



Dame Alice Owen's School
The Dame Alice Owen Foundation - 1613

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

(Statutory Policy)

Agreed by Safeguarding Governor	October 2025
Ratified by Full Governing Body	October 2025
To be reviewed	Autumn 2026
<i>(reviewed annually)</i>	

Introduction

A whole-school, child-centred approach is fundamental to all aspects of everyday life at our school. At Dame Alice Owen's School we strive to create a culture which enables children to express their wishes and feelings and talk about anything that is of importance to them. We believe that every child deserves to receive an education within an environment where they feel safe to learn and develop. We want our students, staff, parents and carers to have confidence and trust in our goals and know that collaborative working is fundamental to create and maintain a child-centred approach to safeguarding.

In practice, this means we endorse the key principle that the welfare of a child is paramount, keeping them at the centre of all decision making in our partnership; working with them, their families, and those supporting them.

In line with our duties set out in the Children Act (1989, 2004) and Working Together (2023) we are committed to providing support and help as soon as possible, underpinned by our values that children are best looked after within their families, with their parents playing a full part in their lives where possible. We are also committed to ensuring that we work with agencies, including the Local Authority, to access support and targeted interventions for families when we consider that a child is, or may be, at risk of harm.

We hope that parents and carers will support us to undertake our statutory duties to offer early help and support and to liaise with agencies to protect children who have suffered or otherwise likely to suffer significant harm if we were not to do so. The core objective of early help support

is to prevent any child from being harmed or placed at risk of harm and therefore halt any escalation where possible.

This policy outlines the commitment to our legal duties to safeguard children, the responsibilities for all our staff and the specific roles and responsibilities for our key Designated Safeguarding Leads and Governance.

Important Safeguarding Contacts

Organisation / Role	Name	Contact details
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Mrs Vicki Blackburn	blackburnv@damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk
Director of Safeguarding/Senior Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Ms Sarah Ogufere	safeguarding@damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk
Senior Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Mrs Sian Jays	safeguarding@damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk
Additional Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	Ms Jade Edwards Mrs Beth Sandler Mrs Jeni McClean	
Designated Teacher for Children Looked After (DT for CLA)	Mr Steve Fry	frys@damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk
Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)	Mr Adam Wharton	admin@damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk
Mental Health Lead	Mrs Vicki Blackburn	
DSL Prevent Lead	Mrs Vicki Blackburn	
Chair of Governors	Mr Gary Haigh	haighg@damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk
Vice Chair of Governors	Mr Adrian Sykes	sykesa@damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk
Link Safeguarding Governor	Mr Gary Haigh	

Non School Contacts

Organisation / Role	Name	Contact details
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Duty LADO	Strictly for professionals use only
Hertfordshire County Council Children's Social Care	Customer Service Centre	Children's Services includes SOOHS (Out of Hours Service - Children's Services) - 0300 123 4043 Report concerns about a child or request support Hertfordshire County Council
Family Help and Support	Families First website, information for parents, carers and professionals Professionals can access support from Families First Coordinators when supporting a family with an Families First Assessment or other support in the Early Help arena	Families First (hertfordshire.gov.uk)
Prevent	Prevent referrals Parent guidance Advice line for members of the public Channel helpline	https://thegrid.org.uk/assets/prevent-national-referral-form 2025.pdf Parents' Booklet (educateagainsthate.com) ACT Early Prevent radicalisation 0800 011 3764 020 7340 7264
NSPCC Helpline	N/A	Call: 0808 800 5000 Email help@NSPCC.org.uk .
Police	N/A	Emergency 999, Non-emergency 101

The Statutory Framework:

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

[Children Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children

[Working together to safeguard children](#) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) DfE guidance outlines what organisations and agencies must and should do to help, protect and promote the welfare of all children and young people under the age of 18 in England

[Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership | Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership \(HSCP\)](#) The three partners (Hertfordshire County Council, Police and Health) have a joint and equal duty to ensure multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are in place at a local level, and organisations and agencies are clear about how they will work together to safeguard children and promote their welfare of children

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (KCSiE) - sets out the legal duties that all schools and colleges in England must follow to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under the age of 18.

[Resolution of Professional Differences including Escalations](#) - sets out that effective partnership working is key to keeping children and young people safe from harm. HSCP encourages constructive challenge as part of our culture of learning and partnership working. In May 2025, the HSCP published this revised policy for resolutions and escalations.

[Specific guidance for Schools/Education](#) - Details the established resolution process to ensure timely and effective resolution of professional differences.

[Serious Crime Act 2015](#), Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 which places a statutory duty on school staff to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18

[Statutory guidance on FGM](#), which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM

[The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#), which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children

[The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#) - sets out what must be recorded on the Single Central Record and the requirement for at least one person conducting an interview to be trained in Safer Recruitment techniques.

Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#), which defines what ‘regulated activity’ is in relation to children

[Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty](#), [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\)](#) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from

being drawn into terrorism”

[The Human Rights Act 1998](#), which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the [European Convention on Human Rights](#) (ECHR)

[The Equality Act 2010](#), which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race). This means our governors and headteacher should carefully consider how they are supporting their students regarding these characteristics. The Act allows our school to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting students (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled students. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there is evidence that they are being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment

[The Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve student outcomes. Some students may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence; homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying; or racial discrimination

Escalation of Concerns and Professional Disagreements about Decisions, including Convening an ICPC (initial child protection conference) [Escalation of concerns and professional disagreements about decisions, including convening an ICPC](#)

[Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#) produced by the DfE, outlines the importance of sharing information about children, young people, and their families in order to safeguard children. It provides clarity on when and how information can be shared legally and professionally to achieve improved outcomes. It also includes the “Seven Golden Rules for Sharing Information”, which provide a framework to support information sharing where practitioners have reason to believe failure to share information may result in the child being at risk of harm. It is non-statutory and has been produced to support practitioners in the decisions they take to share information, which reduces the risk of harm to children and young people and promotes their well-being.

Equality Statement, Children with Protected Characteristics

Some children are at greater risk of harm, both online and offline, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. At Dame Alice Owen's School, we are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and ensuring that all children are provided with the same protection regardless of any additional needs, barriers or protected characteristics they may have. As stated in the Equality Act 2010, we recognise the protected characteristics that may be applicable to our students:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership

- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

All staff and volunteers understand the importance of recognising that a child may benefit from Early Help intervention, and it is integral to our whole school approach to look and listen out particularly for children:

- who have a special educational need and/or disabilities (SEND) or health conditions
- who are a young carers who could experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Who are showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- have English as an additional language
- are known to be living in difficult situations - for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, trafficking, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- are asylum seekers
- are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- are looked after or previously looked after (see Section 11)
- are frequently missing from education, home, or care
- have experienced multiple suspensions, are at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and/or in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit
- whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be provided with elective home education (EHE).
- have a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

We know which of our students have special educational needs, disabilities, or additional health needs and recognise that they may face additional barriers, that can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse, such as behaviour, mood and injury, relate to the child's impairment without further exploration
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- assumptions that children with SEND can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying - without outwardly showing any signs
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges
- cognitive understanding - being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so
- reluctance to challenge carers (professionals may over-empathise with carers because of the perceived stress of caring for a disabled child)
- disabled children often rely on a wide network of carers to meet their basic needs and therefore the potential risk of exposure to abusive behaviour can be increased

- a disabled child's understanding of abuse
- lack of choice/participation.

Children Looked After (CLA)

The most common reason for a child to become looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect. We therefore ensure that the appropriate arrangements are in place to support these children and keep them safe from further harm. This includes:

- appointment of a Designated Teacher (DT) for CLA
- appropriate staff made aware of a child's looked after status
- ensure that necessary staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding of the child's needs
- ensure the child's record contains a clear understanding of their legal status and care arrangements, including the levels of authority delegated to their carer and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility
- keep contact details of the child's social worker, carer(s) and name and contact details of the virtual school head for DT to liaise with.

