCC whistle-blowing helpline: 0800 028 0285
- The Police: 101 to report crime and other concerns that do not require an emergency response; 999 when there is danger to life or when violence is being used or threatened.

See Appendix 2 for Referral Flowchart

MULTI-AGENCY LEVELS OF NEED AND RESPONSE FRAMEWORK

In Sheffield we refer to the Sheffield Threshold of Need Guidance to support decision making in regards to child protection and early help. See the document and guidance found here for more information.

[Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership - Threshold of Need Guidance and the Early Help Assessment for are now updated](#)

CHILD PROTECTION

The Bethany School safeguarding policy incorporates 'child protection' which relates to pupils who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm due to neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, including extremism and radicalisation. Accordingly, the Governors have adopted the policy contained in the remainder of this document which sets out agreed guidelines relating to the following areas:

- The Prevent Duty
- Definitions of abuse
- Responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against teachers in the school.
- Supervision of activities and practice issues
- Helping victims of abuse
- Working with offenders
- Safer Recruitment including the level of DBS checks that will be undertaken for volunteers and Governors

THE PREVENT DUTY

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

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools' and colleges' wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads and other senior leaders in schools should familiarise themselves with the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 141 onwards, which are specifically concerned with schools (and also covers childcare). The guidance is set out in terms of four general themes: Prevent: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, Pursue: to stop terrorist attacks, Protect: to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack, Prepare: to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack

The full Government Prevent Guidance (2023) can be viewed at: [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\) - GOV.UK](#)

Staff members and Governors are asked to complete prevent duty training using the link below

<https://www.support-people-susceptible-to-radicalisation.service.gov.uk/>

Channel

Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. Schools and EYFS providers are expected to demonstrate that pupils are being protected from being drawn into terrorism through assessment, safeguarding practices and in the curriculum. Prevent referrals may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are susceptible to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from the school or college may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

The designated safeguarding lead should consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse or those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

Schools and EYFS providers have a critical part to play. In England, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) accordingly places clear duties on providers to keep children safe and promote their welfare. To protect children in our care, we must be alert to any safeguarding and child protection issues in the child's life at home or elsewhere.

As a school and EYFS provider, we are expected to demonstrate activity in the following areas:

- Assessing the risk of children being drawn into terrorism.
- Demonstrate that they are protecting children and young people from being drawn into terrorism by having robust safeguarding policies.
- Ensure that their safeguarding arrangements consider the policies and procedures of the local authority, the police, and the health service.
- Make sure that staff have training that gives them the knowledge and confidence to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism, and to challenge extremist ideas which can be used to legitimise terrorism
- Expected to ensure children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet

The school holds a separate Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy with regard to these issues. For additional support see pages 157-158 of KCSIE 2024

THE ROLE OF THE CURRICULUM

Bethany school recognises the crucial role of preventative education which keeps pupils safe and prepares them for life in modern Britain. We ensure that our pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted throughout our school aims, behaviour norms and curriculum. Our curriculum is fully inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate, according to our beliefs.

Pupils are taught about the values underpinning public life in the UK which have been summarised as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and the tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. This supports our pupils to be responsible citizens and prepares for an adult life living and working in Britain which is diverse and changing.

We understand that schools and colleges play a crucial role in preventative education. Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school or college approach that prepares pupils for life in modern Britain, creates a culture of zero tolerance for discrimination, and encourages mutual respect for all.

The broad and balanced curriculum includes age appropriate teaching about healthy relationships, boundaries and consent, stereotyping, prejudice and equality, self-esteem, how to recognise abuse and harassment and concepts of, and laws relating to these, and getting help.

Annex B of KCSIE provides resources which help inform our understanding and teaching about safeguarding:

We will also work with local partners, families, and communities in our efforts to ensure our school understands and embraces our local context and values in challenging extremist views and to assist in the broadening of our pupil's experiences and horizons. We will help support students who may be vulnerable to such influences as part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities and where we believe a pupil is being directly affected by extremist materials or influences, we will ensure that that pupil is offered mentoring.

SIGNIFICANT HARM

Some children are in need because they are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. Decisions about significant harm should be informed by a careful assessment of the child's circumstances and discussion between statutory agencies and with the child and family.

