

Merton Bank Primary School



Keeping Children Safe in Education Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Approved by Full Governing Body on

2nd October 2025 - _____

To be reviewed on or before

Signed

P. Winstanley

Chair of Governors

Signed

[Signature]

Headteacher



Merton Bank Primary School

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction to the Safeguarding Policy
- 2.0 Safe School, Safe Staff, Safer Recruitment
- 3.0 Responsibilities and Roles of The Designated Safeguarding Leads
- 4.0 Supporting our Children to be Happy, Healthy and Safe
- 5.0 Confidentiality
- 6.0 Supporting Our Staff
- 7.0 Allegations Against Staff
- 8.0 Whistleblowing and Confidential Reporting
- 9.0 Physical Intervention
- 10.0 Bullying
- 11.0 Racist Incidents
- 12.0 Prevention
- 13.0 Health and Safety
- 14.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

Appendix 1: Recognising signs of Child Abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, Absent from Education, Missing Children and Young People, Private Fostering.

Appendix 2: Forced Marriage, So-called Honor Based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation, Internet Safety (including Filtering and Monitoring), Child-on-Child Abuse, Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment, Contextual Safeguarding, Upskirting, Sexting, Elective Home Education.

Appendix 3: NSPCC Guide to Healthy and Harmful Sexual Behaviour.

Appendix 4: Safety and Welfare Concern Form.

1.0 Introduction

*“Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone’s** responsibility. Children includes everyone under the age of 18. **Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners must make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they must consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child.” – Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025: pg7, Part 1:2.*

The definition of a child is: “Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.” – Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023: pg155, Appendix A.

1.1

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010, Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Education Act 2002, and in line with government publications: ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ 2023, Revised Safeguarding Statutory Guidance 2 ‘Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families’ 2000, ‘What to do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused’ 2003. The guidance reflects, ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ 2025 and incorporates recent updates.

1.2

This policy must also be read in conjunction with:

St Helens’ Descriptions of Need Document 2024-2026

(can be found at <https://trixcms.trixonline.co.uk/api/assets/sthelensscp/e6683959-0432-4849-8f5b-75841dd33c9e/st-helens-descriptions-of-need-2024-2026.pdf>),

St Helens’ Multi Agency Resolution Procedure

(can be found at <https://trixcms.trixonline.co.uk/api/assets/sthelensscp/2e479038-9163-40d7-898a-3a6da6f9d33a/multi-agency-resolution-policy-june-2024.pdf>)

and the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 document (can be found at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65803fe31c0c2a000d18cf40/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf).

This policy is based on the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 document. This document can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf

1.3

The Governing body takes seriously its responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our school to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm.

1.4

We recognize that all adults, including temporary staff¹, volunteers and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm, and that the child’s welfare is our paramount concern.

Safeguarding is everybody’s responsibility and their approach must be child centered.

¹ Wherever the word “staff” is used, it covers ALL staff on site, including ancillary supply and self-employed staff, contractors, volunteers working with children etc, and governors

All staff believe that our school must provide a caring, positive safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

1.5

The aims of this policy are:

- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To create a culture in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident, and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties, believing they will be effectively listened to.
- To raise the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse and how to do this. Whole Staff training will be given yearly and frequent updates and bulletins will be made available to all staff to provide them with relevant skills to safeguard children effectively, including those children with SEND (Reference Appendices 1 and 2).
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure we, the school, contribute to assessments of need and support packages for those children. All staff are aware of the early help process, its importance and the need for constant review.
- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff. All staff know to share their concerns on the Child Protection Monitoring System (CPOMs). Working alongside a school's existing safeguarding processes, CPOMS is an intuitive system to help with the management and recording of child protection, behavioural issues, bullying, special educational needs, domestic issues etc. **All reporting on CPOMs should be factual, comprehensive, concise and clear. Professional opinion can be offered but needs to be indicated if exercised.**
- To develop a structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the Police, Health and Children's Social Care.
- To ensure that all staff working within our school who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability, including verification of their identity, qualifications, and a satisfactory DBS check (according to guidance)², and a central record is kept to audit (See section 2.0 for further information on this.)

2.0 Safe School, Safe Staff, Safer Recruitment

2.1

We will ensure that members of the Governing Body and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) understand and fulfil their responsibilities, namely to ensure that:

- There is a Safeguarding & Child Protection policy, and that the Governing Body, with all other members of teaching and non-teaching staff are issued with a copy. This is reviewed annually.
- All staff including the Governing Body, with all other members of teaching and non-teaching staff are made aware of new legislation in the **ANNUAL** safeguarding training. **ALL STAFF** are guided to read Part 1 and Annex A of the Keeping Children Safe in Education Document which informs of procedure in this area and this is distributed to the Governing Body and all other members of teaching and non-

² Guidance regarding DBS checks recently updated by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

teaching staff on a yearly basis in line with the changes to the document. Any new staff including the Governing Body will also receive safeguarding training at the point of induction.

- In addition to the annual Safeguarding Training provided, it is the responsibility of the Governing Body, teaching and non-teaching staff to maintain their understanding, skills and knowledge throughout the year in order to safeguard children effectively. Staff will be supported by the Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team and DSL via staff room bulletins and weekly staff briefing sessions. Any other staff who are not always present within school or attend designated briefings will be updated either verbally or via email.
- The DSL is kept updated of any safeguarding news and changes weekly via the Local Authority safeguarding briefings and it is the responsibility of the DSL to disseminate this throughout the school as per the above.
- Should any member of the Governing Body not have access to annual Safeguarding Training within their own establishments (i.e if they are not employed in a school or social care setting that already provides this) they are invited to and required to attend the Merton Bank annual safeguarding training delivered by the DSL.
- The school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers and to make a referral to the DBS if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have had they not resigned
- A senior leader has Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) responsibility and that person (and Deputies) are clearly visible throughout the school, and are identified to new staff and volunteers on induction.
- On appointment, the DSLs undertake interagency training and required thematic training
- All other staff have safeguarding training updated as appropriate
- Any weaknesses in Child Protection are remedied immediately – we use reflective practice and ensure we debrief after every child protection issue.
- Safeguarding & Child Protection policies and procedures are reviewed annually and that the Safeguarding & Child Protection policy is available on the school website or by other means
- That enhanced DBS checks are in place for Chairs of Governors of independent, academies, non-maintained special schools

Safer Recruitment

- The school operates safer recruitment procedures by ensuring that there is at least one person on every recruitment panel that has completed Safer Recruitment training. Currently trained at Merton Bank are:
Mrs. Rebecca King (Head Teacher / DDSL/EYFS Lead)
Mr. Nicholas Bullough (Deputy Head Teacher / DDSL / Children We Look After Teacher)
Mrs. Karen Weatherby (Assistant Head Teacher / KS2 Lead / DDSL)
Miss. Bobbie Brussels (KS1 Lead)
- Barred list checks are carried out on newly appointed staff who are engaging in regular activity, pending receipt of an enhanced certificate with barred list information from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and on those who have worked in a school or college in a role that brought them into regular contact with children and young people, and this role ended not more than three months prior to their new appointment.

- References: *“References are an important part of the recruitment process and must be provided in a timely manner and not hold up proceedings. Any repeated concerns or allegations which do not meet the harm threshold which have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious must not be included in any reference.”* – Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025: pg 61:228.
- References cont: *“Substantiated safeguarding allegations that meet the harm threshold must be included in references, provided that the information is factual and does not include opinions.”* - Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025: pg 106:423.
- When a DBS certificate is required it must be obtained before or as soon as practicably possible after appointment, including when using the DBS Update Service
- A risk assessment must be carried out to determine the level of checks required by all volunteers
- It is best practice to check a candidate's name and identity by using their birth certificate.
- Shortlisted candidates must be informed and be aware that online searches may be done as part of the pre-recruitment checks. This can be completed via their Social Media accounts. This is in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and can be adopted by all schools and colleges to ensure ongoing vigilance beyond the recruitment process.
- If required, a Section 128 check must be made by Headteacher / Governors using the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA). The TRA's employed access is free to use and can be used to make prohibition, direction, restriction and children's barred list checks. Further information and support on this can be found at <https://teacherservices.education.gov.uk/>
- The same approach must be used for individuals who have lived or worked outside of the UK, regardless of whether this was in an European Economic Area (EEA) country or the rest of the world. Further information on recruiting applicants from overseas can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/recruit-teachers-from-overseas>
- Even if staff only work in school for a day they need to be added to the Single Central Record (SCR) and removed once they no longer work at the school.
- For agency staff a copy of the DBS check should be obtained with barred list information (where required) for agency and third party staff prior to appointment.
- For contractors, guidance states that safeguarding requirements must be set out in the contract that's held.
- For visitors initially it needs to be established what type of visitor they are (parent / professional for eg). If a professional, ID must be checked and that they have appropriate DBS checks in place. All visitors will be provided with a Safeguarding Procedures for Visitors Leaflet by a member of the Office Staff as soon as they enter school premises. This leaflet outlines Merton Bank Primary School's safeguarding expectations. The DSL will check this has been issued in this manner.

2.2

The Governing Body considers how children may be taught about safeguarding. This is part of a broad and balanced curriculum covering relevant issues through personal social health and economic education (PSHE), through sex and relationship education (SRE). School have an allocated staff member designated to the coordination of this. More information regarding this can be located in section 4.0.

2.3

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Mrs J O' Brien , is a member of the Senior Leadership Team, Safeguarding and Pastoral Manager, Prevent and Mental Health Lead.

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead's (DDSL's) are Mrs R King (Headteacher), Mr N Bullough (Deputy Headteacher) and Mrs K Weatherby (Assistant Headteacher / KS2 Lead). These staff have undertaken the necessary DSL training provided by The National College. Specific DSL Training is refreshed every 2 years. Annual Safeguarding Training is given to all staff, including the DSL's.

The safeguarding governor is Mrs S Platt.

DSL – Mrs J O' Brien – 01744 22104 – Contact at school

DDSL - Mrs R King / Mr N Bullough / Mrs K Weatherby - 01744 22104 – Contact at school

Safeguarding Governor, Mrs S Platt, can be contacted via school on 01744 22104

2.4

Any DSL's / DDSL's who are involved in recruitment and at least one member of the governing body will also complete safer recruitment training, as discussed above.

2.5

All members of staff and volunteers are provided with child protection awareness information at induction, including in their arrival pack (including the Safeguarding Procedures for Visitors Leaflet) and the school safeguarding statement so that they know who to discuss a concern with. The Safeguarding Team are highly visible around the school (ie posters).