Children with a Social Worker (CWASW)

Virtual School Heads have a responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of:

- children looked-after
- children previously looked-after; and
- children with a social worker - defined as any child who has been assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and currently has a social worker; In line with [Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/promoting-the-education-of-children-with-a-social-worker-and-children-in-kinship-care-arrangements-virtual-school-head-role-extension) this has been extended to include:
 - those who have been assessed as needing, or previously needing, a social worker within the past 6 years due to safeguarding or welfare reasons.
 - children who have previously had a social worker this means the cohort of children with a social worker and those who have previously had a social worker who are aged from 0 to 18; and
 - children in kinship care arrangements - this means any friend or family member, who is not a child's parent but raising them for a significant amount of the time, either as a temporary or permanent arrangement.
- Children who are in Elective Home Education (EHE)
- Children Missing from Education (CME)

In offering advice and information to workforces that have relationships with children with social workers, virtual school heads identify and engage with all key professionals in Hertfordshire and beyond, helping them to understand the role they have in improving outcomes for CWASW e.g. DSL and deputies, social workers, headteachers, governors, special educational needs

co-ordinators, mental health leads, other Local Authority partners, including Designated Social Care Officers for SEND.

Dame Alice Owen's School ensures that our Designated Teacher has the appropriate training, so they are able to take the leadership of this crucial area of our safeguarding arrangements in collaboration with our Designated Safeguarding Lead which includes:

- working closely with virtual school heads to ensure that funding is best used to support the child's educational achievement and development needs that are identified in their personal education plans
- collaborating with the virtual school heads to also promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children.

Role and Responsibilities of the Whole School

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility at Dame Alice Owen's School. This policy applies to all of our staff including permanent, temporary and supply, volunteers, governors and contractors. It also applies to our safeguarding arrangements for extended school and off-site activities.

Dame Alice Owen's School plays a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of a whole-school approach to preparing students for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and sexual violence/harassment. This will be underpinned by our:

- Behaviour for Learning and Anti- Bullying Policy
- Pastoral support system
- Planned programme of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), which is inclusive and delivered regularly through our Learning for Life programme, tackling issues such as:
 - healthy and respectful relationships
 - boundaries and consent
 - stereotyping, prejudice, and equality
 - body confidence and self-esteem
 - how to recognise an abusive relationship (including coercive and controlling behaviour)
 - the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and FGM and how to access support
 - what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why they're always unacceptable.

Role and Responsibility of all staff (permanent, temporary and supply), volunteers and contractors

All staff will be required to:

- Read Part One and Annex B of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) and the reviewed version of this guidance at least annually. Staff/volunteers who do not work directly with children

are not required to read Part One and can be provided with Annex A (a condensed version of Part One).

- Translated versions of Part One Keeping Children Safe in Education can be found at [Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1 Translations | LGFL for staff, volunteers, parents and carers](#) whose first language may not be English, should they wish to use this.
- Read Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education which outlines important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues to ensure we have a culture that recognises that children within the specific circumstances can be at greater risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation, and a working knowledge to identify indicators.
- All staff sign to confirm that they have read the expected sections according to their role, have understood the content and their roles and responsibilities in our whole school approach to safeguarding.
- Promote and raise awareness about the importance of online safety when communicating with parents and carers. This includes making parents and carers aware of what we ask children to do online (e.g. sites they need to visit or who they will be interacting with online).
- Contribute to creating a culture for students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning to speak out and share their concerns.
- Contribute to creating a culture for any child defined as having a protected characteristic to speak out and share their concerns.

All staff will be aware of:

Our school's safeguarding arrangements and systems are explained to staff as part of their induction and annual update training. As part of staff induction new staff/ volunteers are provided with the following key guidance and information provided by our school senior leadership team:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- The role and identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputies
- The Behaviour for Learning and Anti-Bullying Policy
- Information Technology and Online Safety Policy
- Our expected safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods
- signs of vulnerabilities to look out for in children who may benefit from Early Help support, we explain to staff the Early Help process for children and their families and what their role is in this to support DSLs in ensuring children and their families receive support as soon as problems emerge the importance of Families First Assessments and how they can help identify emerging difficulties and therefore how sharing information, including with other practitioners, can support early identification and assessment
- what to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals
- the process for recording and sharing information internally to DSLs and on children's safeguarding records

- the process of making referrals to the Local Authority Children's Social Care and/or Police where required and the statutory processes that may follow
- the signs of specific safeguarding issues, such as child-on-child abuse, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM, radicalisation and serious violence (including that linked to county lines) [See Annex B Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- how to support and speak to children when they may share their worries or make disclosures of abuse, neglect or exploitation and contribute to creating a culture where children feel able to speak with the relevant safeguarding leads
- the importance of reassuring children that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- the importance of supporting families and providing a culture of support to encourage parents/carers to seek support and engage with our school and professionals when issues emerge or become a concern
- children can be at risk of harm inside the home (familial harm) and outside of their home (extra familial harms) and that any form of harm can happen directly or online
- the fact that children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGBTQ+) can be targeted by other children
- what to look for to identify children who need help or protection in accordance with statutory procedures under the children act section 17 (child in need) and section 47 (significant harm).

Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Our DSL team includes a member of our senior leadership team. We also have Deputy DSLs (DDSL) within our staffing group. Whilst one of the DSLs is referred to the 'lead' and will coordinate the DSL team, they are all trained at the same level to ensure that at all times one or more of them are available to carry out all of their designated functions in safeguarding.

During term time, the DSL and/or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) will always be available during school hours for staff in the School to discuss any safeguarding concerns. During out of hours and school holidays, the DSL will respond to concerns as soon as is reasonably practicable.

The broad areas of responsibility for the DSL are:

- Managing Child Protection Contact Referrals and cases.
- Completing Child Protection Contact Referrals for all cases of suspected abuse or neglect where there is a risk of significant harm to the child/young person, speaking to Police where a crime may have been committed and to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern.
- Liaising with the Headteacher to inform them of issues especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- Acting as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a Child Protection Contact Referral by liaising with relevant agencies.
- Supporting staff who make Child Protection Contact Referrals and other service referrals.

- Sharing information with appropriate staff in relation to a child's looked after (CLA) legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or an Interim Care Order or Care Order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
- Ensuring they have the details of the CLA's social worker and the name of the virtual school Headteacher in the authority that looks after the child or those currently working with a social worker.
- Responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring processes in place on school devices and school networks, as well as communicating with parents about the risks associated with unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks.
- Ensure records are kept in accordance with KCSIE.

The full responsibilities of the DSL and deputy(s) are set out in their job description, see [Annex C](#) KCSIE.

Role and Responsibilities of the Governing Body

The Governing Body must ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation. They must also have regard to KCSIE to ensure that the policies, procedures and training in the School are always effective and comply with the law.

The Governing Body has a senior board level lead to take leadership responsibility for the School's safeguarding and child protection arrangements.

All governors and trustees receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety, filtering, and monitoring) training at induction. This training equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenges to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training is regularly updated.

The nominated Chair of Governors for child protection is: Mr Gary Haigh

The nominated Vice Chair of Governors for child protection is: Mr Adrian Sykes

The Governing Body will make sure:

- the DSL has the appropriate status and authority to carry out their job, including additional time, funding, training, resources and support
- online safety is a running and interrelated theme within the whole-school approach to safeguarding and related policies
- the DSL has lead authority for safeguarding, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place
- the school has effective procedures to manage any safeguarding concerns (no matter how small) that arise. This includes those related to child welfare concerns, low level concerns and allegations made against staff
- that this policy reflects those children with SEND, or certain medical or physical health conditions, can face additional barriers to any abuse or neglect being recognised

- where another body is providing services or activities on the school site (regardless of whether or not the children who attend these services/activities are children on the school roll):
 - seek assurance that the other body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies/procedures in place and inspect them if needed
 - make sure there are arrangements for the body to liaise with the school about safeguarding arrangements, where appropriate.
- make sure that safeguarding requirements are a condition of using the school premises, and that any agreement to use the premises would be terminated if the other body fails to comply
- the Chair of Governors will act as the ‘case manager’ in the event that an allegation is made against the Headteacher.

Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher

Our Designated Teacher takes responsibility for Children Looked After, Previously Looked After and Children With a Social Worker. Our Designated Teacher also takes leadership of promoting the educational attainment of Children With a Social Worker which includes:

- working closely with Virtual School Heads to ensure that funding is best used to support the child’s educational achievement and development needs that are identified in their personal education plans
- to carry out their duties in line with [Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-and-previously-looked-after-children) and extended duties as outlined [Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-children-with-a-social-worker-and-children-in-kinship-care-arrangements-virtual-school-head-role-extension)
- working closely with our DSL for those children who are supported by a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan to ensure support for the education attainment of these children is appropriately entwined with safeguarding processes.

All staff and leadership are required to support HSCP principals to safeguarding children by exercising their professional curiosity at all times.

Family Help

[Keeping children safe, helping families thrive - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-helping-families-thrive) underpins the [Children and Wellbeing bill](https://www.gov.uk/government/bills/2021/children-and-wellbeing) which is a key step towards delivering the government’s ‘Opportunity Mission’ to break the link between young people’s background and their future success. It will better put in place support to drive high and rising standards throughout our education and care systems so that every child can achieve and thrive. It outlines the government’s commitment to keeping families together and children safe and supporting children to live in family settings where children cannot remain at home, including through kinship or foster care, rather than residential care.

In March 2025 the DfE published [The Families First Partnership \(FFP\) Programme Guide](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-families-first-partnership-ffp-programme-guide) this sets out how every child is to be kept safe and have the opportunity to succeed, children’s social care is to be reformed and committed to supporting every child to grow up in a safe, stable and loving home, for most children this means growing up within their family and support through early help and family networks.

Family Help will take place at the heart of communities, bringing together local services under a combined, multi-disciplinary practice approach and service offer. The key principles that will inform the delivery of services will include:

- wrapping support around the whole-family at the earliest opportunity - using the expertise of multi-disciplinary practitioners;
- ensuring consistency of relationships between children, families, and their lead practitioner;
- adopting one plan that will stay with families but adapt as needs change.

At Dame Alice Owen's school we endorse these principles and will continue to work in partnership and collaboration with children and their families so that they are supported from an early stage by being a part of and leading the conversations about change and aims for their children. We are keen to support families in a strength and solution-based approach, encouraging motivation and confidence to improve their own agency to make safe and positive decisions for themselves and their children.

Our principles include, but are not limited to:

- Approaching families and their wider family networks and communities with empathy, respect, compassion, and creativity.
- Avoiding reinforcing family shame, suffering, and blame.
- Making efforts to understand the impact of parental trauma influencing the dynamics and experiences of the family.
- Using strength-based approaches, working with parents and carers to identify what is working well and how their strengths could support them to effect positive change.
- Ensuring we work sensitively with parents, carers, and children, to identify and understand the impact of adversity and trauma in their lives; seeking to understand how adversity and trauma might manifest and affect children and parent's engagement and use their expertise to adapt their response with care and compassion.
- Adapting our responses to meet the diverse needs of parents and carers, including fathers and male carers, and the specific challenges being faced, including parents and carers of disabled children, and where harm is outside the home.
- Ensuring we understand the family's background, ethnicity, religion, financial situation, ability, education, sex, ages and sexual orientation, and potential barriers these create in seeking and accessing help and support.
- Being alert and recognising where parents or carers may not be acting in the best interest of the child or where children may be experiencing abuse, neglect, and exploitation as a result of actions by parents, carers, or other individuals in their lives. Practitioners use their skills and expertise to adapt their response to secure engagement.
- Being mindful of negative stereotypes when making decisions which might lead to false and unconscious bias.

Communicating effectively verbally and non-verbally by:

- Communicating with respect, being clear, curious, and inclusive; adapting to parent's and carer's needs.

- Providing materials to children, parents, carers, and families which are jargon free, developmentally appropriate and in a format that is easily understood.
- Ensuring any materials, such as minutes or reports, capture the school's contribution but also those from the children, parents and carers which must include their views and wishes.
- Supporting families to access support to translate information where English is not their first language. Our school makes every attempt to access interpreters where needed including British Sign Language.

Empowering our parents and carers to participate in decision-making to help, support and protect children by:

- Creating a safe culture which is an open and accepting forum, free from discriminatory or prejudicial judgements.
- Ensuring the open culture is one which still provides reflection and challenge where the information has the potential to be a risk or influencing factor which may impact on a child's safety and wellbeing.
- Asking families for their perspective on a situation or issue that arises, ensuring we consider their point of view and factor this in when thinking about support.
- Promote families' rights to support through use of advocates, family members or a supporter.
- Ensuring parents and carers are fully aware of who will attend meetings and discussions, if the child will be invited to participate, and the format of the meeting or discussion.
- Giving parents and carers adequate preparation at every stage, relevant information, a safe and appropriate environment for participation, and suitable access arrangements.
- Signposting parents and carers to sources of help and support available locally or through the local authority.
- Providing opportunities for feedback and review to ensure acknowledgement of positive progress but also reviewing and discussing any new or increasing issues to readapt a family's plans.
- Being transparent about our concerns and why we may need to request support from an outside agency; and our potential actions should our concerns increase for the children.
- Helping parents and carers to understand what the issues are and how these impact on the child, what decisions could be made, what changes need to be made, why and how, timescales and possible outcomes.
- Providing information about different types of support, what it involves and expects from parents and carers so they can make an informed choice and decision about which support pathways will be more helpful and effective for them.

Confidentiality and Sharing Information

The [Data Protection Act \(DPA\) 2018](#) does not prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Dame Alice Owen's School recognises that timely information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding. Whilst we promote collaboration and partnership with our families, fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children when required.

The following principles apply to Dame Alice Owen's School confidentiality agreement:

- the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 does not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe
- if staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if: it is not possible to gain consent; it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent; or if to gain consent would place a child at risk
- staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests
- if a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about sexual violence or sexual harassment—even if a victim doesn't consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there is another legal basis under the Data Protection Act that applies
- the DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children
- the DSL should consider the following points:
 - parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the child at greater risk)
 - the basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care where the child resides
 - where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the Police. While the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the Police remains.

Regarding anonymity, all staff will:

- be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system
- do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved
- consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities
- have regard for the Government's publication [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#) includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and

will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information with all relevant parties.

If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they can seek advice from our Headteacher, DSL or any person in a position of senior leadership.

Abuse, neglect and exploitation

All our staff are aware of what abuse, neglect and exploitation is and have an understanding of the different types of indicators as outlined in Appendix 3 which could suggest a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm.

We encourage our staff to be professionally curious about what to look out for as this is vital for the early identification of abuse, neglect and exploitation so that we are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection at the earliest opportunity.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. 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.

Our staff are aware that children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is 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 (Fabricated Induced Illness FII).

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

- not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate
- 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
- a child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- serious bullying (including cyberbullying)
- causing a child to feel frightened or in danger
- 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. It can be difficult to recognise emotional abuse and children may not always realise they are experiencing it. However, there may be indicators in the way a child behaves and reacts to certain situations.

Sexual Abuse

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
- **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
- **Online 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.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of adequate caregivers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

HSCP [Neglect Tool](#)

[7 minute briefing Parental Neglect of Medical Needs](#)

Exploitation

Exploitation in relation to children refers to the use of children for someone else's advantage, gratification, or profit often resulting in unjust, cruel, and harmful treatment of the child. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It covers situations of manipulation, misuse, abuse, victimisation, oppression or ill-treatment.