INDICATORS OF ABUSE, NEGLECT AND EXPLOITATION

The following definitions of child abuse are taken from the document *'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2024*. They are indicators of abuse which staff should be aware of when considering the well-being of children and the likelihood that they may suffer significant harm.

Abuse

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

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Physical Abuse

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

Emotional Abuse

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

Sexual Abuse

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

sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it..

Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion 12 from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Additional information on these safeguarding issues and information on other safeguarding issues is included in Annex B of KCSIE 2024.

SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

Bethany School is alert to the specific safeguarding issues outlined in KCSIE 2024 in relation to the following issues. The relevant Sheffield Safeguarding Hub guidance will be referred to as needed.

[Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership - Professionals & Volunteers](#)

Please read KCSIE Part 1 and Annexe B for further details about the specific safeguarding issues outlined below.

- Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or physical health issues
 - Children with SEND can face additional safeguarding vulnerabilities and are at greater risk of experiencing abuse and bullying. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children.
 - the school refers to the SEND code of practice and supporting pupils at school with medical conditions and provides extra support and attention for pupils with SEND
- Child abduction and community safety incidents
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) - see also [Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners - GOV.UK](#)
- County Lines
- Children and the Court System
- Children Missing from Education (See below and also school Attendance Policy)
- Children with Family Members in Prison
- Child-on-Child Abuse (See further detail in later section)
- Mental Health - see also our Mental Health and Wellbeing policy
- Preventing radicalisation
- So-called 'honour'-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage) see also [3.8.2 Female Genital Mutilation](#)
 - Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

- **Teachers have a specific legal duty to act** with regards to concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM) and. They must personally report to the police a disclosure that FGM has been carried out (in addition to liaising with the DSL). However, all staff should also speak to the DSL where there are concerns.
- The school will access the following documents if ever the need arises for such information, as referred to in Annex B of KCSIE 2024: 'FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers', 'Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation', 'FGM Resource Pack', 'FGM Fact Sheet'
- Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism
- Cybercrime
- Domestic Abuse – inc. 'teenage relationship abuse'

Additional advice on identifying children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available at:

- [NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse](#) Signs Symptoms Effects
- [Refuge](#) what is domestic violence/effects of domestic violence on children
- Safe Young Lives: Young people and domestic abuse | [Safelives](#)
- [Domestic abuse: specialist sources of support](#) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) (includes information for adult victims, young people facing abuse in their own relationships and parents experiencing child to parent violence/abuse)
- [Operation Encompass](#) (includes information for schools on the impact of domestic abuse on children)
- Bullying including cyberbullying - see also our 'Online Safety Policy'
- Children who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)
- Drugs
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith based abuse
- Gangs and youth violence
- Hate – see [Educate Against Hate](#)
- Homelessness – the DSL should be aware of the contact details and referral routes of the Local Housing Authority to enable them to raise concerns. Referrals to the Local Housing Authority should not replace referrals to children's social care where a child is being harmed or at risk of harm.
- Children looked after and previously looked after - [Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership - Children 'in care' or 'looked after'](#)
- Private fostering
- Sexting / Sharing nude and semi-nude images – See The [UK Council for Internet Safety](#) (UKCIS) non-statutory guidance on Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (YPSI), entitled 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people' [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident - GOV.UK](#), our Online Safety policy and [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK](#)

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

Bethany school follows statutory guidance found in the documents below with regard to monitoring and reporting attendance at school. See also the Attendance Policy for further information.

[Children Missing Education - Guidance for Local authorities](#)

Commented [5]: new section in line with new guidance. attendance policy also needs updating to be in line with this.

[Working together to improve school attendance - August 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

The Department for Education Guidance states that all children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. Children missing education are defined as children of compulsory school age who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Parents have a duty to ensure their children are receiving appropriate full-time education and may choose to educate them in a school or at home.

As part of the Bethany School's safeguarding duty concerning our pupils, the school will investigate any unexplained absences.

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 substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary 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 school's unauthorised absences and children missing from education procedures.

Bethany school will notify the local authority when we are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register at a non-standard transition point under any of the grounds listed in the regulations, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.

The school will also notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. The notification will include all the details contained in the admission register for the new pupil.

The School will monitor pupils' attendance through the daily register. The School will agree with the local authority the intervals at which we will inform the local authority of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly or have missed ten school days or more without permission. The School will monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. Pupils' poor attendance will be referred to the local authority.