2.6

All members of staff are trained in and receive regular updates in e-safety and reporting concerns. This is delivered annually.

2.7

All other staff and governors have child protection awareness training, updated by the DSL as appropriate. Also annual training by the DSL is provided to maintain staff understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

2.8

All members of staff, volunteers and governors know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse through delivery of their training and the St Helens Safeguarding Partnership Board flow chart that is displayed within all classrooms, in the staff Room and by the school's entrance. This flow chart can also be found at <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/concern>

2.9

All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to child protection procedures through publication of the school's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy on the Merton Bank School Website.

2.10

There have been occasions and ongoing potential for school to 'let out' school's spaces and/or facilities to external organisations (for example meetings, social groups, community groups, sports associations, or any other service providers that may run extra-curricular activities). Our lettings policy will seek to ensure the suitability of adults working with children on school sites at any time and should an issue arise as with any safeguarding allegation, the school would follow their safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Additional information regarding this can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-out-of-school-settings-code-of-practice/keeping-children-safe-during-community-activities-after-school-clubs-and-tuition-non-statutory-guidance-for-providers-running-out-of-school-settings>

2.11

Community users organising activities for children are made fully aware of the school's child protection guidelines and procedures.

2.12

We will ensure that child protection type concerns or allegations against adults working in the school are referred to the LADO³ for advice, and that any member of staff found not suitable to work with children will be notified to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)⁴ for consideration for barring following resignation, dismissal, or when we cease to use their service as a result of a substantiated allegation, in the case of a volunteer.

To make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) the referrer is to complete the LADO referral form and email securely to sthelenslado@sthelens.gov.uk and then follow up with a telephone call to the Safeguarding Children Unit on **01744 671262 within 1 day of the allegation**.

To download the LADO referral form: This can be located, along with other additional information at <https://www.sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk/p/procedures/allegations-against-professionals-and-local-authority-designated-office-lado>

2.13

All Safeguarding Procedures will be regularly reviewed and up-dated in line with Statutory Guidance and supported by advice and guidance from the Local St. Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership Board. This can be located at <https://sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk/scp/scp>

2.14

The name of the DSL and DDSLs will be clearly visibly in the school, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation.

2.15

All new members of staff entering Merton Bank will be given a copy of our Safeguarding Statement, and Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, with the DSL and DDSLs names clearly displayed, as part of their induction. They will also be issued with a Safeguarding Procedures for Visitors Leaflet immediately on their arrival into school by a member of the Office Staff.

2.16

The policy is available publicly whether on the school website or by other means. Parents/carers are made aware of this policy and their entitlement to have a copy of it via the school newsletter / website.

2.17

Training must provide the DSL and DDSL's with a good understanding of their own role and the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly children's social care. The DSL also helps to promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and school and college leadership staff. Their role could include ensuring that the school or college, and their staff know who these children are, understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort; supporting teaching staff to identify the challenges that children in

³ LADO Local Authority Designated Officer for allegations against staff. AEO Area Education Officer

⁴ Contact the LADO for guidance in any case

this group might face and the additional academic support and adjustments that they could make to best support these children. This will always be on a **need to know basis**, with the child's best interests at the forefront of any information sharing.

2.18

Here at Merton Bank, we want to ensure that Parents / Carers are fully aware of the Safeguarding Procedures and Child Protection Policy, alerting them to where referrals may be made should **anyone** have concerns about a child's welfare (ie to Social Care and / or The Police), and the role of the DSL within school's setting in line with this.

The DSL is the allocated member of staff who communicates with any external agencies (ie Social Care / Police / Health etc) however parents / carers need to understand the safeguarding of a child is **everyone's responsibility**, including theirs.

In the event of any safeguarding disclosures either from a child, staff member, family member or any member of the community the relevant agencies will be contacted for advice and guidance, generally by the DSL. **The DSL does not make decisions regarding disclosures and are fully guided by health and social care services should a safeguarding issue arise.** These agencies usually comprise of Social Care, Police, Health or any other relevant emergency or social care service in line with the best interests and welfare of the child / children. We will always act within the spirit of Data Protection legislation however, as the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 state, 'the welfare of the child is paramount' and if considered in the best interests of the child any information deemed appropriate at the time will be shared with those who it is felt need to be information on a 'need to know' basis, regardless of any data protection laws. In these instances the DSL and Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher will work together to determine the best course of action within that moment, with the child's welfare and safety at the forefront of any decision making.

Although discussions with parents / carers and obtaining consent from them to chat with their child / children and contacting external services when a safeguarding issue occurs is preferred in respect of working together openly and honestly, this is not always effective or appropriate and the DSL will always act upon what is felt is in the best interests of the child in that instance. We do however strongly believe it is best practice to hold discussions with parents / carers when issues arise as it strengthens and improves outcomes for our children, supports the primary care giver / school relationship and we recognise that parents / carers know their children best however, this is not mandatory.

Incidences where school do not need consent from parents / carers for discussions to be held with children when they are in the care of school, or referrals to be made are where a child may be at risk of significant harm. The DSL will then work alongside the Headteacher in order to act appropriately and efficiently to ensure any child/children are safe and free from any form of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

As stated above, it may be that at times, school will need to refer to the Police. This decision is always made with appropriate consideration. Merton Bank Primary School never wants to unnecessarily criminalise children or any members of our school community, and so the necessity to contact the Police will always be considered carefully. This policy is written alongside the NSPCC Guidance **When to Call the Police – Guidance for Schools & Colleges**.

3.0 Responsibilities

3.1

It is **EVERYONE'S** responsibility to Safeguarding children and:

- Be mindful that early information sharing is vital for the effective identification, assessment, and allocation of appropriate service provision, whether this be when problems first emerge or where a child is already known to the Local Authority / Children's Social Care.

- Refer a child if there are concerns about possible abuse, to the Local Authority, and acting as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns. Referrals must be made in writing using a professional referral form, following a telephone call to the Contact Centre. All staff are aware that anyone can make a referral but in line with staff support it is good practice that we don't work alone and staff are encouraged to approach the DSL or DDSL in the first instance if they have any concerns about a child's welfare.
- Keeping electronic records using CPOMS (internal staff), of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.
- All records whether hand-written or electronic must be clear, concise, comprehensive and contain factual detail of how the concerns was reported and then followed up and resolved. Actions taken, decisions reached and any outcomes need to be logged in line with school's internal systems and procedures.
- Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records, until the child's 25th birthday, and are passed on to the child's next school or college.
- Ensure that a record is kept and witnessed of the disposal of individual's records or passed on to the next school.
- Children We Look After CWLA (formally know as 'Looked After Child' / LAC) records must be retained for 99 years.
- Liaising professionally with other agencies and professionals.
- For **external members of staff** (Supply staff, volunteers, external club leaders etc) who do not have access to internal recording systems (CPOMS) they **MUST** report any concerns in a hand written format on a **Safety and Welfare Concern Form**. It is the responsibility of the professional to record details of the disclosure immediately, including where possible the exact words or phrases used by the child.

These forms can be located at the Main Office or requested from a member of the Designated Safeguarding Team. This needs to be signed and dated by the person completing.

If the form contains any safeguarding elements it needs shared with the DSL, or DDSL in their absence immediately. The DSL / DDSL will then ensure the record has been completed fully, signed and dated by the person who has taken the disclosure. Please note this document will not be amended in any way by the DSL / DDSL however, it may be used in accordance with school's Safeguarding Policies, procedures and shared with any other relevant parents / carers agencies in the best interests of a child's safety and welfare.

If the record has been completed in accordance with any other issue not relating to safeguarding concerns (behaviour log) please hand in at the office and this will be uploaded to CPOMS for our records.

A copy of the Safety and Welfare Concern Form can be located in Appendix 4.

- **All staff** must be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. All staff, but especially the DSL and DDSL's must consider whether children are at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be susceptible to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.

It is the DSL and / or DDSL's role and responsibility to ensure that:

- Either they or an appropriate staff member attend Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups, or other multi- agency planning meetings, contribute to assessments, and provide a report which has been shared with the parents **where required or requested by parents / carers and/or professionals**.
- The DSL will either complete or contribute to the S175 Audit which is reviewed and quality assured by the St. Helens Safeguarding Children's Partnership. This is a self assessment tool which is used to ensure school's safeguarding procedures and robust and effective.
- Any pupil currently with a Child Protection Plan who is absent in the educational setting without explanation for two days is referred to their key worker's Social Care Team.
- Organising child protection induction, and update training annually, for all school staff.
- Create and maintain a School Vulnerability Risk Register. This is a fluid, working document that lists all the school's vulnerable children. This document allows then DSL and senior staff to be aware and vigilant to individual vulnerabilities so that we can be proactive and offer families the best support possible at the earliest opportunity.
- Providing, with the Headteacher, an annual report for the Governing Body, detailing any changes to the policy and procedures; training undertaken by the DSL and DDSLs, and by all staff and Governors; number and type of incidents/cases, and number of children on the Child Protection Register (anonymised)⁵.
- Ensure school's policies and procedures, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation are understood and followed by staff.
- If a new pupil joins Merton Bank, it is the DSL's responsibility to ensure that any records for that child, whether it be electronic (CPOMs) or hard copied are requested from the previous school **within 5 school days. The steps for this are:**
 - Request Transfer through the CPOMs system (if available) and verbally from the previous school **within 5 school days of the child being on roll.**
 - Should this not arrive in a timely manner, to either verbally request or send an email request for this to be actioned as soon as possible.
 - Should this not be actioned following the above in a timely manner, inform the Headteacher who will then escalate either via telephone, email or letter to the previous Headteacher.

4.0 Supporting our Children to be Happy, Health and Safe

At Merton Bank Primary School, we fundamentally believe that every child has the right to be happy, healthy and safe. Therefore, we must ensure that our safeguarding practices are thoroughly effective and appropriately developed to meet the individual needs of our children.

4.1

We recognise that a child who is abused, neglected or exploited, is abusing others or witnesses violence may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth. We also recognise there are many vulnerabilities a child may be exposed to, these are further highlighted within **Vulnerable Children – Key indicators – Page 13 of this document**.

⁵ A model format for the Governors Annual Report is available from St Helens Governor Services

4.2

We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.

4.3

Attendance and Children who are Absent from Education

At Merton Bank we acknowledge that good attendance is essential not only for academic attainment, but also to ensure the safety of the child because being absent from education can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns including but not inclusive to sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or criminal child exploitation. As a result of this, we have set procedures in place to ensure the safety of pupils through their attendance.