Our staff are aware that there are several types of child exploitation, including, but not limited to:

- **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE):** this is a type of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power, or status. It can involve contact and non-contact activities and can occur without the child's immediate recognition; this is due to their grooming by the abuser.
- **Child Labor Exploitation:** this involves the use of children in work that is harmful to their physical well being
- **Child Trafficking:** children are recruited, moved, or transported and then exploited, forced to work, or sold. They are often used for forced labour, sexual exploitation, or illegal activities.
- **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE):** this is where children are involved in activities of a criminal nature, often in gangs. They may be forced or manipulated into committing crimes, such as selling drugs or stealing.

Safeguarding Issues and Specific Forms of Abuse

All our staff understand that children can be at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. They are aware that extra familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, radicalisation, consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) and can put children in danger.

Staff are aware that Extra-Familial Harms can occur in various contexts, including online, within a child's environment or neighbourhood, at school, and in any space children occupy or access such as:

- Child abduction and community safety incidents
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

- County Lines
- Children and the Court system
- Children absent from education
- Children with family members in prison
- Cybercrime
- Domestic abuse
- Homelessness
- Mental health
- Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism
- Preventing radicalization
- The Prevent Duty
- Channel
- Sexual violence and Sexual harassment between children in schools
- Serious Violence
- FGM and the mandatory reporting duty for teachers
- Forced marriage

Detailed information about what staff understand about these forms of abuse and safeguarding issues is outlined in Appendix 4.

Additional advice and support - There is a wealth of information and resources available in this chapter to support schools and colleges.

Child-on-Child Abuse

At Dame Alice Owen's School we know that children can cause harm to other children. As a school we have a zero acceptance of child-on-child abuse and create a culture of keeping an open mind and attitude that "it could happen here". Our staff are aware that even if no reports are being made in our school, it does not mean it is not happening.

Our staff understand that it is important to challenge inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature, and we have clear expectations that incidents are not downplayed or suggested to be jovial or part of growing up as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and unsafe environments for children and young people.

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')
- physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment
- 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 nude and semi-nude 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
- 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).

Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduced the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. They may also experience it within their own intimate relationships.

Our staff understand that these experiences can have a detrimental and long-term impact on a child's health, well-being, development, and ability to learn. The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members.

Our staff are aware that domestic abuse can include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse (CPA) and that anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

Types of Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse can take, but is not limited to the following, signs to look out for and be professionally curious about:

- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Physical or sexual abuse
- Economic abuse
- Technology-facilitated abuse
- Psychological, emotional, or other abuse
- Stalking

Staff must stay professionally curious about any behaviours or things young people might say which could suggest that any of the above is taking place.

- **Violence against woman and girls (VAWG)** includes but is not limited to harassment, stalking, rape, sexual assault, murder, honour-based abuse, coercive control and while men and boys also suffer from many of these forms of abuse, they disproportionately affect women. [Crime and Policing Bill: reducing violence against women and girls \(VAWG\) factsheet - GOV.UK](#)

Child-to-parent-abuse (CPA) or adolescent-to-parent abuse (APA) is any behaviour used by a child or young person to control, dominate or coerce parents. It can include emotional, verbal, physical or financial abuse and includes “coercive control,” or in other words, the parent or other adult is compelled to change their own behaviours for fear of further abuse.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) explains that FGM includes ‘*all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs.*’

FGM is illegal in the UK and is considered as a form of child abuse that has significantly harmful and long-lasting consequences. It can also be referred to as ‘female genital cutting’, ‘circumcision’ or ‘initiation’.

Our teachers are aware of their mandatory reporting duty and the requirement to immediately contact the Police if they are

- informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her
- observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 (and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl’s physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth).

The duty for teachers above does not apply in cases where a student is at risk of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. In these circumstances, teachers know they must report to the DSL who will follow local safeguarding procedures.

Our members of staff who are not teachers, are aware that if they suspect a child is at risk or that FGM has been carried out, they should report this to the DSL immediately.

Prevent and concerns about extremism

Dame Alice Owen’s School is aware of our duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of our functions, to have “*due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism*”. This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty is one of our wider safeguarding obligations. Our DSLs and senior leaders are aware of the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 141-210, which are specifically concerned with education.

Our staff are aware that children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk is a part of our school’s safeguarding approach.

The Prevent Duty is concerned with all forms of terrorism and extremism. It also includes some forms of nonviolent extremism. For example:

- Right Wing extremism

- Religious extremism
- Environmental and Animal Rights extremism
- School Massacre ideology
- Involuntary Celibate (Incel) ideology

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

Radicalisation is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the Government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Although there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism, there are [factors that may indicate concern](#).

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to Children's Services [website](#), or [Channel](#), the Government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

The DfE also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which all staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism for a student. In non-emergency situations DSLs can also email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk. In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321.

Concerns about mental health

Mental health difficulties can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Poor or deteriorating mental health can also be a safeguarding concern in its own right. Our staff know to be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing mental health difficulties / challenges or be at risk of developing one.

If a staff member has a concern about a child's mental health, no matter the level of the child's emotional difficulties, they must speak to the school's DSL who will evaluate if the child is at risk of immediate harm, and if so, will escalate to the appropriate level of support which includes speaking to the school lead for Mental Health.

If a child is experiencing low moods, low self-esteem and general anxiety, our school mental health lead will be able to provide some advice about some self-accessed support through relevant approved wellbeing websites and apps. If however, the child is presenting with a concerning level of low mood and anxiety for a period of time then our mental health lead in partnership with the DSL will discuss with the child and their parents/carers to explore options of support.

If someone is experiencing suicidal thoughts but they do not need physical input from A&E then consideration will be given to accessing support from the Single Point of Access (SPA)/Crisis team. If a referral for targeted mental health support is required then a referral through SPA will be made.

If, however, a child/young person is at immediate risk the school will recommend they need to be sent to A&E, or dial 999.

Concerns about child-on-child abuse

In most circumstances, incidents of students hurting other students will be dealt with under our school's [Behaviour for Learning and Anti- Bullying policy](#). Our child protection policy will apply to all incidents that raise safeguarding concerns where the alleged behaviour:

- is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- could put students in the school at risk
- is violent
- involves students being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes).

If a student makes an allegation of abuse against another student:

- Staff must record the allegation using Edulink One (child protection tab) and report to a member of the Safeguarding Team, staff should not investigate the matter
- The DSL/DDSL will assess and consider the relevant next steps which may include, speaking with the child and parents, accessing relevant consultation lines provided to schools by the Local Authority, making a request for support to Children's Services as well as the Police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence or the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), if appropriate
- The DSL/DDSL will consider whether a risk assessment or a safety and support plan would be beneficial for any children involved, including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected, with a named person they can talk to if needed. This should include consideration of all aspects and areas of the school environment and beyond, for example off-site activities and school transport
- The DSL/DDSL will speak to the child and their parent/s or carers to share the concerns, gain their views and consent to liaise with other agencies if there are any identified risks and unmet needs
- If the incident is a criminal offence, schools have a duty to report this and thereafter work closely with the Police (and other agencies as required) while protecting children and/or taking any measures to manage risk. For incidences which involve significant harm and/or a potential criminal offence, the DSL will endeavour to gain consent but may override this should gaining consent increase the risk to a child
- Our DSLs are committed to ensuring that where concerns are raised about child-on-child abuse, incidences are taken seriously and dealt with fairly. DSLs will consider all information available to them and ensure that any action or decision is proportionate for all children involved, and that such decisions do not disproportionately impact on their

access to education, although at times some restrictions or adaptations may be required to manage identified risk.

Creating a culture where children feel safe in school and minimising the risk of all forms of abuse.

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of any form of abuse, neglect and exploitation irrespective of from whom and where this comes from, including child-on-child abuse. Creating a supportive environment where children can feel confident in reporting incidents is key to our safeguarding culture at Dame Alice Owen's School.