Where a pupil has not returned to the school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education - the list below presents some of the circumstances that local authorities consider when establishing their CME policies and procedures:

- Pupils at risk of harm/neglect
- Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families
- Children of Service Personnel
- Missing children and runaways
- Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System
- Children who cease to attend a school
- Children of new migrant families

Full details can be found in *Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities*.

ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

- If the school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, they remain responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the provider meets the needs of the pupil. The provider should provide written confirmation that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on those working at the establishment.

ADULTS WHO SUPERVISE CHILDREN ON WORK EXPERIENCE

- When organising work placements, the school will ensure that the placement provider has policies and procedures in place to safeguard pupils.

Commented [6]: new sections - is this accurate about the work experience policy?

SHARING SAFEGUARDING/CHILD PROTECTION INFORMATION WITH A NEW SCHOOL OR COLLEGE

When a pupil with child protection issues moves school, the DSL should consider whether it is appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a pupil leaving, in addition to the child protection file. The DfE gives the example of information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting a victim of abuse and have the appropriate support in place for the pupil's arrival.

RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE

The following signs may or may not be indications that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

Physical Signs of Abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries that occur to the body in places that are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention.
- Neglect – under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc.
- Reluctance to change for or participate in games or swimming.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc., which do not have an accidental explanation.
- Cuts/ scratches/ substance abuse.

Indicators of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
- Any allegations made by a child concerning female genital mutilation.
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play.
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams, or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.

- Eating disorders – anorexia, bulimia

Emotional Signs of Abuse

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging. Also, depression/ aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness.
- Obsessions or phobias.
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/ or adults.
- Attention-seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/ stealing/ lying

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT THAT ABUSE MAY HAVE OCCURRED

See Sheffield Children's safeguarding partnership page below for detailed referral information, referral flow chart and contact telephone numbers. (Appendix 4)

[Referring a safeguarding concern to Children's Social Care](#)

A '**Concern**' is where you are troubled about a child's welfare, safety and wellbeing. Where a child is vulnerable, suffering significant harm or is likely to do so, action will be taken to protect that child. Action will also be taken to promote the welfare of a child in need of additional support, even if they are not suffering harm or at immediate risk (ie early help or pastoral support in school). Weekly staff meetings provide opportunities for regular discussion and sharing information where appropriate, although concerns must be reported as soon as possible.

1. You must report concerns as soon as possible to Mr D Charles (DSL), who is nominated by the Governors to act on their behalf in referring allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. In the absence of the DSL, the matter should be brought to the attention of Mrs S Walker, Mrs E Ireland or Mrs Anna Daniels (hereafter the "Deputy DSL").
2. If the suspicions in any way involve the DSL or Deputy DSL, then the report should be made to the Safeguarding Governor, Mr Ben Udejiofo who should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
3. Staff should only involve those who need to be involved when a child tells them he/she is being abused or neglected. Suspicions will not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.
4. Although members of the school are expected to use the procedure stated in step 1, it is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies or seek advice from a reputable safeguarding agency. Please inform the DSL immediately, if you do so. If, however, you feel that the DSL or Deputy DSL have not responded appropriately to your concerns, then it is open to you to contact the relevant organisation direct. We hope that by making this statement that we demonstrate the commitment of the school to effective child protection.

ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL INJURY OR NEGLECT

If a child has a physical injury or symptom of neglect, the DSL will:

1. Contact the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub for advice in cases of deliberate injury or when concerned about the child's safety. The school in these circumstances should not inform the parents.

2. Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The DSL will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
3. In other circumstances speak with the parent/ carer and suggest that medical help/ attention be sought for the child. The doctor (or health visitor) will then initiate further action, if necessary.
4. If appropriate, the parent/ carer will be encouraged to seek help from the Local Authority.
5. Where the parent/ carer is unwilling to seek help, if appropriate, the DSL will offer to go with them. If they still fail to act, the DSL should, in cases of real concern, contact the local Safeguarding Children Hub for advice.

ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the DSL will:

Contact the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub or Police Child Protection Team directly. The DSL will NOT speak to the parent (or anyone else).