When a child is absent from education (previously Child Missing from Education - CME) for any reason, Merton Bank will follow **Education Welfare's Children Missing Education Policy and Procedures**. This can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education/children-missing-education-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities-and-schools>

- There are named Officers within the Education Welfare Service. The named officer for St. Helens is: **Diane Russell**. Her details are as follows:
Senior Education Welfare Officer
St Helens Borough Council
PO Box 512
St Helens
WA10 9LX
Tel: 01744 673356
Mobile: 07795 591818
Email: dianerussell@sthelens.gov.uk

Our allocated Education Welfare Officer is **Tracey Gillespie**.

Our in-house Attendance Officer is **Angelina Malone**.

- There is also a dedicated CME Officer within the Education Welfare Service. The named CME Officer for St. Helens is Helen McCabe. Email address for any enquiries relating to Children who are Absent from Education: cme@sthelens.gov.uk
- **More information on this can be found at <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/1813/Child-missing-from-education>** . In addition to this, The Children's Commissioner report regarding children who are absent from education can be found here: <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/attendance-is-everyones-business/>
- Any adult with Parental Responsibility has the right to collect their child from school, unless there is a Contact, Residency or Child Arrangement Order in place, or if there are child protection concerns surrounding a parent or carer. For families with orders in place, we ask parents and carers to inform us of any such instance and provide paper evidence where necessary. Please note we will not keep original copies of orders but may take photocopies which will be stored securely within the child's individual safeguarding file.
- If any child is off school there is first day response with a phone call home. If the child is vulnerable there are home visits carried out, this is at the discretion of the DSL regarding the timescale of such visits where required, but also in line with the Attendance Policy. If the child has an allocated Social Worker they are also contacted, along with any other external support services that may be deemed relevant to contact at that time in line with the welfare of the child / children. It is also the role of the DSL to work alongside the Attendance Officer and Education Welfare, and this Safeguarding Policy is directly linked to and supports

the school's Attendance Policy. There are times when the DSL or DDSL deviate from the Attendance Policy in respect of contacting parents / care givers when a child is absent from school or missing their education however, this is always in the best interests of the child/children and takes individual cases into account.

- If a child goes missing from the school site during the school day, parents / carers will be contacted immediately **as will the Police**. Staff will use their knowledge of the pupils and their own discretion as to whether it is appropriate to follow them off school premises

Vulnerable Children – Key indicators

In accordance with Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023 and Keeping Children Safe in Education, Merton Bank recognises that some children may be considered more vulnerable than others. These include:

- A child that has special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND)*
- A Young Carer
- Children We Look After - CWLA
- A member of the LGBTQ+ community
- A child who is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour
- A child who is in a family circumstance that is presenting challenges for them such as substance abuse, adult mental health, domestic violence
- Is showing early signs of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation
- Multiple suspensions, risk of perm ex and Alt Ed
- Parents in custody or if a child is affected by parental offending
- Frequently missing from Education, Home or Care
- A child who is accessing / awaiting alternative education provision
- Children who are educated at home (see appendix 2 for further information)

* Children with additional learning difficulties or disabilities can face additional barriers in regards to recognition of abuse, neglect or exploitation. These barriers can include:

| Barrier | Resolution / Additional Support |
|---|--|
| <p>Communication Difficulties It can be significantly more challenging and unlikely for a child to disclose abuse if they have difficulties with communication.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Speech and language interventions ➤ Utilising key members of staff who have good understanding and relationships of that pupil ➤ Alternative communication means such as sign language, Makaton, PECs etc. |
| <p>Behavioural Difficulties Screaming, shouting, emotional distress, marks being ignored, overlooked or failure to investigate if this is considered to be 'regular behaviour for the child'.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure that incidents are questioned and challenged. ➤ Understanding behaviours displayed such as triggers, relation to mood. ➤ Individual Behaviour Plans ➤ Gaining the views, wishes and feelings of the child. ➤ Always questioning any marks, bruises etc. |
| <p>Physical Disabilities Physical disabilities can present a significant barrier for some children as it can limit their independence and personal ability to keep safe.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Always questioning any marks, bruises etc. – never assuming why an injury may be present. ➤ Using times such as during personal care to be vigilant against marks and bruises. ➤ Ensuring open dialogue and trusting relationships at all times. |
| <p>Marks and Physical Injuries Assumptions that marks relate to the child's physical disability or individual need without further exploration.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Always questioning any marks, bruises etc. – never assuming why an injury may be present. ➤ Seeking advice from external agencies including Children's Social Care. |
| <p>Bullying and prejudice behaviours Children with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities may be more at risk of bullying and prejudice behaviour. Children with SEND may be more prone to peer group isolation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensuring that equality, diversity and difference is taught to all children throughout school. ➤ Challenging and dealing with anti-bullying incidents immediately. ➤ Supporting children with forming healthy friendships with their peers. |
| <p>Cognitive difficulties Some children may have difficulty understanding or recognising abuse, neglect or exploitation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure PSHE and SMSC lessons are differentiated accordingly. ➤ Clear and direct conversations to be had regularly with those who are most vulnerable. |

Protecting pupils with additional needs is underpinned by the school's SEND policy.

The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- Our Prevention procedures (see Section 12.0 for more information on Prevention)
- The school's Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy is aimed at supporting all pupils in our school, especially those who are identified as being vulnerable. All staff will adopt a consistent approach which focuses on the behaviour displayed by the child and not by condemning the child themselves, thus preventing damage of the children own sense of self-worth. The school recognises that all behaviour is a form of communication and we aim to address any underlying issues through pastoral intervention.
- Merton Bank is committed to working with the appropriate agencies that best support our children and their families; we will complete any referrals deemed necessary that would provide a child with the right specialist support.
- In connection with the CWLA, a Designated Teacher will be assigned. At present this is Mr. Nicholas Bullough. The Designated Teacher contributes to Personal Education Plans (PEP) and Care Planning Meetings with members of the CWLA Team and is the school link for any professionals, parents and care givers. The designated CWLA Teacher also liaises with the Virtual School Team. The current Virtual School Head is: **Heather Addison**
- Merton Bank will continue to work with external agencies such as Social Care, and will exercise the Local Authority's Multi-Agency Resolution policy when deemed necessary.
- **Alternative Provision (AP)**. In St. Helens this is known as 'PACE' for primary age children. It is the school where the child is registered to who have responsibility to ensure AP is safe and effective:

"Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider it continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and must be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs."
(KCSiE 2025 Para 168)

Merton Bank has the following in place to comply with this:

- Office Staff (mainly Mrs. Malone as Attendance Officer) have daily contact with PACE and log any attendance / absences. This is overseen by Mrs. King and Mrs. O' Brien.
 - SENCo Mrs. Milburn visits PACE regularly when a Merton Bank pupil is attending their provision to ensure they are meeting the needs of Merton Bank's pupils (as outlined in SEND Guidance)
 - Mrs. O' Brien attends any ongoing meetings with Social Care or similar to oversee safeguarding provisions in place, and contributes where necessary.
 - When a child starts at PACE, Merton Bank will request a copy of their safeguarding processes in line with safer recruitment guidance. This is to ensure PACE comply with hiring suitable employees.
- When any vulnerable pupil leaves our school, all information will be photocopied and/or transferred to the new school immediately and Social Care would be informed where necessary (such as if a child were to move to a different Local Authority).
 - We will always listen to each and every one of our pupils and utilise our trusting and authentic relationships to ensure that a child's voice is heard.

4.4

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2025. (EYFS)

Merton Bank Primary School will allow Social Workers and/or Police Officers who are completing legal assessments in line with Section 17 (Child in Need) or Section 47 (Child Protection) enquiries to see and have contact with the child and/or any siblings in school. However, school recognises this may be frightening or upsetting for some children. Therefore, school staff will take the place of an 'appropriate adult'; that is to offer support to the child, provide comfort by being with a staff member they know well and have a relationship with and to ensure and specific needs or issues are communicated to the relevant worker.

In line with this, our school will support **all children** by ensuring the **voice of the child is heard and paramount**. This may be through identifying with the child a TRUSTED ADULT (they are usually asked to

identify 3 adults in case of staff sickness) within school – this does not need to be their current Teacher / Teaching staff and is based on the child's wishes and feelings. The key staff identified are informed and they ensure to monitor the child on a regular basis via informal check ins, notifying the DSL of any major concerns with the child.

Please note: There is a separate Merton Bank EYFS Safeguarding Policy 2025 based on the above document for school-based providers.

4.5

Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness, through the curriculum as well as our relationships, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying.

4.6

Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school to encompass positive mental health and wellbeing with our children and young people. The link below provides information on how staff and promote this ethos within school:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/755135/Mental_health_and_behaviour_in_schools_.pdf

4.7

Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.

4.8 Early Help

The definition of Early Help in KCSiE 2025 (Pg 127; Para 494) is:

“Support for children of all ages that improves a family’s resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse.”

The School will consider the need for an Early help Assessment (EHAT) when it is identified that there are low level concerns or emerging needs for a child and their family. This process provides a way of recording support and interventions that have been provided by the school to the child / young person and also supports a referral for additional support that may be needed from more targeted services where a single agency has been unable to meet that need. An EHAT can be arranged to ensure that a multi-agency action plan can be developed at the earliest opportunity. It is important that the child and parent's voice are captured as part of this assessment and that they take ownership of the plan. This plan must be regularly reviewed normally up to 4 to 6 weeks until outcomes are achieved. To support the children and families there may be times when depending on the circumstance we will share information with other agencies for example: Health and Social care, school health, the SCiE Coordinator, Partnership Coordinators (this list is not exhaustive) **with parent / carers consent**. At this Early Help stage, full consent from parents / carers is required in order to undertake necessary support and link in with external agencies for additional support outside of what school are able to provide.

Factors which may indicate a child may benefit from Early Help could include: Health conditions, a mental health need, a family member in prison affected by parental offending, at risk of honour-based abuse such as FGM or forced marriage, persistent absence from education. This list is not exhaustive.