We expect all staff to:

- challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images
- be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders, for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female students, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- ensure our curriculum helps to educate students about appropriate behaviour and consent
- ensure students are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems
- students can tell any member of staff or use the report buttons on the student intranet
- reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
- be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems in the school or elsewhere that could be addressed by us updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with our safeguarding partners
- support children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. We will do all we can to make sure the victim, and alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed
- consider intra-familial harms (adults close to the child and family) and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment.

If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff or volunteer

All staff are aware they should always be prepared as children can disclose spontaneously to any one anywhere.

Dame Alice Owen's School is situated within the County of Hertfordshire which has a rich and diverse population. We cannot, and do not, assume that all children and their families have the ability, understanding, language and resilience to convey any difficulties they may experience. It is key to our school ethos to recognise the needs of children and their families and to recognise and provide support where English may not be their first language and/or the children or family members have special educational needs; and without doing so may impede their ability to represent their voice, wishes and feelings.

We listen to children by:

- showing patience regardless of a child's age as we know they can find it hard to find the words to express themselves
- encouraging children to tell their story in their own words
- avoiding the use of leading questions or suggesting what may have happened, instead we maintain genuine curiosity, and only ask open-ended questions / prompts.

We reassure children by:

- making sure a child does not feel they are in trouble and that they have done the right thing in speaking to staff
- we let a child know it is not their fault as children are often made to feel blame by those harming them
- never promising confidentiality and being transparent about our obligations to share information if we are concerned that they are at risk of harm
- helping children to understand how we plan to support them and their family and let them know what action we will need to take next to support them.

Recording concerns

Our staff know that reporting concerns is a procedural requirement when safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Our staff are clear that they must:

- record all conversations relating to any level of concerns on our recording system Edulink One; ensuring that the record is as detailed as possible, is factual, does not contain assumptions or personal judgement and captures the child's account in their own words
- inform the DSL about their concern as soon as possible; where the concern involves a disclosure or concern that the child is at risk of harm they must inform the DSL immediately.

Our staff are aware that such information is confidential and should be shared with the DSL only who may hold additional information about the child and their family, and therefore can form a view on its significance and whether any action is required. Staff will not share information amongst themselves and will not share the information outside of the formal reporting process unless asked to by the DSL. This ensures that information is shared without delay enabling the DSL to carry out any necessary functions of their role whilst upholding confidentiality for the child and their family.

What school and college staff should do if they have concerns about a child

Dame Alice Owen's School is committed to ensuring that all children feel safe and comfortable to share and report any concerns and/or allegations about their personal experiences at home, in the community, online or regarding a member of staff or other children in the school. As outlined above, all our staff are clear on the importance of listening to and supporting children when making disclosures, and the need to reassure them.

Any member of staff, including supply teachers, contract workers, volunteers, governors/trustees and visitors at Dame Alice Owen's School who has any concerns about a child's welfare should:

- maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned and always act in the best interests of the child. Never promise a child confidentiality
- reassure the child they have done nothing wrong and if appropriate explain to them how they will be supported and who you will need to share information with
- record what the child or others have disclosed using their language - or describe what you have seen or suspect and your rationale for this. Also ensure you make a note of any injuries observed or described by the child (*if it is the latter two*)
- consider if the child needs medical attention and if so prioritise ensuring they receive this
- you must never delay reporting your concerns about the welfare of a child and always act immediately by reporting/speaking to the school's DSL/deputies
- record what the child or other has disclosed in their language or describe what you have seen or suspect and your rationale for this (*if it is the latter two*)

The DSL or deputy will:

- use Hertfordshire threshold guidance to initially assess the concerns raised and consider the impact on the child's welfare, at the same time their safety. They will also review the child's record in order to establish if there has been any previous concerns (records help to establish relevant history and risk factors for example even if a concern appears low level on the surface, a series of incidents can highlight patterns of ongoing abuse and neglect.) The DSL will use the Continuum of Need to support their analysis and rationale for any decision
- DSL or deputy will speak to the child to verify their wishes and feelings, contact the child's parents or carers to either inform them of the concerns and also to gauge their view (it will be at the discretion of the DSL team to carefully consider if this action may place a child at further risk, e.g. if the child has disclosed abuse and neglect caused in the family home)
- if the child has not suffered significant harm as defined by the Children Act, DSL may also decide to seek advice through the range of Hertfordshire departmental non child protection advice lines. The purpose of these are to support DSLs to consider the best options to engage children and their families with an offer of early help support, preventing escalation where possible but also request for support via Children's Services where necessary. Examples of this are managing any support for the child internally via the school's or college's own pastoral support processes and/or undertaking a Families First Assessment
- If it is immediately apparent that a child has suffered significant harm or is at risk of harm e.g. suffered abuse, neglect and/or exploitation, the school's DSL will make a referral to Children's Social Care to request support at the earliest opportunity; consent will be gained where appropriate. If there has been a crime committed within the circumstances of the abuse, they will also report this to the Police.

Risk Management Plan (RAMP) and Safety and Support Plan (S&SP)

RAMP - When there has been a report of sexual violence, or and harassment, the DSL (or a deputy) will make an immediate Risk and Needs Assessment for both the alleged victim and the perpetrator. The RAMP is to enable the DSL to use their critical thinking and consider what the needs of any child/ren are, analyse what are the risks and what measures can be put in place to protect children and keep them safe from further harm. Risk assessments may be recorded as a formal electronic document or by discussion between the DSL/Senior deputies and relevant parties. In both instances the RAMP will be kept under review.

The school risk assessment is not intended to replace the detailed assessments of other expert specialist assessments, but the DSL/Senior Deputy DSLs will seek and share information from other agencies where required to inform the school's understanding from a multi-agency perspective so that a holistic approach in supporting and protecting children can be strengthened.

We are aware that children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will find the experience stressful and distressing, this can also impact on the family and can cause the child adverse effect on their educational attainment and can be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school or college. The RAMP will take this into account and plan accordingly on the gravity of a situation to treat incidents on a case-by-case situation.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part Five Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment provides statutory duty for schools and colleges.

The RAMP is the responsibility of Dame Alice Owen's School and leadership and management team, and it is critical that parents and carers place confidence and trust in our school by working with us and supporting the plan.

Online Safety and Filtering and monitoring

We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and

We are alert to the risks from misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories (including "fake news"), and their potential impact on pupil wellbeing.

To address this, our school aims to:

- have robust processes (including filtering and monitoring systems) in place to ensure to the best of our ability, the online safety of students, staff, volunteers and governors
- protect and educate the whole school community to be safe and responsibly use technology, including mobile and smart technology
- set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole school community
- establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate.

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following 4 categories of risk as identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025:

Content - being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism

Contact - being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, for example: child-on-child pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes

Conduct - online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes harm, for example: making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and

Commerce - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams.

All DAOS computer devices and internet connections are monitored and filtered, this includes, Windows computers, Apple computers and Google ChromeBooks, both on the schools physical wired network and wireless networks. Guest devices, i.e. those of speakers, contractors that use the school's Guest wireless network are monitored and receive the same filtering as students. Our school carries out an annual review of filtering and monitoring arrangements, using the DfE Plan technology to assess our practice against the filtering and monitoring standards. Governors review and oversee this process.

We will also have regard to the DfE guidance on the use of generative AI in education (2025) and National Cyber Security Centre advice on school cyber resilience.

Managing Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations made about staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors

[Section 11 of the 2004 Children's Act](#) places an expectation on our school to have a clear policy in line with HSCP (Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership) for dealing with allegations against staff who work with children. All staff based within our school will be considered to be in either a position of trust or working with children.

A 'position of trust' is one in which a teacher or other member of staff/volunteer is in a position of power or influence over a child, by virtue of the work or nature of activity being undertaken. [The Sexual Offences Act 2003 \(ss.16-24\)](#) and/or [Crown Prosecution Service Website](#) sets out detailed definitions and a range of criminal offences associated with abuse of such a position.