1. If, for any reason, the DSL is unsure whether or not to follow the above, then advice from the 'Thirty one eight' or the LADO may be sought and followed.
2. Under no circumstances will the DSL attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of the DSL is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to the social services department or Sheffield Safeguarding Hub if there is no allocated social worker. It is the social services task to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989
3. Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse will normally be reported to the DSL, the absence of the DSL or Deputy DSL should not delay referral.
4. Exceptionally, should there be any disagreement between the person in receipt of the allegation or suspicion and the DSL or Deputy DSL as to the appropriateness of a referral, that person retains a responsibility as a member of the public to report serious matters, and should do so without hesitation
5. The Governors will support the DSL or Deputy DSL in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

HOW TO RESPOND TO A CHILD WANTING TO TALK ABOUT ABUSE OR NEGLECT

It is not easy to give precise guidance, but the following may help:

General Points

- If a child makes a disclosure regarding abuse or neglect, you must always take any such concerns seriously and follow the school's procedures for reporting allegations.
- Show acceptance of what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound).
- Keep calm.
- Look at the child directly.
- Be honest.
- Tell the child you will need to let someone else know – don't promise confidentiality.
- Even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse.
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell.
- Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.

Helpful things you may say or show

- Show acceptance of what the child says.

- “Thank you for telling me”.
- “I will help you”.

Do not say

- “Why didn’t you tell anyone before?”
- “I can’t believe it!”
- “Are you sure this is true?”
- “Why? How? When? Who? Where?”
- Never make false promises.
- Never make statements such as “I am shocked, don’t tell anyone else”.

Concluding

- Again, reassure the child what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (the DSL might have to consider referring to the Children, Schools and Families department or the Police to prevent a child or young person returning home if the school considers them to be seriously at risk of further abuse).
- Contact the DSL or contact the Children, Schools and Families department / Police/ NSPCC.
- Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed.

WHAT TO DO ONCE A CHILD HAS TALKED TO YOU ABOUT ABUSE

The Procedure

- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the child talking to you), writing down exactly what the child said and when she/he said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity). Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept safely for an indefinite period.
- Use the form “reporting concerns sheet” located in the school office
- Report your discussion as soon as possible to the DSL. If the latter is implicated, report to the Deputy DSL. If all are implicated, report to the Safeguarding Governor, who should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- You should not discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated in the above point.
- Once a child has talked about abuse the DSL should consider whether it is safe for a child to return home to a potentially abusive situation. On rare occasions, it might be necessary to take immediate action to contact the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub and/ or Police to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the child so that they do not return home.

HELPING VICTIMS OF ABUSE – THE CHILD’S WISHES

As a Christian school, we are committed to supporting victims of abuse, and encouraging them in their faith.

The school will ensure the child’s wishes or feelings are considered when determining what action to take and what services to provide to protect individual children through ensuring there are systems in place for children to express their views and give feedback. Staff members should not promise confidentiality to the child and always act in the **best interests** of the child.

If a child – or their parent/carers – makes a disclosure regarding abuse or neglect, the member of staff must always take any such concerns seriously and follow the school’s procedures for reporting allegations.

ONE-TO-ONE SITUATIONS

Staff working in one to one situations with pupils at the setting, including visiting staff from external organisations can be more vulnerable to allegations or complaints.

To safeguard both pupils and adults, a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of one to one work should always be undertaken. Each assessment should consider

the individual needs of each pupil and should be reviewed regularly.

Arranging to meet with pupils from the school or setting away from the work premises should not be permitted unless the necessity for this is clear and approval is obtained from a senior member of staff, the pupil, and their parents/carers.

Where staff are expected to work one to one with a pupil on a virtual platform, clear expectations should be set out for all of those involved that are reflective of the settings safeguarding policies and procedures.

Staff should:

- work one to one with a child only when absolutely necessary (both in person or online) and with the knowledge and consent of senior leaders and parents/carers.
- be aware of relevant risk assessments, policies and procedures, including child protection, Acceptable Use Agreements, and behaviour management.
- ensure that wherever possible there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations.
- avoid use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible. Such signs may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy.
- always report any situation where a pupil becomes distressed or angry.
- consider the needs and circumstances of the pupil involved
- ensure prior to any online learning, there are clear expectations of behaviour and conduct of all parties that have been agreed in advance.