4.9

If at any point during the EHAT process risk increases and the school becomes concerned that the child is or is likely to suffer significant harm then a referral will be made to Children's Social Care and in some circumstances, the Police. This will include as much information as possible to support social care assessments to consider contexts outside the home and enable a contextual approach to harm. **Parent / carer consent is not needed at this stage as discussed on page 8-9, Paragraph 2.18 of this document.**

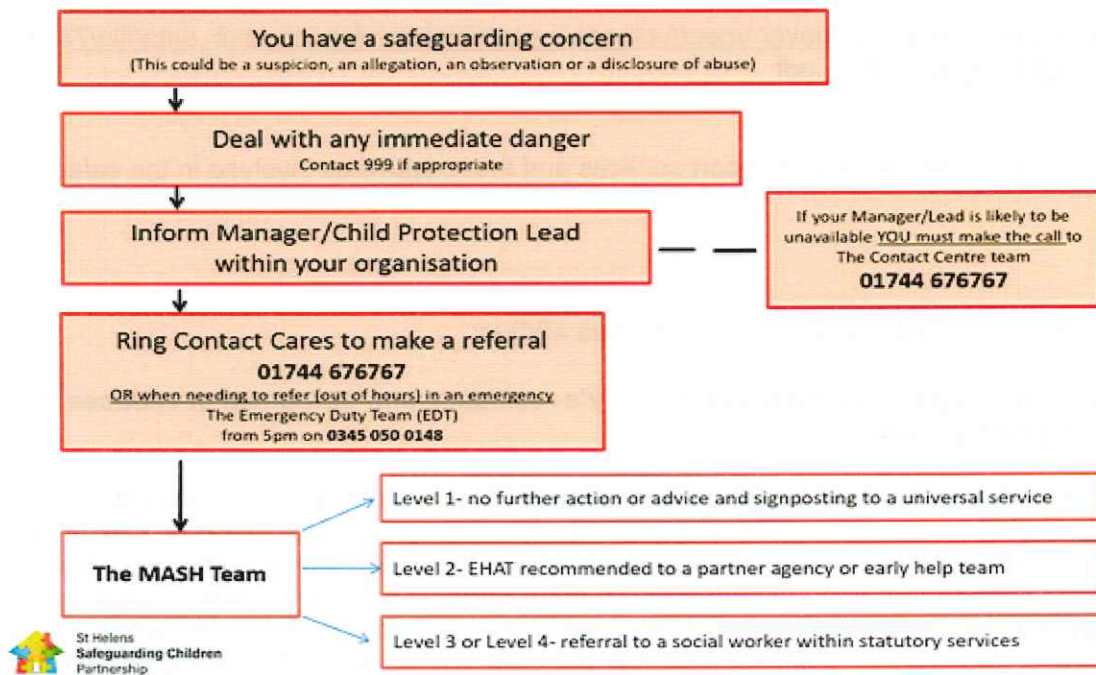
4.10

Notifying Peoples Services as soon as there is a significant concern: Staff are aware that they should be advised of a decision within 1 working day and if the situation does not seem to be improving press for re-consideration. If any professional or parent are not satisfied or informed of decisions then they must access the St Helens Multi Agency Escalation Policy, which can be found at:

<https://trixcms.trixonline.co.uk/api/assets/sthelensscp/2e479038-9163-40d7-898a-3a6da6f9d33a/multi-agency-resolution-policy-june-2024.pdf>

Safeguarding a child is EVERYONE’S responsibility – please see Flow Chart overleaf for support.

St. Helens process for reporting concerns about children (Under 18)



If you suspect a child is being abused, please call The Contact Centre on 01744 676767

Or in the case of an emergency outside normal office hours (after 5pm) you can contact the Emergency Duty Team on 0345 050 0148

(Image taken from The St. Helens Safeguarding Partnership Board Website)

4.11

Providing continuing support to a child about whom there have been concerns who leaves the school by ensuring that appropriate information is copied under confidential cover to the child’s new setting and ensuring the school medical records are forwarded as a matter of priority.

4.12

Operation Encompass Operation Encompass operates in the majority of police forces across England. It helps Police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when Police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the Police will inform the key adult (usually the DSL) in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This ensures that the school has up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable support to be given to the child according to their needs. Police forces not signed up to Operation Encompass will have their own arrangements in place.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline: Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. It's website (<https://refuge.org.uk/>) provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which a safe time from the team for a call can be booked. Additional advice on identifying children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available at:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/domestic-abuse/>
<https://refuge.org.uk/what-is-domestic-abuse/>

The named adult responsible at Merton Bank is Joanne O' Brien. The aim is to give schools the information they need in order to look after that child's needs in the aftermath of what may be one of the most distressing things they will ever witness. This is normally done via Email.

4.13

Radicalisation and Prevent. In order for school to fulfil the Prevent Duty 2023, it is essential that staff are able to identify children who may be susceptible to radicalisation, and know what to do when they are identified. Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is seen as part of schools' wider safeguarding duty, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms (e.g. drugs, gangs, neglect, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, county lines), whether these come from within their family or are the product of outside influences. Staff have separate, annual training on Prevent and Radicalisation in addition to the annual Safeguarding Training as all **staff need to be alert to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism** as per the Guidance in the Prevent Duty 2023.

The Prevent Duty builds on existing local partnership arrangements. For example; the policies and procedures of St Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership. The Prevent guidance refers to the importance of Prevent awareness training to equip staff to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. Individual schools are best placed to assess the training needs of staff in the light of their assessment of the risk to pupils of being drawn into terrorism (ie high or low risk). The school's DSL and DDSL must be aware of local procedures for making a prevent referral. There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home).

School must ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in schools. School ensures that suitable filtering is in place (see Appendix 2 regarding Internet Safety, Filtering and Monitoring).

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 should 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.

5.0 Confidentiality

5.1

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.

5.2

The DSL and DDSL's will disclose any information about a child to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.⁶

5.3

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. Data protection fears must not be a barrier to information sharing; the safety of the child must be of the utmost importance.

5.4

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.

5.5

We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Social Care with their parents / carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation.

All staff are aware of the sensitivity around such events and designated staff are mindful and work closely around legislation regarding this.

6.0 Supporting Staff

6.1

We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting.

6.2

We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the Mental Health Lead and/or DSL and to seek further support as appropriate. The Mental Health Lead at Merton Bank is **Mrs. Joanne O' Brien**. For further information please see Merton Bank Primary School's Mental Health Policy.

6.3

Supervision: Supervision has an essential role in the effective management of staff performance and practice, and is a primary means by which staff are supported and held accountable.

Supervision can mean different things to different people but essentially it is an activity that brings skilled supervisors and practitioners together in order to reflect upon their practice. 'Supervision aims to identify solutions to problems, improve practice and increase understanding of professional issues' UKCC (1996).

The document, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023) states; organisations should provide 'appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking safeguarding training' (Pg 107).

There are various models or approaches to supervision, one-to-one, group, or peer supervision. The choice of approach will depend upon a number of factors, including personal choice, access to support, length of experience, qualifications, availability of groups, etc.

⁶ DPA and GDPR **do not** prevent the sharing of information for the purpose of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. If any doubt regarding sharing information speak with the DSL and DDSL. Fears about sharing **must not** be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. (KCSiE 2025).

Purpose of supervision:

- Review workloads, if required.
- A place where a member of staff can be challenged supportively and constructively within mutually agreed and accepted boundaries.
- Issues relating to the work place and to working practices can be identified and discussed.
- Achievements are identified and celebrated.
- Emotional well-being/work life balance is considered.
- A safe place to offload.

7.0 Allegations against staff

What school and college staff must do if they have a safeguarding concerns about another staff member (including supply staff and volunteers) who may pose a risk of harm to children.

There are two levels of allegation – those that meet harm threshold and those that don't (low level). Incidences also include behaviour that may have happened outside of school that may make an individual unsuitable to work with children and where appropriate the Headteacher must carry out an assessment of transferrable risk.

Low-level concerns that are generally explored by the Headteacher within school and in line with School's policies could be:

- Member of staff has been inconsistent with staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- Being 'over-friendly' with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone (in line with the Mobile Phone Policy)
- Engaging with a child one-to-one in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is not considered serious enough to refer to LADO.

It is therefore important that all staff are familiar with staff codes of conduct, behaviour policies and safeguarding policies and procedures.

7.1

All school staff must take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.

7.2

All staff must be aware of Guidance on Behaviour Issues, and the school's own Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy.

7.3

Guidance about conduct and safe practice, including safe use of mobile phones by staff and volunteers will be given at induction.⁷ Information for staff on mobile phone use when in school can also be found in the Merton Bank's Mobile Phone Policy.

7.4

We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff. It is the Headteachers (or another SLT) member to complete basic enquiries supported by local procedures to establish facts before referring to LADO and possibly also Children and Young People's services depending on the nature of the

⁷ Refer to "Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings" available on the DfE website.

allegation. Other alternatives may be considered, such as moving a child to a class where they won't come into contact with the staff member (this depends on the level of allegation).

7.5

If such an allegation is made, or information is received which suggests that a person may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the allegation or aware of the information, will immediately inform the Headteacher.⁸

7.6

The Headteacher on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

7.7

If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Governors who will consult as in 7.6 above, without notifying the Headteacher first.

7.8

The school will follow St Helens procedures for managing allegations against staff. Under no circumstances will we send a child home, pending such an investigation, unless this advice is given exceptionally, as a result of a consultation with the LADO.

7.9

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

7.10

In the event of an allegation against the Headteacher, the decision to suspend will be made by the Chair of Governors with advice as in 7.8 above.

7.11

We have a procedure for managing the suspension of a contract for a community user in the event of an allegation arising in that context.

Any information regarding allegations against staff must be on a **need to know basis**. No information about the staff member involved can be shared with other staff or parents not directly involved.

It will always be the role of the Headteacher and or DSL (depending on the circumstances) to consider appropriate 'next steps' in connection with any outcomes and to record any concerns including those of a low level in line with local authority policies and procedures.

8.0 Whistleblowing/ Confidential Reporting

As per the NSPCC Guidance, Whistleblowing is defined as:

"When someone raises a concern about a dangerous or illegal activity or any wrongdoing within their organisation.

Raising a concern is known as "blowing the whistle" and is a vital process for identifying risks to people's safety.

Sharing information or talking through a concern can be the first step to helping an organisation identify problems and improve their practices."

⁸ Or Chair of Governors in the event of an allegation against the Headteacher

(Definition can be found at <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>)

8.1

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

8.2

All staff must be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. If it becomes necessary to consult outside the school, they must speak in the first instance, to the Area Education Officer / LADO following the Whistleblowing Policy.

8.3

Whistle-blowing re the Headteacher must be made to the Chair of the Governing Body whose contact details are readily available to staff (contact the main office).

8.4

Appropriate whistleblowing procedures must be put in place for such concerns to be raised with the school's or college's senior leadership team.