A person aged 18 or over is said to be in a position of trust in relation to students at the school/college if they:

- look after children at the school/college. "Looking after" is defined as regularly involved in caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of such persons
- a professional who has power and authority in a child's life and may have a key influence on their future is regarded as being in a 'position of trust'
- such a person will have regular contact with the child and may be acting in loco parentis.

The Police, Crime, Sentences and Court Act (August 2022) extended the roles which fall into the definition of 'Position of Trust' within the Sexual Offences Act (2003). The new legislation makes it an offence for anyone who coaches, teaches, trains, supervises or instructs a child under 18, on

a regular basis, in a sport or a religion to engage in inappropriate relationships with those children/young people.

On receipt of any information which raises a concern about any of our staff, the Headteacher, or Chair of Governor, will consider whether the information suggests one of the following:

An allegation, that is to say there is a claim or assertion that someone has done something illegal or wrong, typically one made without proof. The threshold for an allegation that is considered by the LADO is wider than those in which there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, harm. The LADO threshold is, in respect of all people working or volunteering with children in a position of trust, where they have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child/ young person
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child/young person
- behaved towards a child/young person in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children/young people.

Any information or concern which meets the above threshold should be referred to the LADO service prior to the school taking any action.

A Concern about the Quality of Care/Practice. This is an accusation, not of a child protection nature, but that the care/practice provided to a child does not meet the standards expected and is about the level of value provided by any care/practice resource, as determined by some measurement. As with quality in other fields, it is an assessment of whether something is good enough and whether it is suitable for its purpose.

These types of concerns should be addressed internally using performance management processes.

A Complaint. This is a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable. A concern may be defined as ‘an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought’. A complaint therefore can be defined as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action’.

These issues must be addressed through internal complaints policy and procedures.

The two levels of Concerns and Allegations are:

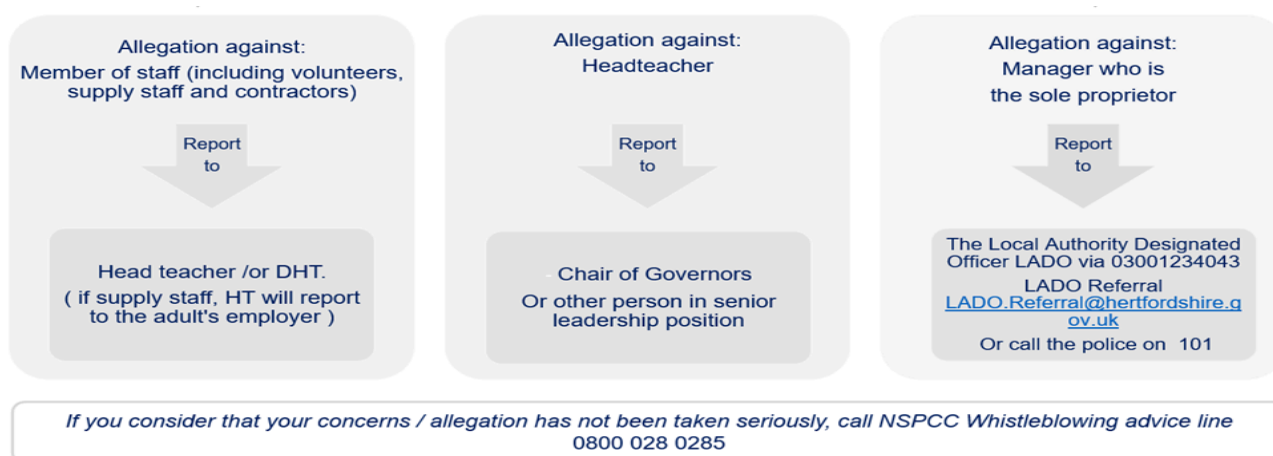
<p>1. Concerns/Allegations that may MEET the harm threshold.</p> <p>An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child. (Harm threshold) • possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; (criminal threshold) • behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, (suitability threshold) • behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (transferable risk threshold). 	<p>2. Concerns/Allegations that DO NOT meet the harm threshold.</p> <p>Behaviours that are inconsistent with school's staff code of conduct and other associated policies, or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), therefore low level concerns LLC) e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being over friendly with children • having favourites • taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy • engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or • humiliating children.
---	--

When concerns/allegations meet the harm threshold Dame Alice Owen's School are required to comply with both [Part Four of KCSiE](#) and also Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures manual section

<https://hertfordshirescp.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/managing-allegations-against-adults-who-work-with-children-and-young-people>

All staff and volunteers at Dame Alice Owen's School are required to immediately report any level of concerns about behaviour and/or conduct of adult working/volunteering with children towards a child to leadership and management. This includes reporting adults who are providing out of school activities/leasing Dame Alice Owen's School facilities.

It is important for staff or any person associated with Dame Alice Owen's School to know who to report concerns to:



What happens next

Headteacher/Chair of Governors may undertake initial inquiries to gather key information. They will assess whether the allegation meets the LADO threshold, if it does they will make a referral to LADO giving consideration to our staff code of conduct, managing allegations policy and [HSCP procedures](#)

If necessary, they will complete a LADO referral within one working day.

If the allegation does not meet the harm threshold for LADO, our Headteacher/Chair of Governors will follow the school's Low-Level Concerns protocol.

Concerns that DO NOT meet the harm threshold - Low-Level Concerns (LLC)

The term low-level does not seek to minimise the seriousness of any concerns, the term low-level indicates that it is a concern that is lower than the LADO threshold, but they are still concerns that need to be considered with a safeguarding lens and require suitable action through internal procedures of the school. It is important these are managed robustly as a repeated low-level concern or a pattern of concerns which may not meet the LADO threshold individually may together indicate a concern about the person's suitability and potential risk to children in the capacity of their role.

At Dame Alice Owen's School, the leadership team manages LLC using our school's internal due process, if we consider a member of staff has breached our school's code of conduct, depending on the seriousness and impact on a child, we will also liaise with our human resource service:

- 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 safeguarding concerns
- 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 identify any weakness in the school's or college's safeguarding system.

All staff should know that in line with our school's culture we encourage staff to have the confidence and trust to confide in the leadership team if they have concerns about adults working or volunteering with children. Low level concerns should be reported to the Headteacher or Deputy in their absence.

After-school clubs, community activities and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers

Dame Alice Owen's School has a legal duty of care to ensure we maintain a safe environment for children. If we receive an allegation or concern relating to an incident that has happened when an outside individual or organisation are using our school premises, we will ensure that we follow our school's safeguarding and child protection procedures, which includes reporting allegations to the LADO, Children's Social Care and Police if a crime has been committed.

It is the role of the Governing Body to ensure any organisation that hires the school premises is compliant with the guidance set out in [After-school clubs, community activities and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/after-school-clubs-community-activities-and-tuition-safeguarding-guidance-for-providers). In particular we have embedded within our lease agreement with external organisations, the standards and expectations for them to provide evidence and assurance of their safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Other complaints

If any of our stakeholders are not satisfied with any aspects of how we implement and comply with safeguarding policies and procedures, our school Complaints Procedures can be found on our school website [here](#).

Whistleblowing

At Dame Alice Owen's School we strive to create a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to confidentially share any concerns they have about poor or unsafe practice, concerns or allegations against staff or the school's safeguarding practice and arrangements so they can be addressed appropriately. We have a separate Whistleblowing policy that can be found [here](#).

You can whistle blow directly to Children's Social Care on 0300 123 4043 and/or the Police on 999, or to the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline 0800 028 0285 help@nspcc.org.uk

Record Keeping

Dame Alice Owen's will hold records confidentially, safely, securely and in line with our records retention schedule.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Records will 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 (including rationale), and the outcome.

Concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate child protection file for each child (either paper recorded or electronically).