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POLICY ON SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE INVOLVING SCHOOL STAFF

Staff, including volunteers, must be aware that they may be vulnerable to accusations of abuse and must, therefore, follow the schools code of conduct. This states that staff should maintain professional standards of behaviour and appropriate boundaries at all times in relationships between themselves and the pupils, themselves, and the parents, and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted by others. Staff should report any such incident to the Head Teacher. This is as relevant in the online world as it is in the classroom; staff engaging with pupils and/or parents online have a responsibility to model safe practice at all times.

If there is an allegation or suspicion of misconduct about a member of staff, the Head Teacher must be informed immediately. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

If the allegation or suspicion in any way involves the DSL or Deputy DSL, then the report should be made to the Safeguarding Governor, Mr Ben Udejiofo, who should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer via the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub and give as much information as possible. The school is required to inform the Disclosure and Barring Service as soon as investigations are completed, of any person, whether employed, contracted, a volunteer, or a student, whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children.

The address for referrals is DBS customer services, PO Box 3961, Royal Wootton Bassett SN4 4HF - Telephone 03000 200 190. Failure by the school to make such a report could constitute an offence, leading to the school being removed from the DfE's register of Independent Schools (legislation from The Education (Provision of Information by Independent Schools) (England) Regulations 2003. Compromise Agreements cannot apply in this connection.

The school will also make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns or would have been had they not resigned. [Making barring referrals to the DBS - GOV.UK](#)

Schools and colleges have a legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult where:

- the harm test is satisfied in respect of that individual;
- the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or if there is reason to believe that the individual has committed a listed relevant offence; and
- the individual has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity or would have been removed had they not left.

A person satisfies the harm test if they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm. It is something a person may do to cause harm or pose a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult. The Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) will also be informed if staff are sacked due to safeguarding issues <https://teacherservices.education.gov.uk/>

Regard must be given to the section 'Allegations of Abuse Made Against Teachers and Other Staff', in the document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', which is on file in the school office. This should be used in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a teacher or member of staff (including supply staff and volunteers) in a school or college that provides education for children under 18 years of age has:

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

This is due to the principle of transferable risk where an individual is involved in an incident outside of school which did not involve children but could have an impact on their suitability to work with children. For example, domestic violence at home – even if no children were involved, could a child trigger the same reaction, and thereby be put at risk.

DUTY TO REPORT CONCERNS ABOUT AN INDIVIDUAL'S SUITABILITY TO WORK WITH CHILDREN

There is a duty to report (including self-reporting) any incident in which an adult has or may have behaved in a way that is inconsistent with the organisation's staff code of conduct including inappropriate behaviours inside, outside of work or online.

Bethany school promotes an open and transparent culture where staff feel valued and are confident to report any concerns. We will ensure that all concerns about adult conduct are heard, received in a sensitive manner, taken seriously, actioned, recorded with clear outcomes and ensure all concerns that do meet the harm threshold are reported to the LADO within 24 hours.

[Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership - Allegations of abuse against people who work with children - LADO](#)

Staff should recognise their individual responsibility to raise any concerns regarding behaviour or conduct (including low level concerns) that falls short of the principles outlined in this document and the staff code of conduct. It is crucial that any such concerns, including those which do not meet the harm threshold (see KCSIE), are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately.

Staff members should:

- escalate their concerns if they believe a child or children are not being protected.
- report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern.
- report allegations against staff and volunteers to the Head Teacher, or where they have concerns about the Head Teacher's response, report these directly to the Safeguarding Governor and Chair of Governors.
- follow the organisation's whistleblowing procedures as appropriate.
- where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they should utilise other whistleblowing channels that are open to them as outlined in KCSIE.

The NSPCC 'what you can do to report abuse dedicated helpline is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by the school. Staff can call 0800 028 0285. The line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST PUPILS

Bethany School is aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse). And that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

All staff should understand that even if there are no reports in the school it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have **any** concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, many of which are listed below, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

It is more likely that girls will be victims and boys' perpetrators, but child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously whoever is the victim and the perpetrator.]

All staff should reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')

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- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm; and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

The School's policies on behaviour, bullying and discipline should be read in conjunction with this policy and will also apply to this situation. Bullying should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation if it is considered to be in the interests of a child who might otherwise be at risk, in the interests of the pupils at large or to allow the investigation to proceed more effectively.