8.5

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them.

General guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>

Staff can also call the NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline on 0800 028 0285 or email help@nspcc.org.uk or fill in the online form via the link above.

The Whistleblowing helpline offers free advice and support to professionals with concerns about how child protection issues are being handled in their own or another organisation.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, for any concerns or allegations against supply members of staff, the school will hold responsibility for managing this and not the supply agency.

Any false or malicious allegations will be taken extremely seriously and will not be tolerated under any circumstance.

If the allegation turns out to be malicious, it will be down to the Headteacher as to whether a sanction should be issued. The LADO will also be contacted so that the child's details can be recorded within the Local Authority in order to protect staff (if the allegation concern a child's welfare).

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, it does not mean that the staff member will automatically be suspended. The Headteacher or Chair of Governors where appropriate, will make decisions based on individual cases in conjunction with the LADO and HR (Human Resources) Representative for the Local Authority.

9.0 Physical Intervention

9.1

At present, reasonable force and restriction is down to assumption, circumstance and the child's best interests in that moment. There is no structured or legal guidance, advice or framework around what is considered to be reasonable force / restriction towards an incident / child however, we acknowledge that **staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort**, when a child is endangering him/herself or others, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.

9.2

Such events must be recorded and the Headteacher be notified immediately. Any witnesses may also be consulted (adult or child).

9.3

Selected staff are appropriately trained in the *Team Teach* technique, but this intervention will always be a **last resort**.

9.4

We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

9.5

We recognise that touch is appropriate in the context of working with children, and all staff have been given 'Safe Practice' guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundary.⁹

10.0 Anti-Bullying

There is no legal definition of bullying.

However, it's usually defined as behaviour that is:

Repeated

Intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally

Often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

It takes many forms and can include:

Physical assault

Teasing

Making threats

Name calling

Cyberbullying - bullying via mobile phone or online (for example email, social networks and instant messenger).

(This definition was taken from The Government website and can be located at <https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school/bullying-a-definition>)

In the case of Cyberbullying, if this occurs outside of school hours it is expected that parents will deal with this effectively and appropriately. School do appreciate parents reporting any incidences to us so that we can **monitor** any further interaction or issues in school and provide advice to parents / carers.

Merton Bank Primary School's policy on anti-bullying is set out in a separate document and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. This includes all

⁹ Guidance on Safer Working Practices is available on the DfE website

forms e.g. cyber, racist, homophobic and gender related bullying. We keep a record of known bullying incidents. All staff are aware that children with SEND and / or differences/perceived differences such as members of the LGBT+ community are more susceptible to being bullied / abused / being an abuser due to their own vulnerabilities. We keep a record of bullying incidents.

10.1

Upskirting is classed as child-on-child abuse and will be investigated and dealt with in line with school's safeguarding policies and procedures. It will never be passed off as 'banter'. These incidents will be logged to capture the Voice of the Child. Support from Pastoral Team and if needed outside agencies will be forthcoming (see appendix 2 for extended information on child-on-child abuse) We also have Child friendly bullying policies appropriate for both Key Stage 1 and Key stage 2. Upskirting is also outlined in Merton Bank Primary School's Mobile Phone policy.

11.0 Racist Incidents

Merton Bank have a separate policy regarding Racism, and any incidences of racism will be taken very seriously and dealt with by the Headteacher in charge.

Our policy on racist incidents is set out separately, and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. We will keep a record of racist incidents.

12.0 Prevention

12.1

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our children by providing children with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

At Merton Bank Primary School, safeguarding children is of paramount importance and incorporating this within the curriculum is essential. Therefore, we will teach children of all ages (in an age appropriate way) a variety of topics and issues relating to safety and wellbeing.

We will also utilise outside agencies coming into school to support our children's education around such topics. This may include school health, the Police, NSPCC, fire safety, road safety, The Prevent Duty, Safer Communities to name a few. This list is not exhaustive and school will always seek support to educate our children around safeguarding and their health and wellbeing. We strongly believe it is in their best interests to be fully aware and informed about social and emotional issues within the local and wider community in order to develop their life skills into adulthood.

Any disclosures or safeguarding concerns raised during or outside a safeguarding focussed session will be dealt with effectively and immediately in line with school's safeguarding procedures.

The policy is written alongside the Government Guidance, **Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education.**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the above, please contact Mrs. R King as the Headteacher or Mrs. J O' Brien as the Safeguarding and Pastoral Manager / DSL and we will be happy to answer any questions and offer any support required.

12.2

The school community will therefore:

- Work to establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to.
- Include regular consultation with children e.g. through safety questionnaires, participation in anti-bullying week, asking children to report whether they have had happy/sad lunchtimes/playtimes, follow the My Happy Minds programme via a whole school approach (this list is not exhaustive).
- Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Include safeguarding across the curriculum, including PSHE which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they can turn to for help. In particular this will include anti-bullying work, e-safety, road safety, pedestrian and cycle training. Also focused work in Year 6 to prepare for transition to Secondary school and more personal safety/independent travel.
- Be vigilant for signs of bullying / abuse and for staff to **always assume** it is happening both inside and outside of school and be mindful of this as “*children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example they may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or are being threatened.*”- *Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025. Pg9:17.*
- Ensure all staff are aware of school guidance for their use of mobile technology and have discussed safeguarding issues around the use of mobile technologies and their associated risks.

13.0 Health & Safety

Our Health & Safety policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both physically within the school environment, and for example in relation to internet use, and when away from the school and when undertaking school trips and visits. This includes the use of mobile phones, ipads and cameras. Please refer to this policy for further detail.

14.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

Our Child Protection Policy and Procedures will be monitored and evaluated atleast annually by:

- Changes in Government legislation
- The Local Authority weekly Safeguarding Bulletin
- Governing Body visits to the school
- SLT 'drop ins' and discussions with children and staff
- Pupil surveys and questionnaires
- Scrutiny of exclusion and attendance data
- Scrutiny of range of risk assessments and audits, including the S175 Audit process
- Logs of bullying/racist/behaviour incidents for SLT to monitor
- Review of parental concerns and parent questionnaires

This policy also links to our policies on:

Behaviour

Staff Behaviour Policy / Code of Conduct

Whistleblowing / Confidential reporting policy

Anti-bullying

Health & Safety

Mental Health

Allegations against staff

Parental concerns

Attendance

CME

Curriculum

*PSHE / includes SRE
Teaching and Learning
Administration of medicines
Drug Education
Sex and Relationships Education
Physical intervention
ESafety, including staff use of mobile phones
Cyberbullying
Risk Assessment
Recruitment and Selection
Intimate Care
Mobile phones and cameras*

We very much appreciate your support in implementing this policy in order to keep your children/ our pupils safe.



Recognising signs of child abuse

“Child abuse is when a child is harmed by an adult or another child – it can be over a period of time but can also be a one-off action. It can be physical, sexual or emotional and it can happen in person or online. It can also be a lack of love, care and attention – this is neglect.”

(Information found at <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/> on 09/09/2025. Additional support and information regarding Child Abuse can also be located at this web address)

Categories of Abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse (including Domestic Abuse)
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation

Signs of Abuse in Children:

The following non-specific signs may indicate something is wrong:

- Significant change in behaviour
- Extreme anger or sadness
- Aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour
- Suspicious bruises with unsatisfactory explanations
- Lack of self-esteem
- Self-injury
- Depression
- Age inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Child Sexual Exploitation

Risk Indicators

The factors described in this section are frequently found in cases of child abuse. Their presence is not proof that abuse has occurred, but:

- Must be regarded as indicators of the possibility of significant harm
- Justifies the need for careful assessment and discussion with DSL / DDSL / Lead Person, Manager, (or in the absence of all those individuals, an experienced colleague)
- May require consultation with and / or referral to Children’s Services
- **Anyone can make a referral**

The absence of such indicators does not mean that abuse, neglect or exploitation has not occurred.

In an abusive relationship the child may:

- Appear frightened of the parent/s or carer/s
- Act in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development (though full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups)
- Also the child may appear quit normal as this may be all they have known

The parent or carer may:

- Use disguised compliance
- Persistently avoid child health promotion services and treatment of the child's episodic illnesses
- Have unrealistic expectations of the child
- Frequently complain about/to the child and may fail to provide attention or praise (high criticism/low warmth environment)
- Be absent or misusing substances
- Persistently refuse to allow access on home visits
- Be involved in domestic abuse

Staff must be aware of the potential risk to children when individuals, previously known or suspected to have abused children, move into the household.

All staff must be aware of the potential of drug and alcohol misuse and the impact on families.

Intra-Familial Abuse

The most common form of intra-familial abuse is between siblings, with one sibling being those who have been / are being abused and the other being those who have / are abusing. It needs to be recognised that both children are vulnerable in their own right. Signs to look out for remain the same as any other form of abuse.

More information on sibling sexual abuse can be found at:

<https://www.csacentre.org.uk/resources/key-messages/intra-familial-csa/>

And

<https://safeguarding.network/content/sibling/>

If staff have concerns in this area they need to discuss with the DSL at soon as possible.

Recognising Physical Abuse

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury
- Several different explanations provided for an injury
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment
- The parents/carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury
- Parents are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a "cry for help" and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury)
- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries
- Staff to consider the possibility of fabricated induced illness.

Bruising

Children can have accidental bruising, but the following must be considered as non-accidental unless there is evidence or an adequate explanation provided:

- Any bruising to a pre-crawling or pre-walking baby
- Bruising in or around the mouth, particularly in small babies which may indicate force feeding
- Two simultaneous bruised eyes, without bruising to the forehead, (rarely accidental, though a single bruised eye can be accidental or abusive)
- Repeated or multiple bruising on the head or on sites unlikely to be injured accidentally
- Variation in colour possibly indicating injuries caused at different times
- The outline of an object used e.g. belt marks, hand prints or a hair brush
- Bruising or tears around, or behind, the earlobe/s indicating injury by pulling or twisting
- Bruising around the face
- Grasp marks on small children
- Bruising on the arms, buttocks and thighs may be an indicator of sexual abuse

Bite Marks

Bite marks can leave clear impressions of the teeth. Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped. Those over 3 cm in diameter are more likely to have caused by an adult or older child. A medical opinion must be sought where there is any doubt over the origin of the bite.