Any non-confidential records will be readily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to know/access them.

Safeguarding records relating to an individual child will be retained for the student until they reach their 25th birthday or 31st birthday if there is an EHCP in place (Information Records Management Society 2022). [eBook: Ultimate Guide to Electronic Records Management | Laserfiche](#)

Safeguarding records which contain information about allegations of sexual abuse were being retained for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA). This has now concluded and the Home Office sent a letter to schools advising that files no longer needed to be kept indefinitely. However, the recommendations from the inquiry have stated:

Recommendation 17: Access to records The UK government should direct the Information Commissioner's Office to introduce a code of practice on keeping and accessing records which relate to child sexual abuse. The code should require records about child sexual abuse and allegations of child sexual abuse to be kept for 75 years, with appropriate review periods.

The school will follow the Recommendation 17.

Receiving in and transferring student records to other education provision

If a child for whom the school has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that their safeguarding information file is forwarded as soon as possible, securely, and separately from the main student file.

To allow the new school/college to have support in place when the child arrives, this should be within:

- **5 days** for an in-year transfer, or
- **the first 5 days** of the start of a new term.

In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the wellbeing and safety of the child.

Retention, archiving and destruction of records

For records that are not transferred to another school, for example the child leaves the country or is going to be home educated, we have:

- a clear retention policy
- secure and appropriate system to archive with restricted access
- a written assurance from our providers of our electronic recording systems that all records are maintained securely which includes any archived records.

Safeguarding Training and Development

All staff receive approved safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) so that everyone understands the expectations, applicable to their role and responsibilities. We ensure that all staff and volunteers' continuous professional development (CPD) is maintained and keep a record of this. In addition to statutory training all staff receive regular updates and CPD via email, e-bulletins, and staff meetings.

The DSL/DDSLs receive formal training specific to their safeguarding role and duties every two years. They also undertake PREVENT Awareness training every three years and Home Office online training on an annual basis as a minimum. In addition to this, the DSL/DDSLs attend local training sessions on issues such as Prevent in Education organised by Hertfordshire County Council to ensure they are aware of local safeguarding issues.

In-between formal training the DSL/DDSLs' knowledge and skills are refreshed (e.g. via e-bulletins, meetings with other DSLs or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments). This training provides the DSL and DDSLs with a good understanding of their own role, how to identify, understand and respond to specific needs that can increase the vulnerability of children, as well as specific harms that can put children at risk, and the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly children's social care so they:

- Understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and relevant local authority children's social care referral arrangements.
- Have a working knowledge of how Hertfordshire and other relevant local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- Understand the importance of the role the DSL/ DDSLs have in providing information and support to children's social care in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes.
- Are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers.
- Understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners. (Full details in Chapter one of [working together to safeguard children](#)).
- Understand and support the school with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.
- Are able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at school.
- Can recognise the additional risks that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support children with SEND to

stay safe online.

- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses; and
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school may put in place to protect them.

Raising Awareness

The DSL/DDSLs:

- Ensure all staff including part time, contractors, volunteers and supply staff have access to, and understand the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures, especially new and part-time staff. This includes, among other things, an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to online safety, filtering, and monitoring.
- Work with the governing body to ensure that the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is reviewed annually and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly.
- Ensure the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is available publicly and that parents know that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this.
- Link with Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (HSCP) to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding arrangements.
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children who have or have had a social worker are experiencing with teachers and school leadership staff. The DSL/DDSLs have details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school's headteacher in the authority that looks after the child.

The management of safeguarding

The Governing Body must ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation. They must also have regard to KCSIE to ensure that the policies, procedures and training in the School are always effective and comply with the law.

The Governing Body has a senior board level lead to take leadership responsibility for the School's safeguarding and child protection arrangements.

All governors and trustees receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety, filtering, and monitoring) training at induction. This training equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenges to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and

procedures in place in schools are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training is regularly updated.

- The Headteacher ensures that the above policies and procedures, adopted by their Governing Body and proprietors (particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation abuse and neglect) are understood and followed by all staff.
- The Governing Body must be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- According to the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against students because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).
- Whilst all of the above protections are important, in the context of safeguarding, this guidance, and the legal duties placed on the school in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, the Governing Body must carefully consider how they are supporting their students with regard to particular protected characteristics - including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race.
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is found in the Equality Act. Compliance with the PSED is a legal requirement for state-funded schools.
- The PSED places a general duty on schools to have, in the exercise of their functions, due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation (and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act), to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. The duty applies to all protected characteristics and means that whenever significant decisions are being made or policies developed, specific consideration must be given to the equality implications of these such as, for example, the need to eliminate unlawful behaviours that relate to them such as sexual violence and sexual harassment, misogyny/misandry and racism.

Quality Assurance, Improvement and Practice

The purpose of auditing is to quality assure safeguarding arrangements and identify where professional development is needed in order to improve and strengthen practice, it can also evidence the settings strengths and practice. Effective safeguarding should be part of a school's management's shared approach and should be embedded in the vision, ethos, and strategic direction so that a 'whole school approach' is achieved as this is what ultimately creates a safe and secure environment for children and young people to learn and develop and feel safe.

Auditing is essential for the Governing Body and leaders to be able to reassure stakeholders about how our school is complying with the contractual requirements for safeguarding and that these arrangements are being met.

Dame Alice Owen's School endeavours at all times, to provide an education and learning environment where children and our staff feel safe. One way we review and monitor our practice is through auditing: it is important that we are aware of the level of our school's compliance to key guidance, such as KCSiE. We want to be open, transparent and reassure ourselves and our stakeholders, including regulators, of what we are proud of and of what we need to strengthen to meet our own high standards. It is therefore standard practice that we factor in on-going auditing, consisting of objective scrutiny by our Governing Body and all Senior Leadership Team, children, students and their parents and carers.

This policy will be reviewed annually by Sarah Ogufere, Director of Safeguarding and Vicki Blackburn Designated Safeguarding Lead. At every review, it will be approved by our full Governing Body.