Actions the school will take

The school deals with a wide continuum of children's behaviour on a day-to-day basis and most cases will be dealt with via school-based processes. These are outlined in the following policies:

- Good Behaviour and discipline policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety and IT acceptable use Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy

The school will also act to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by ensuring the establishment provides a safe environment, promotes positive standards of behaviour, has effective systems in place where children can raise concerns and provides safeguarding through the curriculum via PSHE and other curriculum opportunities.

Action on serious concerns

The school will take this issue as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult and address it through the same processes as any safeguarding issue. We also recognise that children who abuse others are also likely to have considerable welfare and safeguarding issues themselves.

Child-on-child abuse may be a one-off serious incident or an accumulation of incidents. Staff may be able to easily identify some behaviour/s as abusive however in some circumstances it may be less clear. In all cases the member of staff should discuss the concerns and seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

When an allegation is made by a student against another student, members of staff should consider if the issues raised indicate that the child and /or alleged perpetrator may have emerging needs, complex/serious needs, or child protection concerns.

Any suspicion or allegations that a child has been sexually abused or is likely to sexually abuse another child (or adult) should be referred immediately to the DSL, who will refer to the Sheffield

Safeguarding Hub or the Police, straightaway. However, staff may refer directly to the Safeguarding Hub or police, but please inform the DSL if you do so.

All allegations should be discussed with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) **the day** the allegation is made known to the school and advice sought from the LADO. (contact via Sheffield Safeguarding Hub)

Particular considerations for cases where child-on-child abuse is a factor include:

- What is the nature, extent, and context of the behaviour including verbal, physical, sexting and/or online abuse? Was there coercion, physical aggression, bullying, and bribery or attempts to ensure secrecy? What was the duration and frequency? Were other children and /or adults involved?
- What is the child's age, development, capacity to understand and make decisions (including anything that might have had an impact on this i.e., coercion), and family and social circumstances?
- What are the relative chronological and developmental age of the two children and are there any differentials in power or authority?
- Is the behaviour age appropriate or not? Does it involve inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation?
- Are there any risks to the child themselves and others i.e. other children in school, in the child's household, extended family, peer group, or wider social network?

The school will use resources on such issues to address these matters in PSHE.

Resources on child-on-child pressure can be found at:

[Resources on peer-on-peer sexual abuse in education and healthy relationships | NSPCC Learning](#)

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges

Bethany School staff are aware of the particular risk of sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges as outlined in *KCSIE Part 5: Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment*.

We understand that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two or more children of any age and sex from primary to secondary stage and into colleges. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. 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.

School staff are committed to handling any such reports sensitively and in line with current guidance and are aware that some groups are more at risk (girls, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and LGBT children are at greater risk).

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that there is a **zero-tolerance** approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, that it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It should **never** be passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "a part of growing up" or "boys being boys". Failure to do so can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it;
- recognising, acknowledging, and understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported;

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- challenging physical behaviour (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.

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 should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. All staff should understand it is important to explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

Sexual Violence

It is important that school staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse other children in this way and that it can happen both inside and outside of school. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus, or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. Staff should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.

Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)

For information on 'What is consent' see page 113 of KCSIE 2024

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded, or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual "jokes" or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (the school will consider when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim)
- displaying pictures, photos, or drawings of a sexual nature;
- upskirting (this is a criminal offence)
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:

- consensual and non-consensual nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos; Taking and sharing nude photographs of those aged under 18 is a criminal offence. [UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#) provides detailed advice for schools and colleges. [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK](#)
- sharing of unwanted explicit content;
- sexualised online bullying;
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media;
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats and
- coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they're not comfortable with online.

Guidance on this matter may be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 5.

Bethany School keeps a record of any reports of SVSH which is reported to Governors at the end of each academic year.

OTHER SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

Alternative Provision

If the school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, they remain responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the provider meets the needs of the pupil. The provider should provide written confirmation that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on those working at the establishment.

Adults Who Supervise Children on Work Experience

When organising work placements, the school will refer to its work experience policy to ensure that its pupils are kept safe. (See also Bethany School Work Experience Policy)

Sharing Safeguarding/Child Protection Information with a New School or College

When a pupil with child protection issues moves school, the DSL should consider whether it is appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a pupil leaving, in addition to the child protection file. The DfE gives the example of information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting a victim of abuse and have the appropriate support in place for the pupil's arrival.