Burns and Scalds

It can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns and scalds, and will always require experienced medical opinion. Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious e.g.:

- Circular burns from cigarettes (but may be friction burns if along the bony protuberance of the spine)
- Linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements
- Burns of uniform depth over a large area
- Scalds that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid (a child getting into hot water is his/her own accord will struggle to get out and cause splash marks)
- Old scars indicating previous burns/scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation

Scalds to the buttocks of a small child, particularly in the absence of burns to the feet, are indicative of dipping into a hot liquid or bath.

Fractures

Fractures may cause pain, swelling and discolouration over a bone or joint.

Non-mobile children rarely sustain fractures.

There are grounds for concern if:

- The history provided is vague, non-existent or inconsistent with the fracture type
- There are associated old fractures
- Medical attention is sought after a period of delay when the fracture has caused symptoms such as swelling, pain or loss of movement
- There is an unexplained fracture in the first year of life

Scars

A large number of scars or scars of different sizes or ages, or on different parts of the body, may suggest abuse.

Mental Health

All staff must also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals must attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Where children have suffered abuse, neglect, exploitation, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action must be taken, following their child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

Further guidance on this for staff can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-mental-health-in-schools-and-colleges>

Recognising Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. The manifestations of emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse.

The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Developmental delay
- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent/carer e.g. anxious, indiscriminate or not attachment
- Indiscriminate attachment or failure to attach
- Aggressive behaviour towards others
- Scapegoated within the family
- Frozen watchfulness, particularly in pre-school children
- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence
- Withdrawn or seen as a "loner" – difficulty relating to others

Domestic Abuse

"The Domestic Abuse Act 2021, section 3, recognises that a child is a victim of domestic abuse in their own right if they see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse and are related to either victim or perpetrator of the abuse, or either the victim or perpetrator of the abuse has parental responsibility for that child." – Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, Pg 13.

Domestic abuse is a form of childhood emotional abuse, but is also a stand-alone criminal offence for those being abused and can be **direct or indirect**.

The term domestic abuse (or domestic violence as it is sometimes referred to) is used to describe anything from emotional abuse, financial abuse to physical assault, sexual abuse, intimidation, isolation, threats or coercive and controlling behaviour.

The Government define domestic abuse as:

*“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged **16 or over** who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:*

*psychological
physical
sexual
financial
emotional*

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.”

This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called ‘honour’ based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.”

(This definition was taken from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-government-domestic-violence-and-abuse-definition/circular-0032013-new-government-domestic-violence-and-abuse-definition>)

There are different types of domestic abuse. They are:

- **Emotional abuse** – constant criticism, insults, undermining capabilities
- **Physical abuse** – hitting, punching, burning, strangling, punching, slapping, biting, pinching, kicking, pulling hair out, pushing, shoving
- **Sexual abuse** – forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual acts / activities, having sex with you when you don't want to have sex, any degrading treatment based on your sexual orientation, not necessarily involving violence.
- **Isolation** – preventing someone from having or developing family, social or professional relationships, preventing from working, monitoring or blocking your telephone calls.
- **Financial abuse** – withholding money, making a person account for every penny they spend, taking your money without asking.
- **Threats** – making angry gestures, using physical size to intimidate, shouting someone down, destroying someone's possessions, breaking things, punching walls, wielding a weapon, threatening to kill or harm someone around children.
- **Coercive control** – an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim.

Domestic abuse is often a combination of several, if not all of the above. More information and support can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help>

Staff need to be aware that all children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Recognising Signs of Sexual Abuse

Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and/or fear. This is particularly difficult for a child to talk about and full account must be taken of the cultural sensitivities of any individual child/family.

Recognition can be difficult, unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional/behavioural.

Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Inappropriate sexualised conduct
- Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age
- Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts
- Involvement in prostitution or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes e.g. for sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties)

Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Pain or itching of genital area
- Blood on underclothes
- Pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed
- Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted disease, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing

Sexual Abuse by Young People

The boundary between what is abusive and what is part of normal childhood or youthful experimentation can be blurred. The determination of whether behaviour is developmental, inappropriate or abusive will hinge around the related concepts of true consent, power imbalance and exploitation. This may include children and young people who exhibit a range of sexually problematic behaviour such as indecent exposure, obscene telephone calls, fetishism, bestiality and sexual abuse against adults or children.

Developmental Sexual Activity encompasses those actions that are to be expected from children and young people as they move from infancy through to an adult understanding of their physical, emotional and behavioural relationships with each other. Such sexual activity is essentially

information gathering and experience testing. It is characterised by mutuality and of the seeking of consent.

Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour can be inappropriate socially, in appropriate to development, or both. In considering whether behaviour fits into this category, it is important to consider what negative effects it has on any of the parties involved and what concerns it raises about a child or young person. It may be recognised that some actions may be motivated by information seeking, but still cause significant upset, confusion, worry, physical damage, etc. it may also be that the behaviour is “acting out” which may derive from other sexual situations to which the child or young person has been exposed. If an act appears to have been inappropriate, there may still be a need for some form of behaviour management or intervention. For some children, educative inputs may be enough to address the behaviour.

Abusive sexual activity included any behaviour involving coercion, threats, aggression together with secrecy, or where one participant relies on an unequal power base.

Further advice can be found on the below link.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/sex-relationships/sexual-behaviour-children/>

There is also an NSPCC guidance table regarding healthy and harmful sexual behaviours and how to respond to this in Appendix 3.

Assessment

In order to more fully determine the nature of the incident the following factors must be given consideration. The presence of exploitation in terms of:

- **Equality** – consider differentials of physical, cognitive and emotional development, power and control and authority, passive and assertive tendencies
- **Consent** – agreement including all the following:
 - Understanding that is proposed based on age, maturity, development level, functioning and experience
 - Knowledge of society’s standards for what is being proposed
 - Awareness of potential consequences and alternatives
 - Assumption that agreements or disagreements will be respected equally
 - Voluntary decision
 - Mental competence
- **Coercion** – the young perpetrator or alleged perpetrator who abuses may use techniques like bribing, manipulation and emotional threats of secondary gains and losses that is loss of love, friendship, etc. Some may use physical force, brutality or the threat of these regardless of victim resistance.

In evaluating sexual behaviour of children and young people, the above information must be used only as a guide.

Recognising Neglect

Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting. Indicators include:

- Failure by parents or carers to meet the basic essential needs e.g. adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene and medical care
- A child seen to be listless, apathetic and unresponsive with no apparent medical cause
- Failure of child to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss
- Child thrives away from home environment
- Child frequently absent from school
- Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent
- Child abandoned or left alone for excessive periods

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Both CSE and CCE are both forms of child abuse and can include vehicle crime and threatening / committing serious violence. Children may become trapped as they or their families may be threatened with violence and they may be coerced or entrapped into debt or into carrying weapons. They may also carry weapons as a source of protection. Children who are involved in CCE and CSE need to be treated as those who have been abused even though they may commit the crime themselves.

CSE: Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the person who has been abused needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator, alleged perpetrator or facilitator. They have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CSE can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. It can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity and may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media)." It can be a one-off occurrence or may happen over time.

Signs are similar to CCE and further information on this can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines>

Merton Bank will follow **Pan-Merseyside Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Protocol** which is available on the St. Helens Safeguarding Children partnerships' website:

<https://liverpoolscp.org.uk/scp/professionals-volunteers/child-criminal-exploitation>

If CSE is suspected, the practitioner must complete a CE1 form (available on the St. Helens Safeguarding Children's Board' website <https://sthelensscp.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/merseyside-child-exploitation-1-ce1-referral-form>) and email it through to adultandchildrenteam@sthelens.gov.uk.

The CE1 form will be screened at a multi-agency 'Morning Meeting' where partners from People's Services, Health, Social Care, Police and Catch 22 will assess each case.

Catch 22 are a dedicated service currently commissioned within St. Helens to support children and young people as well as professionals in all aspects centring on Child Sexual Exploitation. More information, advice and guidance can be found on their website:

<https://www.catch-22.org.uk/services/st-helens-missing-child-sexual-exploitation-service/>

CCE: CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something those who are being abused needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of those who have abused or facilitated and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country, forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Indicators of CCE can be different for boys and girls. A person might exhibit some signs, either as a member or as an associate of a gang dealing drugs. Any sudden changes in a person's lifestyle should be discussed with them.

Some **potential signs / indicators** of county lines involvement and exploitation (CCE) are listed below, with those at the top of particular concern:

Persistently absent from education, going missing from school or home and / or being found out-of-area

Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones

Excessive receipt of texts / phone calls and/or having multiple handsets

Relationships with controlling / older individuals or groups

Leaving home / care without explanation

Suspicion of physical assault / unexplained injuries

Parental concerns

Carrying weapons

Significant decline in school results / performance

Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks

Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being

Further guidance and information on this, and the signs to look out for can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines>

Serious Violence also falls under such categories. Risk factors that may increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence include (but not exhaustive of):

- being male
- having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school
- having experience child maltreatment
- having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

County lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”.

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of the person who is being abused. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children’s homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism must be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral must be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

Trafficking

A person commits an offence if the person arranges or facilitated the travel of another person to exploit them. It is irrelevant whether the exploited person, adult or child, consents to the travel. A person may, in particular, arrange or facilitate another person’s travel by recruiting, transporting or transferring, harbouring or receiving them, or transferring or exchanging control over them. ‘Travel’ means arriving in, or entering, any country; departing from any country and travelling within any country.

The same process for Child Sexual Exploitation must be followed for suspected or confirmed cases of Child Criminal Exploitation.

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the person who is being abused needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator, alleged perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or female. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. The person who is being abused can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it must be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

Missing Children and Young People

Going missing is a dangerous activity and puts a child or young person at immediate risk. This section reflects the guidance set out in **St. Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership's Missing Children Procedure**, which is available on the St. Helens Safeguarding Partnership website.

This information is also in line with the Government guidance - **Children who run away or go missing from home or care (2014)**.

There is a national definition of what constitutes a missing person (including a child):

“Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another”.

In St Helens, anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located and their well-being or otherwise confirmed.

The immediate risks associated with going missing include:

- No means of support or legitimate income – leading to high risk activities;
- Involvement in criminal activities including gang crime
- Those who have been / are being abused
- Those who have abused as they may be victims in their own right
- Victim of crime, for example through sexual assault and exploitation or through gang activities
- Risk of trafficking
- Alcohol/substance misuse
- Deterioration of physical and mental health
- Absent from Education
- Increased vulnerability.

Longer term risks include:

- Long term drug dependency / alcohol dependency
- Crime
- Homelessness
- Disengagement from education
- Child sexual exploitation
- Poor physical and/or mental health.

The police must always be notified immediately when a child or young person goes missing, regardless of what setting they go missing from.

Preventing children and young people from going missing

Any missing episode is potentially serious; one run away is one too many. Therefore prevention work relating to children going missing is of paramount importance. The prevention of children and young people going missing required an integrated multi-agency approach to vulnerable children and young people. Prevention strategies need to include the prevention of children going missing from home and care and will include:

- Awareness and training for all professionals;
- Awareness and safety sessions for young people via curriculum opportunities;

- Multi-agency assessment procedures, including Early Help, must include the risk indicators for running away;
- Consistent implementation of this protocol across all agencies;
- Monitoring and reporting is missing from home, care and education incidents;
- Support to parents and carers;
- Every individual has a duty to inform the authorities if a child is missing.
- Effective interventions are best achieved by partnership working, information sharing, problem-solving and performance management.

Missing from care

Children We Look After CWLA (formally know as 'Looked After Child' / LAC) can also be 'absent' in that they are away from their placement, their whereabouts are known, but they must not be there. If a child is categorised by Merseyside Police as 'absent', the person calling the police will be asked if there are safeguarding concerns or risks, to inform the Police response. Professional must contact the Police if there is a change of circumstances that would increase risk level or if the person returns.

Merseyside Police Missing Persons Policy states that **“All children aged 12 years and under will be categorised as ‘missing’ and not categorised as ‘absent’ under any circumstances”**.

If Merseyside Police have a CSE or CCE flag recorded on their systems, or have any intelligence that a child is at risk of CSE or CCE, they must automatically be recorded as 'missing' and never 'absent'.

With regard to CWLA by another Local Authority and placed within the Merseyside boundary, they remain the responsibility of the placing Local Authority.

Regardless of how long a child has been missing, upon their return an Independent Return Interview must be offered to all children and young people who have been missing from home.

Further information regarding children and young people who go missing from home, or children and young people who go missing who are already open to children's social care, can be found in the **St. Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership's Missing Children Procedure**.

Private Fostering

Private Fostering is where a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if they have a disability) goes to live with someone who is not a close relative for 28 days or more. It is a private agreement between a parent and another adult.

A close relative includes a parent, step-parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether blood related or through marriage). A private foster carer may be from the extended family such as a cousin or great aunt, a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child or someone previously unknown to the child's family.

Examples of private fostering could include:

- Children or young people who are sent to this country for education or health care by their parents from overseas.
- Teenagers living with a friend's family because they do not get on or relationships have broken down with their own family.

- Children living with a friend's family because their parents study or work involves unsociable hours, which makes it difficult to use ordinary day care or after school care.
- Children staying with another family because there has been a bereavement or their parents have divorced or separated.
- A child from overseas staying with a host family while attending school or overseas students at boarding school who do not stay with a host family during the holidays.

Education and other professionals have a mandatory duty to notify the Local Authority and Children's Social Care when they believe there is a private fostering arrangement and they are not satisfied that the Local Authority has been or will be notified by the parent or carer. Private foster carers also have a responsibility to notify the Local Authority.

If a member of staff or any individual believes that a child is being privately fostered, they must contact Children's Social Care or inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will make the referral.



Forced Marriage (FM)

This is an entirely separate issue from arranged marriage. It is a human rights abuse and falls within the Crown Prosecution Service definition of domestic violence. Young men and women can be at risk in affected ethnic groups. Whistle-blowing may come from younger siblings. Other indicators may be detected by changes in adolescent behaviours. Never attempt to intervene directly as a school or through a third party.

It is no longer lawful to marry with parental consent in England and Wales under the age of 18. If it is below the age of 18 it is now classed as a forced marriage arrangement, and this is illegal.

More information on this topic can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/implementation-of-the-marriage-and-civil-partnership-minimum-age-act-2022>

So-Called Honour Based abuse

So-called Honour Based abuse is a violent crime or incident which may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community. Although it is often perceived to be linked to religion, this is not a religious practice and is a form of child abuse when the person who is being abused is under the age of 18. However, any form of Honour Based abuse, despite their age, is illegal. Honour based abuse can include, but is not exclusive to the following:

- Forced abortion and hymen repair
- Abduction and imprisonment
- Forced marriage
- 'Honour' suicide
- 'Honour' Violence

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

It is essential that staff are aware of FGM practices and the need to look for signs, symptoms and other indicators of FGM.

What is FGM?

It involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

4 types of procedure:

- Type 1 Clitoridectomy – partial/total removal of clitoris
- Type 2 Excision – partial/total removal of clitoris and labia minora
- Type 3 Infibulation entrance to vagina is narrowed by repositioning the inner/outer labia
- Type 4 All other procedures that may include: pricking, piercing, incising, cauterizing and scraping the genital area.

Why is it carried out?

Belief that:

- FGM brings status/respect to the girl – social acceptance for marriage
- Preserves a girl's virginity
- Part of being a woman / rite of passage
- Upholds family honor
- Cleanses and purifies the girl
- Gives a sense of belonging to the community
- Fulfills a religious requirement
- Perpetuates a custom/tradition
- Helps girls be clean / hygienic
- Is cosmetically desirable
- Mistakenly believed to make childbirth easier

Is FGM legal?

FGM is internationally recognized as a violation of human rights of girls and women. It is **illegal** in most countries including the UK.

Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening:

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- Family taking a long trip abroad
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leon, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:

- Prolonged absence from school and other activities
- Behavior change on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- Bladder or menstrual problems
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
- Complaining about pain between the legs
- Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- Secretive behavior, including isolating themselves from the group
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity
- Repeated urinal tract infection
- Disclosure

The 'One Chance' rule: As with Forced Marriage there is the 'One Chance' rule. It is essential that settings/school/colleges take action **without delay**.

Whilst all staff must speak to the DSL, or DDSL, with regards to any concerns about FGM, there is a specific legal duty on Teachers.

If a Teacher, in their course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the Teacher must report this to the Police.

Under Section 5B(11)(a) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, “teacher” means, in relation to England, a person within section 141A(1) of the Education Act 2002 (person employed or engaged to carry out teaching work at schools and other institutions in England.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, pg. 16 para. 42

Internet Safety, Online Use, Filtering and Monitoring when in School

It needs to be noted how online / internet use is a large part of our modern society therefore children must be taught the importance of HEALTHY internet use, rather than being shielded from this. School do so by teaching safe and appropriate online use through PSHE lessons, My Happy Minds Programme and information for parents is regularly shared via Twitter or the Parent App.

Access to the Internet enables learners to explore thousands of information sources and whilst we use a filtering service called Smoothwall provided by St. Helens Council, it is nevertheless possible that learners may access some material that could be deemed inappropriate due to their own curiosity and exploration. Should this happen, the issue will be dealt with quickly and efficiently by the Headteacher and DSL with support from St. Helens Council and parents / carers will be notified immediately. However, when in school, specifically when in structured lesson time, pupils are guided towards specific materials to assist their learning in that topic and supported in doing so. Outside of structured learning (for example reward time) pupils are expected to access appropriate entertainment when in school. Pupils utilise internet and online facilities in the presence of school staff therefore should an issue arise a responsible adult is on hand to support pupils quickly and effectively. Outside of school, we strongly urge parents / carers to share responsibility for such guidance as with other potentially offensive media such as video / camera content, Apps, Social Media platforms, television programmes, Youtube, Ipads etc (this list is not exhaustive). Teaching and monitoring safe internet use at home is paramount and sets the expectations and foundations for what we teach and provide when your child is in school.

Should your child / children divulge they have accessed / viewed any inappropriate material outside of school (at home or at a friends house for example) parents will be contacted by either the Class Teacher, DSL or Headteacher and this will be discussed. If it is felt a child has been exposed to content that has placed them at risk of significant harm Social Care and/or Police may also be contacted (this can be without the need for parental / carers consent as previously discussed).

Safeguarding children when on the internet or using online facilities is **everyone's responsibility day-to-day**.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable and ever evolving, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

Content: Being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, **misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.**

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

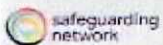
Conduct: Online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying, and

Commerce: Risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

Tackling **misinformation**, **disinformation** and **conspiracy theories**.

Changes in KCSiE 2025

| R | E | V | I | E | W |
|---|--|--|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| Reputation | Evidence | Verification | Intent | Emotions | Weigh it all up |
| Who is posting the content – are they reliable? Who are they writing for? | Find information that supports what you are seeing or hearing. | Do other reputable sources say the same thing? | Ask yourself, what is the person's motivation for posting? | Don't let your emotions takeover. | Use everything you have found out to make your decision. |



educate.against.hate

There are allocated staff who ensure procedures are in place to support this. They are:

- Mrs J O' Brien as Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Mrs. R King as the Headteacher
- Mr. N Bullough as the Deputy Headteacher and I.T Lead.

The above staff receive any filtering / monitoring reports and/or updates, and are notified immediately by Smoothwall service should it be detected that someone in school (whether pupil, staff or other) has accessed **any form** of inappropriate material when using a device within school. If you have any further questions about this, please make an appointment via the Main Office to discuss with Mrs. King.

To uphold all the above and support our children to access the online world as safely and securely as we possible can, Merton Bank Primary school has 'Smoothwall' filter software in place via the St. Helens Council Schools I.T Service that blocks any harmful, offensive or otherwise materials being viewed. Below is a diagram provided by Smoothwall services to demonstrate how this works:

Digital monitoring - how it works



smoothwall.com



Merton Bank's School I.T Technician is: Lewis Bolton. Lewis is present in school every week on a Tuesday. Lewis can be contacted on:
01744 676525
lewisbolton@sthelens.org.uk

Filtering and Monitoring Standards

To support schools and colleges to meet this duty, the DfE has published filtering and monitoring standards which set out that schools and colleges must:

- Identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems
- Review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually
- Block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning
- Have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs

This can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/filtering-and-monitoring-standards-for-schools-and-colleges>

Governing bodies and proprietors must review the standards and discuss with IT staff and service providers what more needs to be done to support schools and colleges in meeting this standard.

Further guidance can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/cyber-security-standards-for-schools-and-colleges>

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/teachers-and-school-staff/appropriate-filtering-and-monitoring>

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/>

Child on Child abuse, Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

Context and Definition:

We recognise that children are capable of abusing other children. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”, as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for pupils.

We also recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse. However, **all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.**

Child-on-child abuse is behaviour by an individual or group, intending to physically, sexually or emotionally hurt others. All staff must recognise that children are capable of abusing other children and the key indicators to this and how to respond to such reports. Staff also need to be aware through other key indicators that child-on-child abuse may be taking place even if not reported.

All staff must be aware of safeguarding issues from child-on-child abuse that takes place inside and outside of school including being subjected to this face to face or online. Staff must challenge the below:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory), bullying or child-on-child abuse will never be passed off as 'banter'.
- Be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues, and that children are at risk of online abuse as well as face to face.
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical abuse also now constitutes online elements that facilitate, threaten and/or encourage physical abuse.
- Abusive, harassing and misogynistic messages whether conveyed verbally face to face or online
- sexual violence and sexual harassment, this also now constitutes online elements that facilitate, threaten and/or encourage sexual violence.
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) including consensual and non-consensual sharing of sharing indecent nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, especially round group chats
- sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who don't want to receive such content
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
- Upskirting (see below)
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (for example self-harm groups).
- Be aware that children with SEND may present with additional barriers in connection with recognising and understanding child-on-child abuse and in respect of those children, staff to be vigilant to that child's individual needs (please refer to pages 8 and 9 of this Policy for further information in respect of SEND barriers).

(please note this list is not exhaustive and if any staff member have concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they must seek further support and guidance from the DSL or DDSL.)

We minimize risk by:

- Close observation of our children
- Availability of staff to provide conflict resolution
- Children knowing that this is not acceptable
- Robust Behaviour policy and procedures
- Logs of incidents

Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our school's behaviour policy, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put pupils in the school at risk
- Is violent
- Involves pupils 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)

Procedures for dealing with and reporting allegations of child-on-child abuse

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

- You must record the allegation and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it
- The DSL will contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including those who have been abused, those who have abused as they may be victims in their own right and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed
- The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate
- Add further details here depending on your school's procedures for recording, investigating and dealing with allegations, and supporting those who have been abused, those who have abused as they may be victims in their own right and any other children affected.
- Creating a supportive environment in school and minimising the risk of child-on-child abuse
- We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where those who have been abused feel confident in reporting incidents with a 'zero-tolerance' approach across the whole school.

To achieve this, we will:

- Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between children, 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 pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensure pupils are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems
- Ensure staff reassure those who have been abused that they are being taken seriously
- Ensure staff are trained to understand:
 - How to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports
 - That even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff must maintain an attitude of "it could happen here"
 - That if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they must act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that those who have been abused may not always make a direct report. For example:
 - Children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to
 - A friend may make a report
 - A member of staff may overhear a conversation
 - A child's behaviour might indicate that something is wrong
 - If they suspect abuse is located on a device to confiscate for evidence to hand to Police
 - That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation

- Girls are generally more likely to be those who have been abused, boys those who abuse, but it is important to recognise that it can happen to any gender and also that those who abuse may also be a victim in their own right.
- That a pupil harming another child could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
- The important role they have to play in preventing child-on-child abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it
- That they must speak to the DSL if they have any concerns

Parental engagement with Online Safety:

- If an issue has come to light within school regarding online safety parents / carers are consulted
- In order to try and prevent issues and raise awareness, school uses forums such as Twitter and ParentApp to highlight the importance of online safety at home and links are regularly shared with parents in order to increased their knowledge and understanding of this. A common link used is the NSPCC website, as follows:
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>
- Should any external agencies come into school to discuss online safety (such as Catch 22 <https://www.catch-22.org.uk/>) parents / carers are advised of this.
- Policies regarding online safety are readily available on the Merton Bank School Website at <https://mertonbank.st-helens.sch.uk/school-information/policies/policies-1>

For further information on this topic please go to <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/dfeguidance-sexual-abuse-harassment-schools-violence-2021/>

Contextual Safeguarding (also known as extra-familial context or harm)

Contextual safeguarding is an approach to understanding and responding to young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. For many young people, their relationships extend beyond their family such as within their neighbourhoods, in their schools and online. These relationships can unfortunately sometimes feature violence and abuse.

Parents and carers can have little influence over these contexts and therefore can have little impact on a young person's experiences of extra-familial abuse. This abuse subsequently undermines the parent-child relationship, which is in itself, a protective factor for most children and young people.

It is therefore important that practitioners, including school staff, engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial (outside the family) contexts, and recognise that assessing and intervening with these areas are a crucial part of safeguarding practices and responsibilities. Contextual safeguarding is therefore a continuation and expansion of child protection systems by recognising that children and young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.

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 those who have been abused humiliation, distress or alarm.

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a persons clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the those who have been abused humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be abused.

Sexting

Sexting is the exchange of sexual messages or self-generated sexual images or videos through a mobile phone network or the internet. Once a message or image has been shared, the sender has no control about how it's used. Sexting can leave a child vulnerable to bullying, blackmail, online grooming or abuse. It's also a criminal offence to create or share explicit images of a child, even if the person doing it is a child.

Elective Home Education

Elective home education is a term used to describe *"a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home - or at home and in some other way which they choose - instead of sending them to school full-time. This is different to education provided by a local authority otherwise than at a school - for example, tuition for children who are too ill to attend school."* – DfE 2019; pg 6; 1.1

Although children may have a positive experience of home education, for some children it means they are less visible to services that are there to keep them safe and supported.

If a parent / carer expressed their intention to educate a child at home, the local authority, school and other key professionals must work together to coordinate a meeting with the parent / carer. This is particularly important if a child has SEND, is vulnerable or has a social worker

Further guidance regarding this can be found at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/791527/Elective_home_education_guidance_for_LAv2.0.pdf



NSPCC Healthy and Harmful Sexual Behaviour

There are 4 phases of childhood sexual development. Just like every other part of growing up, some children mature sooner or later than others. Children with developmental delays may not stick to these age guides. If a parent or carer is worried about anything they can speak to a health professional about it.

Below are some examples of healthy and age appropriate sexual behaviour.

Infancy from 0 to 4 years

Even at this stage, sexual behaviour is beginning to emerge through actions like:

- Kissing and hugging
- Showing curiosity about private parts
- Talking about private body parts and using words like poo, willy and bum
- Playing “house” or “doctors and nurses” type games with other children
- Touching, rubbing or showing off their genitals or masturbating as a comforting habit

Young children from 5 to 9 years

As children get a little older they become more aware of the need for privacy while also

- Kissing and hugging
- Showing curiosity about private parts but respecting privacy
- Talking about body parts and sometimes showing them off
- Trying to shock by using words like poo, willy and bum
- Using swear and sex words they have heard other people say
- Playing “house” or “doctors and nurses” type games with other children
- Touching, rubbing or showing others their private parts

Pre-adolescents from 9 to 13 years

Children are getting more curious about sex and sexual behaviour through:

- Kissing, hugging and ‘dating’ other children
- Being interested in other people’s body parts, relationships and sexuality
- Using sexual language and talking about sex with friends
- Looking for sexual pictures or online porn
- Masturbating in private and experimenting sexually with the same age group

Adolescents from 13 to 17 years

As puberty kicks in, sexual behaviour becomes more private with;

- Kissing, hugging, dating and forming longer-lasting relationships
- Being interested in and asking questions about body parts, relationships and sexuality
- Using sexual language and talking about sex with friends
- Looking for sexual pictures and online porn
- Masturbating in private and experimenting sexually with the same age group

How to respond to sexualized behaviour

Learning about sex and sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child's development. It will help them as they grow up and as they start to make decisions about relationships. By knowing what is 'normal' at each particular stage you can be ready for what to expect, even though it might seem a little uncomfortable at times.

The way you respond is important.

If you are too disapproving or imply that sex shouldn't be spoken about then your child may be less likely to come to you with any questions or worries they may have.

Of course, this won't be easy for everyone, especially if your child's behaviour seems shocking or morally wrong to you. Try to keep calm. Your body language and tone can make a difference. The way you react can affect how comfortable your child will feel about talking to you about these things in the future.

Incidences of harmful sexualised behaviour are evaluated via the Local Authority Ending Rape, Assault and Sexual Exploitation (ERASE) Tool, which has been developed in line with the above NSPCC guidelines and the evidence base outlined by Hackett. It has been created by partners of the St Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership and supports practitioners to assess any harmful sexualised behaviour children may express, and the necessary steps to take following this (ie who to contact externally for support).

Above information sourced from the NSPCC Website at:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-health-development/sexual-behaviour>

'Never Less than our Best'



SAFETY AND WELFARE CONCERN FORM

Name of Child:

Date:

Time:

Class:

Nature of concern (including incidents, reports by pupils, dates. Additional information/accounts should be attached). If further space is needed please record overleaf or attach additional pages.

Large empty rectangular box for recording the nature of concern.

Guidance for staff where a disclosure is made

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|------------|----------------|------------------|-------|----------------|------------------|------|-----------------|----------------|-----|----------------|--|------|--|--|-----|--|--|
| <p>Examples of what might you say: "You have done the right thing by telling me" "This is so important I need to talk to someone (e.g. Mrs King, Mrs. O' Brien) about it" "I will do my best to help you"</p> | <p>Asking Questions: Observe and listen but don't ask leading questions Give the child time to answer your questions Do not over-talk or interrupt Short, open-ended questions are best.</p> | <p>Productive questions:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>5WH</td> <td><i>Tell me</i></td> <td><i>Precisely</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Where</td> <td><i>Explain</i></td> <td><i>In detail</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>When</td> <td><i>Describe</i></td> <td><i>Exactly</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>How</td> <td><i>Show me</i></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>What</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Who</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>How did it make you feel?</p> | 5WH | <i>Tell me</i> | <i>Precisely</i> | Where | <i>Explain</i> | <i>In detail</i> | When | <i>Describe</i> | <i>Exactly</i> | How | <i>Show me</i> | | What | | | Who | | |
| 5WH | <i>Tell me</i> | <i>Precisely</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Where | <i>Explain</i> | <i>In detail</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| When | <i>Describe</i> | <i>Exactly</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| How | <i>Show me</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| What | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Who | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Staff Name:

Position:

Time form completed:

Signed:

PLEASE PASS THIS FORM TO EITHER: Mrs King, Mrs. O' Brien, Mrs. Weatherby or Mr. Bullough

Date received:

Time received:

Signed

| Action to be taken | Action completed ✓ | Initials | Date | Evidence |
|-------------------------|--------------------|----------|------|------------|
| Parents/carers informed | | | | |
| Add to chronology | | | | Chronology |
| | | | | |

Outcome

Large empty rectangular box for recording the outcome.