Appendix 1

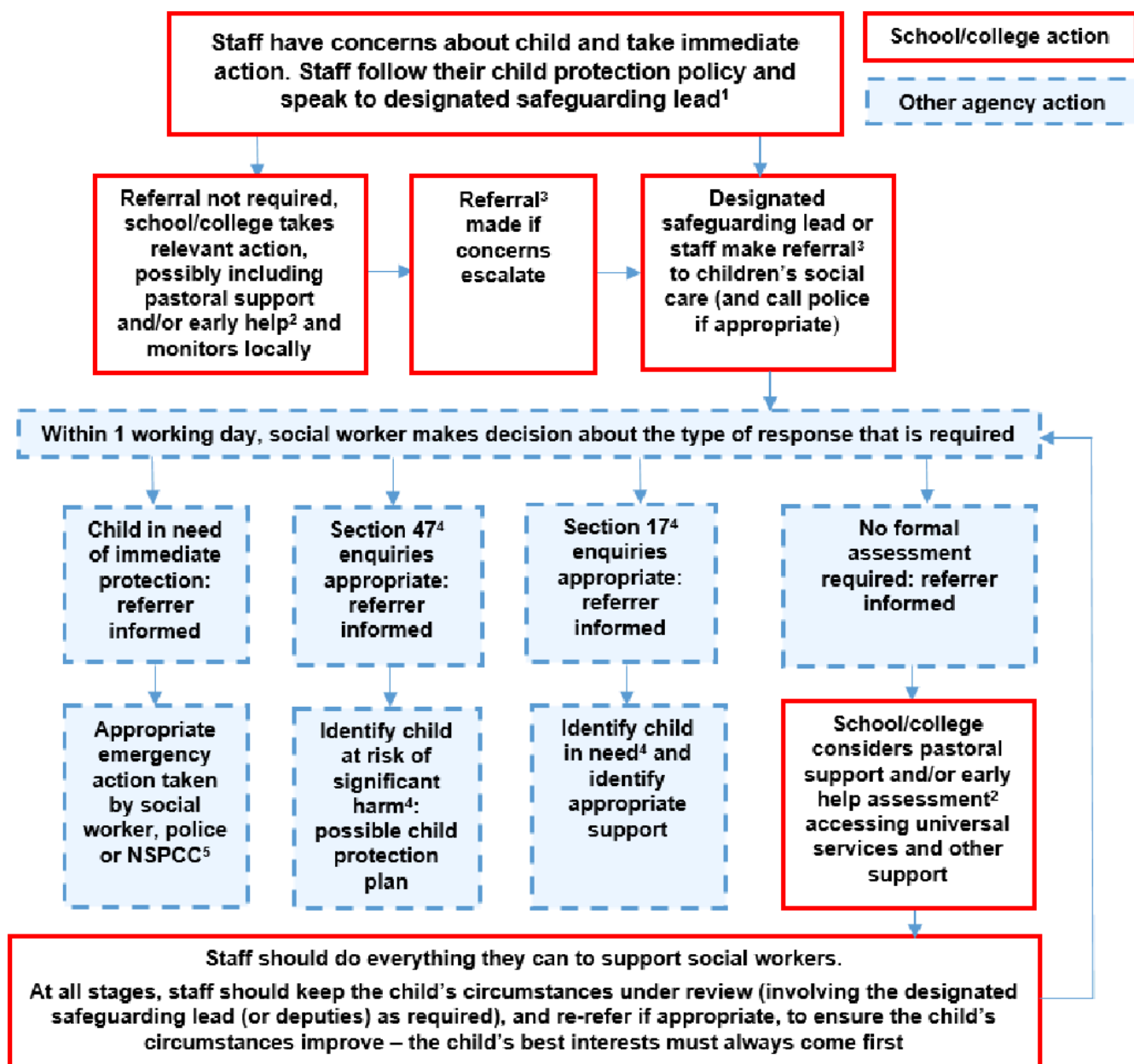
All staff are obliged to read and sign to confirm that they have read and understood Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education at the start of each school year. Staff also have the opportunity to seek clarity from the DSL/DDSLs for any content. They are redirected to these online documents again should any changes occur.

This is to assist staff to understand their role and discharge their responsibilities as set out in this guidance.

The Governing Body is obliged to read and sign to confirm that they have read and understood Part One and Two of KCSIE. The Governing Body also has the opportunity to seek clarity from the DSL for any content. This is to assist the Governing Body to understand their role and discharge their responsibilities as set out in the guidance. They are redirected to these online documents again should any changes occur.

Appendix 2

Actions where there are concerns about a child:



Any member of staff is able to make a Child Protection Contact Referral if they have significant concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a student. Referrals should be made to the local authority in which the student lives at the numbers below:

- Hertfordshire Children's Services - 0300 123 4043 (24 hour line)
- Barnet Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub - 020 8359 4066 (out of hours - 020 8359 2000)
- Enfield Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub - 020 8379 5555 (out of hours - 020 8379 1000)
- Islington Children's Social Care - 0207 527 7400 (24 hour line)

The National Police Chiefs' Council- *When to call the police* guidance

This advice covers incidents on school and college premises where students have potentially committed a crime. It provides guidance on what the school should bear in mind when considering contacting the police. This advice covers the following situations:

- Assault
- Criminal damage
- Cyber crime
- Drugs
- Harassment
- Sexual offences
- Theft
- Weapons

This advice aims to support schools and colleges to make defensible decisions when considering whether to involve the police. Further guidance can be found at;

<https://www.npcc.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/publications/publications-log/local-policing-coordination-committee/national-strategy-for-the-policing-of-children-young-people.pdf>

<https://www.npcc.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/publications/publications-log/2020/when-to-call-the-police--guidance-for-schools-and-colleges.pdf>

Appendix 3

Operation Encompass Safeguarding Statement:

- Our school is part of Operation Encompass. This is a police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people who experience Domestic Abuse.
- Operation Encompass means that the police will share information about Domestic Abuse incidents with our school PRIOR to the start of the next school day when they have been called to a domestic incident.
- Our parents are made aware that we are an Operation Encompass school.
- The Operation Encompass information is stored in line with all other confidential safeguarding and child protection information.
- The Key Adult has also led training for all school staff and Governors about the prevalence of Domestic Abuse and the impact of this abuse on children. We have also discussed how we can support our children following the Operation Encompass notification.
- We are aware that we must do nothing that puts the child/ren or the non-abusing adult at risk.
- The Key Adult will report on Operation Encompass in the termly report to Governors. All information is anonymised for these reports.
- The Key Adult has used the Operation Encompass Toolkit to ensure that all appropriate actions have been taken by the school.

Our key adult is: Mrs Vicki Blackburn, Designated Safeguarding Lead

Appendix 4: Filtering and monitoring

Roles and Responsibilities

- The DSL has lead responsibility for understanding filtering and monitoring. The DSL is also responsible, with the support of the Safeguarding team, for assessing risk when filtering and monitoring alerts are raised and responding to safeguarding concerns.
- Senior leaders and the Governing Body are responsible for ensuring that all systems are appropriately robust and in place.
- The Network Management team has technical responsibility for maintaining and managing the system and passing on filtering and monitoring alerts that come through to the DSL.
- All staff are responsible for following online safety policies and procedures, supporting the delivery of online safety education through Learning for Life or alike, monitoring what is happening on screens used by students especially in lessons, and reporting any problems they become aware of.

Filtering and Monitoring Systems

All DAOS computer devices and internet connections are monitored and filtered, this includes, Windows computers, Apple computers and Google ChromeBooks, both on the schools physical wired network and wireless networks. Guest devices, i.e. those of speakers, contractors that use the school's Guest wireless network are monitored and receive the same filtering as students.

Herts for Learning and RM SafetyNet

Internet provision and filtering is provided by Herts For Learning (HfL). The filtering software is RM SafetyNet, with policies set by HfL. Exceptions and changes are added by DAOS Network Support staff, subject to approval by Network Manager and SLT as required.

Like all schools using the HfL filtering and monitoring package, DAOS by default has Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) and Prevent alerts deployed. If anything gets triggered, RM SafetyNet contacts HfL, who in turn contact the school. These alerts cover attempts to access:

- Child sexual abuse content ('IWF Alerts')
- Extremist content ('Prevent Alerts')

Smoothwall Filtering and Monitoring

DAOS uses Smoothwall as its filtering and monitoring system to help safeguard pupils and staff when accessing the internet on school-owned devices and networks.

Smoothwall provides real-time content filtering, keyword detection, and alert monitoring across all school-owned Windows, Apple, and Chrome devices.

Smoothwall automatically flags activity that may indicate a safeguarding or policy concern, such as access to harmful or inappropriate content, online bullying, self-harm indicators, or potential security risks.

The Senior Safeguarding team reviews each report promptly and determines whether any alerts require further investigation or intervention by the Safeguarding or Pastoral teams.

The school's filtering and monitoring arrangements are reviewed annually by the DSL, Director of Safeguarding and Network Management Team in line with DfE's Filtering and Monitoring Standards and the Plan technology for your school guidance.

Governors oversee this process through regular safeguarding reports to ensure systems remain effective, proportionate, and age-appropriate.

Changes and updates to filtering and monitoring

HfL provides regular updates at <https://hfl-broadband.co.uk/category/webfilter/>. Examples of these include changes in response to new DfE filtering and monitoring guidance and revised access to X (formerly Twitter).

The Network Management team monitors and responds to new and evolving IT security threats, updating the DSL as necessary where needed when there is a safeguarding component to the update.

<u>Review:</u>	The Governing Body will review the policy in full annually to ensure it reflects changes in the most recent KCSIE and the changes to any relevant personnel.
-----------------------	--

<u>Date of Next Review:</u>	Autumn 2026
------------------------------------	-------------