Children Looked After

The school recognises that children looked after/ children in care are one of the most vulnerable groups of children so need more frequent observational assessment to meet their needs. All staff will be made aware of anyone in the school who is looked after so that the child can be supported adequately. On admission, it will be established who has parental responsibility so that statutory requirements are met.

The Governing body will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked after children or previously looked after children safe. Appropriate staff will have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. Information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her will be available for all staff involved, including the designated safeguarding lead having details of the child's social worker.

When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, the school will work together with all agencies involved and take prompt action when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.

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Commented [11]: changed from 'looked after children' in line with sheffield safeguarding preference

Care Leavers

A **care leaver** is defined as a person aged 25 or under, who has been looked after by a local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14; and who was looked after by the local authority at school-leaving age or after that date.

If the need arises, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise as necessary with the local authority Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support the care leaver, regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

Use of school premises for non-school activities

In the case of the school premises being hired out to organisations for non school activities, Bethany school will take steps to ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place including seeking assurances in line with [After-school clubs, community activities and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers - GOV.UK](#)

And using our own policy to report any concerns that arise.

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION AND USE OF REASONABLE FORCE

The use of 'reasonable force'

The term reasonable force covers a range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils. Bethany School makes reference to

[Use of reasonable force - GOV.UK](#)

https://www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org/assets/1/reasonable_force_screening_searching_sept_23.pdf

where reasonable force is required.

Reasonable force is defined as using no more force than needed to control or restrain pupils either passively, i.e. standing between pupils, or to physically hold or bring a pupil under control. The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident warrant it and the degree of force is in proportion to the circumstances and seriousness of behaviour. All staff can legally use reasonable force to prevent pupils hurting themselves or others, or damaging property and causing disorder. Parental consent is not required, however parents would be spoken to the same day and the incident recorded, via the usual incident reporting system, if a physical intervention has been used. Risk assessments and close monitoring of the need for reasonable force are required to maintain the welfare of pupils and staff members.

In cases where a pupil has frequently behaved disruptively, a risk assessment may point to planning positive and proactive behaviour support, for instance through drawing up individual behaviour plans, and agreeing them with parents and carers. Efforts would be made to reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use reasonable force or planned restrictive physical interventions.

Appropriate adjustments and/or training may be needed for pupils with special educational needs or disability.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND IMAGES

Bethany school will implement its Online Safety and ICT acceptable use policy in order to safeguard children against abusive situations involving images.

In summary, to protect children, we will:

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- Seek parental consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in publications)
- Only store photos on school equipment
- Use only the child's first name with an image
- Remind parents that photos taken at school events are for personal use only (i.e. not to be shared without permission)

EXTERNAL VISITORS/CONTRIBUTORS/SPEAKERS

Visitors with a professional role, such as the school nurse, social worker, educational psychologist, or members of the Police will have had the appropriate vetting checks undertaken by their own organisation. Any professionals visiting the school should provide evidence of their professional role and employment details (an identity badge for example). If felt necessary, the school will contact the relevant organisation to verify the individual's identity.

The head teacher and senior members of staff will use their professional judgement about the need to escort or supervise other visitors.

- Regular contractor employees will be subject to the appropriate level of DBS check, if any such check is required.
- Contractors and contractors' employees for whom an appropriate DBS check has not been undertaken will be supervised if they will have contact with children.
- Agency staff members attending the school should be verified as the same person that the agency has provided the vetting checks for.

A record of external visiting speakers is kept in the school office.

REPORTS AND SAFETY MATTERS

A Safeguarding audit is completed by the head teacher, in consultation with the Safeguarding Governor and submitted to the Sheffield safeguarding children's board annually each August/September. In addition, an annual head teachers report to governors is submitted in September (Appendix 5). The Safeguarding Governor undertakes an audit throughout the year and reports to the Governing Board in order to review all aspects of safety for children and young people.

The Governor Audit and report should consider the following issues

How does Bethany School

- Ensure high standards of provision and care for children and learners
- Actively promote equality and diversity
- Tackle bullying and discrimination immediately
- Actively promote British values
- Prevent radicalisation and extremism
- Ensure that all persons know how to complain and understand the process for doing so
- Ensure that children and learners are protected and feel safe.
- Challenge any discriminatory behaviour and give help and support to children about how to treat others with respect
- Consistently promote positive behaviour
- Ensure that all children and learners can identify a trusted adult with whom they can communicate about any concerns and know that these adults will listen to them and take their concerns seriously

- Ensure that written records are made in a timely way and held securely where adults working with children or learners are concerned about their safety or welfare. Those records will be shared appropriately and, where necessary, with consent.
- Make clear risk assessments
- Oversee the safe use of technology by ensuring that our policies and procedures are adhered to
- Use Acceptable Use Agreements
- Carefully select and vet staff and volunteers working with children and learners according to statutory requirements.
- Check all staff using Enhanced DBS checks
- Ensure that all staff have regular Child Protection and Safeguarding Training
- Ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Leads undertake training at two-yearly intervals, and in addition receive an update at least yearly
- Ensure that the Deputy DSL is trained to the same standards as the DSL.
- Ensure training allows the DSL to “recognise the additional risks that children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support SEND children to stay safe online”.
- Ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSL have job descriptions, where their roles are explicit, with clear cover arrangements. DSLs will be drawn from the senior leadership team and will be the persons carrying out the day-to-day work of safeguarding and child protection. Their responsibilities will not be delegated to others. See *Appendix 1*.
- Keep the Single Central Record up to date
- Regularly review safeguarding policies and procedures to keep all children and learners safe
- Ensure the school holds more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.

This policy will be reviewed annually

Policy Adopted by Governors on:

Policy Due for Review on: September 2025

Appendix 1

Keeping children safe in education part 1: information for all school and college staff, September 2024

This document can be found at the link below, in the safeguarding file in the school office, and on the notice board in the staff/parent room

[Keeping children safe in education 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

Appendix 2

Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings, February 2022

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

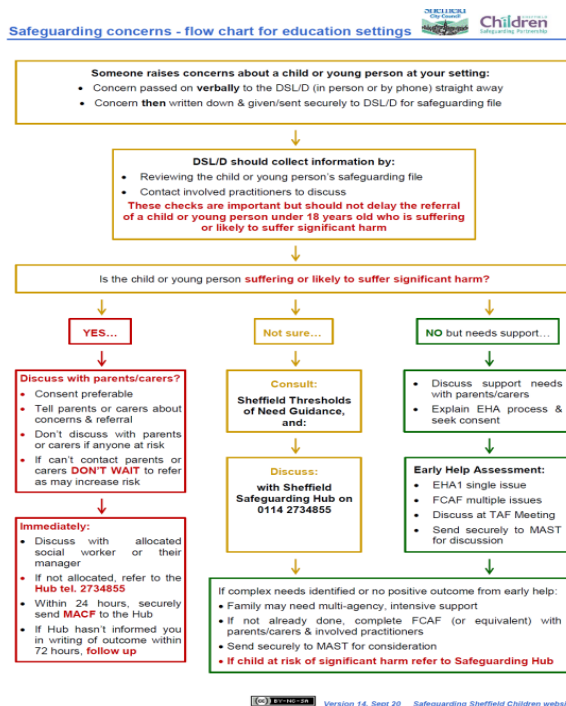
Appendix 3

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy

[Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership - Safeguarding Roles](#)

Appendix 4

Referring a safeguarding concern to Children's Social Care



APPENDIX 5

**Annual Head Teacher's Report to Governors under Safeguarding Policy
September _____ - August _____**

Number of safeguarding concerns reported to DSL: _____

**Number of referrals made to children's safeguarding and specialist services;
include the nature of the referral, (physical/sexual/emotional/neglect): _____**

**Number of safeguarding consultations held with the local safeguarding board or
'Thirtyone eight': _____**

Total number of 'children looked after' on the role throughout the year: _____

Total number of children 'previously looked after' on the role: _____

Number of 'Early Help' family meetings school: _____

Number of Gateway referrals following 'early help' meeting: _____

Number of Signs of Safety Assessments completed: _____

**Number of children reported to children missing in education, including those
moved into home education: _____**

Other comments on safeguarding issues: _____

Signed:

(Chair of Governors)

Date: