



# Alley Court Preparatory School Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

This is a whole school policy which applies to EYFS, Pre-Prep and Prep sections of the school.

Compiled by: D Lewington  
Reviewed by: The Board of Trustees  
Review date: October 2025  
Next review date: September 2026  
Publication on School Website: November 2025

## Policy review dates and changes (annual review)

Review date	By whom	Summary of changes made	Date ratified by trustees	Date implemented
21.10.25	DSL	Annual Review of Policy	31.10.25	1.11.2025

## Key Safeguarding School Contacts

Safeguarding Role	Name and Role	School/Education setting contact details
<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead inc EYFS</b>	Mrs D. Lewington (Deputy Headteacher)	CONTACT NUMBER: 01702-582553 email: <a href="mailto:dlewington@alleyn-court.co.uk">dlewington@alleyn-court.co.uk</a>
<b>Senior Leader(s) available for contact in the absence of the designated safeguarding lead</b>	Mrs H. Sanders (Head teacher)	CONTACT NUMBER: 01702-582553 email: <a href="mailto:head@alleyn-court.co.uk">head@alleyn-court.co.uk</a>
<b>Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead</b>	Mrs H. Sanders (Head teacher)	CONTACT NUMBER: 01702-582553 email: <a href="mailto:head@alleyn-court.co.uk">head@alleyn-court.co.uk</a>
<b>Other staff with safeguarding responsibilities</b>	Mr L. Velleman (Head of Computing)	CONTACT NUMBER: 01702-582553 email: <a href="mailto:lvelleman@alleyn-court.co.uk">lvelleman@alleyn-court.co.uk</a>
<b>Attendance Lead</b>	Mrs D. Kluczynska	CONTACT NUMBER: 01702-582553 email: <a href="mailto:dkluczynska@alleyn-court.co.uk">dkluczynska@alleyn-court.co.uk</a>
<b>SENCo</b>	Mrs N. Vangelis	CONTACT NUMBER: 01702-582553 email: <a href="mailto:senco@alleyn-court.co.uk">senco@alleyn-court.co.uk</a>
<b>Designated Safeguarding Trustee</b>	Graham Reeder (Chair of Trustees)	email: <a href="mailto:greeder@alleyn-court.co.uk">greeder@alleyn-court.co.uk</a>
<b>Designated Teacher for Looked After/ previously Looked After Children</b>	Mrs D. Lewington	CONTACT NUMBER: 01702-582553 email: <a href="mailto:dlewington@alleyn-court.co.uk">dlewington@alleyn-court.co.uk</a>
<b>Mental Health First Aider</b>	Mrs T. Green	CONTACT NUMBER: 01702-582553 email: <a href="mailto:tgreen@alleyn-court.co.uk">tgreen@alleyn-court.co.uk</a>

Safeguarding Role	Name and Role	School/Education setting contact details
PSHE/RSE Lead	Mrs A Hawkins	CONTACT NUMBER: 01702-582553 email: <a href="mailto:ahawkins@alleyn-court.co.uk">ahawkins@alleyn-court.co.uk</a>
SLT Digital Lead	Mrs D. Lewington	CONTACT NUMBER: 01702-582553 email: <a href="mailto:dlewington@alleyn-court.co.uk">dlewington@alleyn-court.co.uk</a>
Data Protection Officer	Mrs H. Sanders  (Head teacher)	CONTACT NUMBER: 01702-582553 email: <a href="mailto:head@alleyn-court.co.uk">head@alleyn-court.co.uk</a>

## Key Safeguarding Local Authority Contacts

<b>Referrals to Local Authority Children's Social Care</b>	Where schools have concerns for the safety and welfare of a child or young person – a referral should be made through the <a href="#">Southend Children's Services Portal</a>  <b>Out of Hours:</b> 0345 606 1212
<b>Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)</b>	Where school have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a child – they should contact the local authority duty officer (LADO):  Allison Francis (LADO) Email: <a href="mailto:LADO@southend.gov.uk">LADO@southend.gov.uk</a> Tel: 01702 534539
<b>Essex Police</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 999 for emergencies or 101 for non-emergencies</li> <li>• Mandatory reporting of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) via 101</li> <li>• Also see <a href="#">When to call the police – guidance for schools and colleges</a></li> </ul>
<b>Children Missing from Education</b>	<a href="mailto:me@southend.gov.uk">me@southend.gov.uk</a>
<b>Southend Virtual School</b>	<a href="#">Southend Virtual School</a>
<b>School Nursing Team</b>	<a href="mailto:schoolnursing@southend.gov.uk">schoolnursing@southend.gov.uk</a> Tel: 01702 534843

## Key Safeguarding National Contacts

Organisation	Description and contact details
<b>NSPCC helpline for adults</b>	<p>Helping adults protect children 24 hours a day. For help and support, including anyone needing advice about female genital mutilation, young people affected by gangs, concerns that someone may be a victim of modern slavery contact the NSPCC trained helpline counsellors on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text 88858</li> <li>• 0808 800 5000</li> <li>• <a href="mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk">help@nspcc.org.uk</a></li> </ul>
<b>NSPCC helpline Report Abuse in Education</b>	<p>Bespoke helpline for children and young people who've experienced abuse at school, and for worried adults and professionals who need support and guidance including for non-recent abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0800 136 663</li> <li>• <a href="mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk">help@nspcc.org.uk</a></li> </ul>
<b>NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice</b>	<p>Free advice and support for professionals concerned about how child protection issues are being handled in their organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0800 028 0285</li> <li>• <a href="mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk">help@nspcc.org.uk</a></li> </ul>
<b>UK Safer Internet Centre professional advice line</b>	<p>Helpline for professionals working with children and young people in the UK with any online safety issues they may face themselves or with children in their care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0844 381 4772</li> <li>• <a href="mailto:helpline@saferinternet.org.uk">helpline@saferinternet.org.uk</a></li> </ul>
<b>Police Anti-Terrorist Hot Line number</b>	0800 789 321
<b>National Domestic Abuse Helpline</b>	Hosted by <a href="#">Refuge</a> , Helpline 0808 2000247
<b><a href="#">Operation Encompass</a></b>	Information, resources and eLearning for schools
<b>Report harmful online content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK Safer Internet Centre – <a href="#">report online harm</a>. A national reporting centre that has been designed to assist anyone in reporting harmful content online</li> <li>• <a href="#">CEOP</a> – to report online sexual abuse or the way someone has been communicating online</li> <li>• Report <a href="#">online material</a> promoting terrorism or extremism</li> </ul>
<b>Report Abuse in Education helpline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people who have experienced abuse at school and parents and teachers who are concerned about sexual abuse in education settings can call the Report Abuse in Education helpline on 0800 136 663 or email <a href="mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk">help@nspcc.org.uk</a></li> </ul>
<b>Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Stop it now!</a> For worries about a child's sexual behaviour, 0808 1000 900. Includes <a href="#">Shore</a> which provides a safe and anonymous place for young</li> </ul>

Organisation	Description and contact details
	people to get help and support. The aim is to prevent harmful sexual behaviours among young people.

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## Section 1: Introduction

### Statutory Context

This child protection policy enables Alleyn Court Preparatory School to carry out its functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in line with key statutory guidance and legislation:

- Department for Education's [statutory guidance](#) publications for schools and local authorities, including:
  - [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (2023)
  - [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (2025)
  - [Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#) (2018)
  - [The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework](#) (2025)
- [Human Rights Act](#) (1998) and [Equality Act](#) (2010), including the Public Sector Equality Duty
- [Data Protection Act](#) (2018) and [UK GDPR](#)
- [Prevent Duty Guidance](#) (2023) and [The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation](#) (2023)
- [Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures](#)

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined for the purpose of this guidance as activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

As defined in [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (2023) safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- Taking action to enable all children to achieve the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework

## School Context: Child Protection Policy Statement

Alleyn Court maintains an attitude of “*it could happen here*”. We recognise that everyone in the school has a role to play to keep children safe. At Alleyn Court we are committed to safeguarding children and young people, and we expect everyone who works in our school to share this commitment. The best interests of the child are at the heart of our work to: identify and act swiftly on concerns, share information and ensure children feel listened to, taken seriously and are safe.

- We ensure that all children are safeguarded while on or off school premises
- We are proactive about anticipating and managing risks that children face in the wider community and online.
- We have a Prevent risk assessment (compliant with Prevent guidance).
- We are part of Operation Encompass.
- We implement any local or national learning where appropriate (e.g. learning from case reviews or audits)
- We recognise the important role we play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and contributes to multi-agency working as set out in [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (2023).
- We understand our role within local safeguarding arrangements and operates in accordance with the [Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures](#), including the local [Threshold document](#).

Parents are encouraged to raise any concerns directly with the School. When a concern could be considered a safeguarding or child protection issue, parents should contact a member of the DSL Team directly. Alternatively, parents may contact ISI directly if they wish.

## Contextual Safeguarding

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (2025) states that:

“All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual abuse, serious youth violence and county lines.”

Safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside our school and within our community. All staff are aware of contextual safeguarding and the fact they should consider whether wider environmental factors present in a child’s life are a threat to their safety and / or welfare. Contextual safeguarding ensures we realise that children can experience abuse or harm beyond their family network and also recognises that relationships that are formed in the local community, neighbourhoods, schools or online can have an adverse effect on a young person’s life. To this end, we will consider relevant information when assessing any risk to a child and share it with other agencies to support better understanding of a child and their family.

## **Responsibilities of ALL adults in school**

**ALL** adults in the school have a role to keep children safe by:

- Providing safe environments, with secure access, where children can learn and develop
- Acting in the best interests of children to protect them on and offline
- Identifying children who are at risk of harm or have been harmed, or are in need of additional help to keep safe
- Taking swift, timely and appropriate action to safeguard children who need extra help or who may be suffering, or likely to suffer harm
- Adhering to safe recruitment processes to make sure all adults in the school have the appropriate vetting checks in place
- Clearly following managing allegations processes to address any concerns (including low level concerns) about an adult's behaviour towards a child
- Understanding the broader aspects of safeguarding in the context of care and education such as behaviour, Special Educational Needs, attendance and educational visits.

All staff are aware that 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. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead if they have concerns about a child.

## **Section 2: What is abuse?**

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child which may be caused by an adult, adults or by another child or children inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. The harm can involve:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect
- exploitation

Children can be at risk of abuse inside and outside of their home, in their community, inside and outside the school and online.

Safeguarding issues can put children at of risk harm. Behaviours linked to drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, unexplained and/or persistent absences or going missing from education, serious violence (including county lines), radicalisation, consensual/non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images can be signs that children are at risk. Abuse, neglect, exploitation, and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events; in most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. If members of staff are unsure, they should always speak to the DSL. The NSPCC lists some of the signs and behaviours which may indicate that a child is being abused:

- A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect or exploitation
  - Repeated minor injuries
- Children who are dirty, smelly, poorly clothed or who appear underfed
- Children who have lingering illnesses which are not attended to, deterioration in school work, or significant changes in behaviour, aggressive behaviour, severe tantrums
- An air of “detachment” or “don’t care” attitude
- Overly compliant behaviour
- A “watchful” attitude
- Sexually explicit behaviour (e.g. playing games and showing awareness which is inappropriate for the child’s age), continual open masturbation, aggressive and inappropriate sex play
- A child who is reluctant to go home, or is kept away from school for no apparent reason
- Not trusting adults, particularly those who are close
- “tummy pains” with no medical reason
- Eating problems, including over-eating, loss of appetite
- Disturbed sleep, nightmares, bed wetting
- Running away from home, suicide attempts
- Self-inflicted wounds
- Reverting to younger behaviour
- Depression, withdrawal
- Relationships between child and adults which are secretive and exclude others
- Pregnancy

These signs are not evidence themselves, but may be a warning, particularly if a child exhibits several of them or a pattern emerges. It is important to remember that there may be other explanations for a child showing such signs. Abuse is not easy to diagnose, even for experts. For details on wider forms of abuse refer to Appendix D.

Safeguarding action may be needed to protect children from a range of risks. Further information about indicators of abuse and neglect as well as safeguarding risks noted above are located in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (2025). These include the following risks, and include abuse perpetrated by other children, as well as by adults:

- any concerns that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect (or Acts of Omission)
- child on child abuse
- absence from school
- bullying, including cyber/online bullying and prejudice-based bullying, anti-social behaviour, Hate Crime, discriminatory, racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls
- sexual harassment, online sexual abuse, and sexual violence between children. Including abusive messaging and share sexual imagery
- radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour
- child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation, including county lines, Modern Slavery.
- risks linked to using technology and social media, including online bullying; the risks of being groomed online for exploitation or radicalisation; and risks of accessing and generating inappropriate content, for example youth produced sexual imagery

- abuse within intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship’ abuse)
- upskirting
- substance misuse – drugs and/or alcohol
- gang activity and serious violence, particularly affecting young males who have been excluded, have experienced trauma and have been involved in offending
- domestic abuse
- modern slavery
- forced marriage, marriage/civil partnership under the age of 18, Female Genital Mutilation and so-called ‘honour-based’ abuse
- children with Perplexing Presentations (PP) in whom illness is fabricated or induced (FII)
- homelessness
- child abduction
- community safety issues
- Adulthood

This list correlates with the key priorities outlined in The Southend Safeguarding Children Partnership Strategy 2024/2027 and can be found here: [Southend Safeguarding Children Partnership – One Page Strategy Summary 2024-27 | Safeguarding Southend Partnership](#). Further information about abuse and support as collated by the Southend Safeguarding Partnership can be found here: [Information for Children | Safeguarding Southend Partnership](#).

### **Section 3: School staff safeguarding roles and responsibilities**

All staff and trustees are equipped with the knowledge and skills to keep children safe as set out in KCSIE (2025) by receiving:

- safeguarding training at induction
- appropriate safeguarding training appropriate to their roles and responsibilities which is regularly updated
- online safety and for children to be taught about safeguarding, including in relation to online safety
- attendance information, with dedicated attendance training for any staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral, and senior leaders
- data protection information (including recording protocols) and cyber security, relevant to the roles staff undertake
- safer recruitment appropriate training for those involved with the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children
- support and training for those involved with managing allegations against staff

All staff and trustees know and understand the:

- Child Protection policy
- Behaviour policy
- Anti Bullying policy
- Staff and Volunteer Behaviour (Code of Conduct) policy
- Whistleblowing policy

- Attendance policy including dealing with persistent absences or children missing from education
- The safeguarding response to child-on-child abuse
- The role and names of the designated safeguarding lead, their deputy, the designated teacher for looked after children, the senior mental health lead

Staff and trustees receive an electronic copy of, read and sign to say that they have received, read, and understood as follows:

- Those who work directly with children at least Part one of [Keeping Children Safe in Education: for school and college staff](#) and Annex B: Further information (2025)
- School leaders, including trustees and designated safeguarding lead/deputy all of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (2025)
- Staff who do not work with children directly at least [Keeping Children Safe in Education: for school and college staff \(part 1\)](#) (2025)
- Code of Conduct policy for staff
- Code of conduct policy for trustees

All staff receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including online safety (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings) as required, and at least annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

Staff build their expertise by undertaking safeguarding training and through managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis. Staff contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and the child protection policy.

### **Staff induction**

Staff and trustees at Alleyn Court will have an induction appropriate to their roles in line with any advice from local safeguarding partners. New staff will also receive information about systems within the school which support safeguarding, including online safety and copies of policies. All staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring at induction.

## **Section 4: School Leadership Accountability Responsibilities**

### **Governance**

As outlined in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (2025) Chapter 2 'The Management of Safeguarding' the trustees exercise strategic leadership oversight of all aspects of safeguarding in the school, in line with statutory requirements. This is a standing item at all trustee meetings and recorded in minutes. To support this a safeguarding audit is undertaken every two years to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding policies and processes.

The senior trust board level member who takes leadership responsibility for the school is Graham Reeder.

The trustees ensure:

- compliance to the Equality Act (2010) and the Human Rights Act (1998).
- that the school adheres to the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).
- appropriate policies and procedures in place in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare in line with Section 157/175 of the Education Act.
- an appropriate senior member of staff, from the school leadership team, is appointed to the role of designated safeguarding lead.
- a clear job description for the designated safeguarding lead is in place which clearly sets out their lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems processes).
- the designated safeguarding lead has the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the significant level of responsibility and duties of the post.
- allocation of sufficient time, funding, training, resources, and support to the designated safeguarding lead to carry out the role effectively.
- additional deputy designated safeguarding lead is appointed as required.
- the designated safeguarding lead including the deputy is trained to undertake their role as set out in local requirements and are both trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead.
- those involved in safeguarding work understand and applying the [Threshold document](#), and the [Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures](#) and follow the local information sharing protocols to supply information as requested by the Southend Safeguarding Children Partnership so that partners can perform their functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area, including information related to local and national child safeguarding practice reviews.
- staff and trustees have the right safeguarding training to undertake their roles effectively. This includes recognising and responding to child-on-child abuse, mental health concerns, risks associated with non-school attendance, any additional safeguarding barriers for children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or health conditions, protected characteristics and the use of 'reasonable force.'
- children are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe, including when online.
- safer recruitment procedures are robust, including the hire of any school premises or facilities and the use of any alternative provision provider.
- rigorous procedures in place to report and manage any allegation raised about an adult's behaviour towards a child.
- a designated teacher works with local authorities to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked after.
- the school works effectively with the local authority in line with the DfE guidance on Elective Home Education.

## **Headteacher Responsibilities**

The Headteacher adheres to the Headteacher Standards (2020) to ensure the protection and safety of pupils and staff through effective approaches to safeguarding, as part of the duty of care. The Headteacher ensures that the policies and procedures, adopted by their trustees are understood, and followed by all staff. This includes working with the designated

safeguarding lead, their deputy, and other senior leaders, to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding within the school and ensuring that educational outcomes of children who have or have had a social worker are promoted.

## **The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Lead**

*Training:* The designated safeguarding lead and deputy have the appropriate training, knowledge and skills required to carry out their role. This includes how to identify, understand and respond to specific needs that can increase the vulnerability of children, as well as specific harms that can put children at risk, and the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly local authority children's social care. This training is updated at least every two years. The designated safeguarding lead and deputy also undertake Prevent awareness training. Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead are at times delegated to a trained deputy, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection remains with the designated safeguarding lead, this lead responsibility is not delegated.

*Availability:* The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) is available during school or hours for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

*Responsibilities:* The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). These are specifically outlined in KCSIE (2025), and primarily include:

- providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters
- responding to and acting on any concerns or disclosures in a timely manner, triaging these against the local authority thresholds using all of the available information and refer or seek advice as necessary
- ensuring child protection records are appropriately maintained and updated, including detail about decision making and further actions or outcomes and the threshold level reached in line with local procedures
- taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and/or supporting other staff to do so, and contributing to the assessment of children and being a key point of contact with the safeguarding partners
- informing the Headteacher of issues, including ongoing section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations
- being the lead contact when working with the school's leadership team for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school by:
  - ensuring senior leaders know and have oversight of its cohort of children who have or have had a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort,
  - supporting teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes

## Teachers

Teachers adhere to the Teachers' Standards (2021) expectation that all teachers manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe educational environment and requires teachers to have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils.

This includes:

- knowing and understanding and following the school's child protection policy and procedures.
- promote educational outcomes of pupils subject to any safeguarding concerns and following any advice such as making reasonable adjustments or implementing any directed actions in a statutory safeguarding plan.

At Alleyn Court we recognise the possibility that adults working in the school may harm children, including trustees, volunteers, supply teachers, agency workers, out of school providers and contractors. Any concerns about the conduct of other adults in the school should be taken to the Headteacher without delay; any concerns about the Headteacher should go to the Chair of Trustees using the contact details shown in this policy who should report the matter directly to the LADO.

If there is concern that the allegation has not been taken seriously in the school, it should be reported directly to the LADO.

Concerns may come from various sources, for example, a suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken. The Headteacher has to decide whether the concern is an allegation or low-level concern. The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (see below).

## Allegations

It is an allegation if the person (anyone working in the school including supply teachers, agency workers, volunteers, out of school providers and contractors.) has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (also includes behaviour outside the school)

Allegations should be reported to the LADO 'without delay'. Before contacting the LADO, the school will conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation. The LADO's role is not to investigate the allegation, but to ensure that an appropriate investigation is carried out, whether that is by the police, children's social care, the school, or a combination of these.

## Low-level Concerns

Concerns may be graded Low-level if the concern does not meet the criteria for an allegation; and the person has acted in a way that is inconsistent with our staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work. Example behaviours include, but are not limited to:

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

Reports about supply staff, agency workers, out of school providers and contractors will be notified to their employers, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Staff should be encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

Low-level concerns should be recorded in writing, including:

- name of individual sharing their concerns (if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible)
- details of the concern
- context in which the concern arose
- action taken

Records will be kept confidential on CPOMS Staffsafe, held securely, and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018. Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. If a concerning pattern of behaviour is identified and now meets the criteria for an allegation, then the matter should be referred to the LADO.

All members of staff and the wider school community should be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and feel confident any concern will be taken seriously by the school leadership team. Where there are concerns about the way that safeguarding is carried out in the school, staff should refer to the Whistleblowing Policy. A whistleblowing disclosure must be about something that affects the general public such as:

- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- a legal obligation has been breached
- there has been a miscarriage of justice
- the health or safety of any individual has been endangered
- the environment has been damaged
- information about any of the above has been concealed.

We have 'whistleblowing' procedures in place and these are available in the school Whistleblowing Policy. However, for any member of staff who feels unable to raise concerns internally, or where they feel their concerns have not been addressed, they may contact the [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/help) on: 0800 028 0285 or by email at: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

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

## **Teaching Children to Be Safe**

Children at Alleyn Court are taught about how they can keep themselves and others safe, including online. To be effective, we present this information in an age-appropriate way. We are sensitive to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs or disabilities.

At Alleyn Court, safeguarding—including online safety—is embedded throughout the curriculum, assemblies, PSHE, and other activities. Pupils learn how to adjust their behaviour to reduce risks and build resilience, including protection against radicalisation.

In line with the Online Safety Act (2023), teaching covers the safe use of electronic devices and the internet, as well as the risks posed by individuals who use online platforms to bully, groom, abuse, or radicalise others. Internet safety is an integral part of the Computing curriculum and is reinforced through PSHE and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE).

Age-appropriate lessons address harmful online content such as sexting, inappropriate image sharing, deepfakes, AI misuse, and dangerous social media trends. The School uses robust filtering and monitoring systems to protect students from illegal, harmful, or inappropriate material online, reduce the risk of harmful interactions, and manage behaviours that could lead to harm. Measures are also in place to prevent access to extremist or terrorist content.

Full details are available in our Online Safety Policy. Teachers can access recommended resources from:

- UK Safer Internet Centre
- CEOP's Thinkuknow
- The use of social media for online radicalisation
- UKCCIS: Sexting in schools and colleges

## Section 5: Responding to concerns about a child's welfare

Any staff member including supply staff should follow the following procedures if they have any concerns about a child's welfare:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999 for medical assistance or if a crime needs to be reported
- report your concern on CPOMS, a Child Protection Online Monitoring System. This has replaced the hardcopy report forms as our means of reporting any safeguarding concerns. However, paper formats, Concerns Form (Appendix A) and Body Map (Appendix B), will still be used if for any reason the online system is not accessible. The school's records on child protection are saved securely and are separated from routine student records.
- inform the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy as swiftly as possible and within the hour.
- if the matter is extremely urgent, or you are unsure, speak to the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy as quickly as possible.
- follow the advice of the DSL and remember this information is confidential
- ensure record keeping is up to date and accurate. It should be logged as quickly as possible, on the same day and before the child is due to leave the school premises
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed by speaking to a member of the Safeguarding Team or through professional helplines such as the [NSPCC](#).

Staff must always **immediately** inform the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy if there are any:

- concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse, exploitation, or neglect, including suspicion that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play
- searching incidents where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a learner was in possession of a prohibited item or where a search has revealed a safeguarding risk
- behaviour or changes in presentation, including changes in school attendance, which gives rise to suspicions that a child may not be receiving adequate care or may be suffering harm
- hint or disclosure of abuse about or by a child
- concerns that a person(s) who may pose a risk to children is living in a household with children present
- concerns about online abuse including cybercrime, exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, sharing nudes and semi nudes and/or where any adult appears to be sexually communicating (e.g., email, text, written note or verbally) with a child
- concerns about child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and harassment
- information which indicates that the child is living with someone who does not have parental responsibility for them (this is known as private fostering)
- concerns that a child is at risk of domestic abuse or so-called 'honour-based' abuse, including forced marriage, marriage, or civil partnership under the age of 18, female genital mutilation (FGM), breast ironing, virginity testing or hymenoplasty

- concerns that a child is at risk of radicalisation, child sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation, including county lines; or that a child or their parent/carer may be a victim of modern slavery (trafficked)

There will also be occasions when you suspect that a child may be at risk, but you have no 'real' evidence. For instance:

- the child may need support with their mental health.
- the child's behaviour, play and or appearance may have changed
- attendance rates at school may have reduced
- the child's ability to concentrate and focus may have altered
- 

These concerns should be raised with the DSL. Do not presume someone else will do or has done it.

It is not the responsibility of the school or its staff to determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. This is the responsibility of local authority children's social care.

Ensure you record these early concerns using CPOMS. If a child or adult does begin to reveal that a child is being harmed, you should follow the advice in the section '*If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about a concern or abuse*'.

**Remember: If you are unsure, you should always have a discussion with the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy. All verbal conversations should be recorded in writing on CPOMS.**

### **If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about a concern or abuse**

It takes a lot of courage for a child, parent, carer, or other significant adult to disclose that they are worried or have concerns. They may feel ashamed, the abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults, or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. It is important they are reassured that they are being taken seriously, and that they will be supported and kept safe. They should not be made to feel they are creating a problem, blamed or ashamed for making a report. Reports, particularly those about sexual violence and harassment, if possible, should be managed with two members of staff present (preferably one being the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy), however this might not be possible in all cases.

If a child or adult talks to you about any risks to a child's safety or well-being you will need to let them know that you must pass the information on – you are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which you do this is a matter for professional judgement.

During your conversation with the child (or their parent/carer):

- allow them to speak freely, listen to what is being said without interruption and without asking leading questions
- keep questions to a minimum and of an open nature ('TED questions' tell me, explain, describe) i.e., 'can you tell me what happened?' rather than 'did x hit you?'
- remain calm and do not overreact – the child (or their parent/carer) may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting you

- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m so sorry this has happened’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’
- avoid admonishing the child or adult for not disclosing earlier. Saying ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ or ‘I can’t believe what I’m hearing’ may be your way of being supportive but they may interpret it that they have done something wrong
- do not be afraid of silences – remember how hard this must be for the child or adult
- under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what do other family members think about all this
- at an appropriate time tell the child or adult that to help them you must pass the information on
- do not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort; it may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused
- tell the child or adult what will happen next. The child or adult may agree to go with you to see the designated safeguarding lead. Otherwise let them know that someone will come to see or contact them before the end of the day
- report verbally to the designated safeguarding lead
- write up your conversation as soon as possible and if in written format use the Concerns Form (Appendix A) and Body Map (appendix B) and hand it to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy
- children should not be asked to write statements about abuse or any concerns that may have happened to them or sign the staff record
- Seek support if you feel distressed. This may be sometime after the disclosure

The school recognises that some children may potentially be at risk of greater harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and poor mental health and may require additional help and support. These may be children with a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan, those in Care or previously in Care, those with a social worker or those requiring mental health support. We work with Social Care and other appropriate agencies to ensure there is a joined-up approach to planning for these children and that they receive the right help at the right time.

The school understands that children with special educational needs and / or disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. Barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child’s condition without further exploration
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges

### **Role of the designated safeguarding lead and their deputy following identification of concerns**

Whenever the designated safeguarding lead or deputy receive information regarding concerns about a child, including via police domestic abuse notifications via Operation Encompass they will:

- review information received and assess if any urgent actions are needed, i.e. medical, child's immediate safety
- check what is known about the child when they arrived (or not) at school, how they are presenting physically and emotionally and if there are any changes in their behaviour
- consider what is already known about the child and their family, including whether any previous concerns have been raised by staff or if they are already known to local authority children's services (targeted early help or social care)
- consider what 'checks' need to be carried out and how best these can be achieved
- inform relevant school staff who have a specific need to know i.e., class/form teacher and relevant support staff
- where appropriate use relevant national, local, and education-based risk identifying, assessment tools and guidance to support the identification of needs and decision making, such as: school records, assessments, and chronologies, including any contextual factors/placed based risks
- use national guidance and assessment tools e.g. [Stop it now](#) (sexual behaviours), [Contextual safeguarding](#) tools, [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people \(2024\)](#)
- not directly approach a child or parent/carer about an incident when the school have received a domestic abuse notification and instead make general enquiries with the child about how they are. If a child initiates a conversation about the incident the guidance outlined in the section '*If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about a concern or abuse*' will be followed
- follow the [Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures](#) and using the Southend [Threshold document](#) to support decision making about the child's needs and the appropriate level of support and intervention. Possible options may include internal support via school pastoral systems, early help assessment and referral to statutory services such as local authority children's services
- consider whether the matter should be discussed with the child's parents or carers or whether to do so may put the child at further risk of harm, see Notifying parents
- if unsure about the action to take, including if a child protection referral should be made, seek advice from local authority children's social care or another appropriate agency
- if the concerns are about radicalisation or violent extremism, contact the local authority Prevent Team for advice and where appropriate make a referral to the police Prevent Team
- where the child has complex needs or where there are child protection concerns, refer as appropriate to Local Authority Children's Services via agreed processes, providing a copy of the Early Help Assessment, action plan and any other relevant assessments
- notify the appropriate Local Authority Children's Services of any private fostering arrangements, to allow the local authority to check the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child. Notifications will contain the information specified in Schedule 1 of The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 and made in writing
- if a child is at risk of immediate harm, and/or where it is believed a criminal offence has been committed, including sexual violence and harassment, refer to the police. See [NPCC When to call the police; guidance for schools and colleges](#). Safeguarding considerations must take priority and include how screening, searching, and

confiscating powers will be used safely, proportionately, and appropriately, including undertaking a police strip search on a child and the requirement for children to have an [appropriate adult](#).; see [Searching, screening and confiscation at school guidance \(2022\)](#)

*Responding* to a concern or disclosure. The designated safeguarding lead reviews all available information and uses this to triage the case and take appropriate action in line with the local authority thresholds. This includes:

- referring cases of suspected abuse and neglect to the local authority children's social care as required and support staff who make referrals to:
  - local authority children's social care
  - the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme
  - where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required, and
  - where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required. (NPCC - When to call the police should help understand when to consider calling the police and what to expect when working with the police)

*Recording*: The designated safeguarding lead ensure records are a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, including:

- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome, referencing the local authority thresholds
- ensuring that child protection files are kept up to date, stored securely and confidentiality
- keeping concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child.
- ensuring a child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term, when children leave the school
- ensuring receipt of a child protection file for any pupil new to the school subject to statutory safeguarding intervention

## **Notifying parents/carers**

The school will normally seek to discuss any needs or concerns about a child with their parents or carers. Where an early help assessment would benefit the child and their family, the most appropriate member of staff should approach the parent/carer to take this forward. In situations where there are serious needs or child protection concerns the designated safeguarding lead or deputy will contact the parent or carer. However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, then advice will first be sought from local authority children's social care.

## **Pastoral/school-based support (universal support/ low level needs)**

In all cases the school will consider what support could be offered within the setting such as regular one to one check-ins and opening channels of communication with parents/carers. Pastoral support will be kept under constant review to ensure that it is effective.

## Early help support and assessment (emerging needs)

Where a child is likely to require co-ordinated support from a range of early help services, or where there are concerns for a child's well-being or a child's needs are not clear, not known or not being met, the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy will support the completion of an early help assessment (EHA) and if needed, co-ordinate a team around the family (TAF).

Whenever a child and their family are supported via an early help assessment, the school will keep this under constant review and should the child's situation appear not to be improving or getting worse, consideration will be given to a referral to local authority children's services.

For more information about the early help assessment process see the [Southend Early Help Framework](#).

## Referral to local authority children's social care

Concerns about a child's welfare will be referred to local authority children's social care using the agreed referral process as outlined in the Southend [Threshold document](#).

**If at any point there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, an immediate referral should be made to local authority children's social care and/or if appropriate, the police.**

**Anybody can make the referral.**

Where it is believed that there are urgent child protection concerns, the designated safeguarding lead or deputy will make a referral to local authority children's social. Non-urgent cases will be referred via the local authority [Children's Services Portal](#).

In exceptional circumstances, such as in an emergency or a genuine concern that appropriate action hasn't been taken, any staff member can refer their concerns directly to local authority children's social care; however, they should inform the designated safeguarding lead or deputy as soon as possible.

## Confidentiality and sharing information

The school recognises the importance of information sharing between the school and local agencies to effectively safeguard our learners. The school operates with regard to HM Government [Information Sharing; Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers](#) (2024), Information Commissioner's Office [A 10 step guide to sharing information to safeguard children](#) (2023) and DDSCP [Information Sharing Guidance for Practitioners](#) (2022).

All staff will be mindful of the seven golden rules to sharing information and [Data Protection Act](#) (2018) and [UK General Data Protection Regulation](#) (UK GDPR) obligations. Staff are aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare, rather,

they provide the legal framework under which information can, and in some cases, must be shared.

Staff should be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess, and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of a child, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care.

**If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy, who will seek advice from our Data Protection Officer if needed**

**Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children**

**All information sharing outside of 'business as usual', should be recorded on the appropriate logs**

Staff should only discuss concerns with the designated safeguarding lead or deputy (or the most senior person on the premises if they are unavailable), Headteacher or Chair of Trustees (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Where appropriate, consent will be sought to share information. However, where there are safeguarding concerns about a child, information will be shared with the appropriate organisations such as local authority children's social care under alternative, appropriate, lawful basis. In most cases concerns will be discussed with parents and carers prior to the referral taking place unless doing so would increase risk.

## **Record keeping**

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, including the rationale for those decisions, should be recorded on CPOMS. This includes instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency, such as local authority children's social care or the Prevent programme etc. If in doubt about recording requirements staff should discuss with the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy.

Records of concerns documentation, referrals and other written safeguarding information are kept in a child protection file for each child and stored separately from each child's education file. Child protection files are confidential and stored securely and only made available to relevant individuals.

Records will include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached, the rationale for these, and the outcome, as well as a review of any progress made
- any professional differences of opinion about the safety of a child will also be recorded.

When a child leaves the school, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure a copy of these records will be sent securely as soon as possible (within 5 days for an in-year transfer

or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term) to any school or other education setting to which the child transfers and a confirmation of receipt obtained. The child protection file transfer will be separate to the main pupil file. This will allow the new provider to continue supporting the child and have the support in place for when the child arrives.

The designated safeguarding lead will also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new education provider in advance of the child leaving e.g. children who have or who have had a social worker and those receiving support through the Channel programme.

The designated safeguarding lead, their deputy and key staff such as special education needs co-ordinators will be informed when a child's safeguarding/child protection file is received

### **Support for those involved in a safeguarding/child protection issue**

Child neglect, abuse and exploitation are devastating for children and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved. We will support the children and their families and staff by:

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- nominating a link person who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact
- nominating a 'case manager' where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a child
- responding sympathetically to any request from a child or member of staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety
- maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
- storing records securely
- offering details of helplines, counselling, or other avenues of external support
- following the procedures laid down in our whistleblowing, complaints, and disciplinary procedures

## **Section 6: Child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and harassment**

All staff working in or on behalf of the school maintain an attitude of '*it could happen here*' – this is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse. Even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening.

**If staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy**

The school recognises that children may abuse their peers physically, sexually, and emotionally. There is a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse; abuse is abuse and

this will not be tolerated or passed off as ‘banter’, ‘just having a laugh’, ‘boys being boys’ or ‘part of growing up’ as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

The school will take child-on-child abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult and address it through the same processes as any safeguarding issue. We will respond to all reports and concerns, including those that have happened outside of the school and online. In addition, we also recognise that children who abuse others and any other child affected by child-on-child abuse are also likely to have considerable welfare and safeguarding issues themselves.

## **What is child-on-child abuse?**

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (2025) defines child-on-child abuse as most likely to include but not limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice based and discriminatory bullying):
  - abuse within intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’)
  - physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and /or encourages physical abuse)
  - sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and /or encourages sexual violence)
  - sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
  - causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
  - consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos
  - upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm
  - initiating/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)
- It can also include causing someone to engage in extremist or radicalising behaviour
- Child-on-child abuse exists on a continuum and different forms of abuse may overlap
- It can affect any child/young person of any age and sex and can occur between two children or through a group of children abusing a single child or group of children
- Sometimes vulnerable children are targeted. For example:
  - those living with domestic abuse or with intra-familial abuse in their histories
  - young people in care
  - those who have experienced bereavement through the loss of a parent, sibling, or friend
  - black and minority ethnic children are under identified as victims but are over identified as perpetrators

- there is recognition it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys are likely to be perpetrators. However, both girls and boys can experience child-on-child abuse, but they are likely to experience it differently e.g. girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to homophobic taunts/initiation/hazing (rituals and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group)
- evidence also shows that children with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning children are at greater risk
- It is influenced by the nature of the environments in which children spend their time - home, school/education settings, peer group, online and community - and is built upon notions of power and consent. Power imbalances related to gender, social status within a group, intellectual ability, economic wealth, social marginalisation etc, can all be used to exert power over a peer
- Child-on-child abuse involves someone who abuses a 'vulnerability' or power imbalance to harm another and has the opportunity or is in an environment where this is possible
- While perpetrators of child-on-child abuse pose a risk to others, they are often victims of abuse themselves

## **Preventing child-on-child abuse**

There is a whole school approach to preventing child-on-child abuse, including child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, this forms part of the whole school approach to safeguarding. The school will seek to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by ensuring an approach that prepares learners for life in modern Britain. Our school has a clear set of values and standards which are upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life.

Alleyn Court provides a safe environment, promotes a culture of positive standards of behaviour, takes steps to address inappropriate behaviour and has effective systems in place where children can confidently raise concerns knowing they will be taken seriously and provides safeguarding through the curriculum via relationships education, online safety, and other curriculum and assembly opportunities. Children are taught about how they can keep themselves and others safe, including online. To be effective, we present this information in an age-appropriate way. We are sensitive to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs or disabilities. We may include targeted work with children identified as vulnerable or being at risk and targeted work with those identified as being a potential risk to others.

All staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours will not be tolerated or passed off. Staff will maintain an attitude of '*it could happen here*' and all inappropriate behaviour will be addressed.

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

- Behaviour policy
- Positive Touch and Restraint policy

- Anti Bullying policy
- Online Safety Policy and other associated issues, including sharing nudes and semi-nudes and extremist material
- Attendance policy

## **Systems for children to report abuse**

Even if there are no reports, all staff understand it does not mean it is not happening; it may be the case that it is not being reported. We recognise that children may not find it easy to tell staff about the abuse, that certain children may have additional barriers to telling someone and children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice or react to. In some cases, victims may make indirect reports via a friend or staff may overhear conversations. All staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it.

**If staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy**

## **Action on concerns**

Child-on-Child abuse may be a one-off serious incident or an accumulation of incidents. Staff may be able to easily identify some behaviour/s as abusive, however, in some circumstances it may be less clear. Reports of sexual violence and harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. In all cases the initial response to a report is very important. Members of staff will take the concerns seriously and reassure the child that they will be supported and kept safe, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward. If possible, reports should be managed with two members of staff present (preferably one being the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy), however this might not be possible in all cases. The victim will not be given the impression they are creating a problem or made to feel ashamed for making a report or their experience minimised. Abuse which has occurred online or outside of the school will be treated just as seriously as that which has occurred within school.

Staff must follow *Responding to concerns about a child's welfare* and discuss the concerns and seek advice from the designated safeguarding lead.

When an allegation is made by a pupil against another pupil, members of staff should consider if the issues raised indicate that the child and/or alleged perpetrator may have low level, emerging needs, complex/serious needs, or child protection concerns and follow the process outlined in *Responding to concerns about a child's welfare*.

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

- what are the wishes of victims in terms of how they want to proceed?
- what is the nature, extent and context of the behaviour including verbal, physical, sexual (including sharing of nudes/semi-nudes) and/or online abuse? Was there coercion, physical aggression, bullying, bribery or attempts to ensure secrecy? What was the time, location, duration, and frequency? Is the incident a one off or a

sustained pattern of abuse? (Remember there may be other forms of abuse in addition to what has been reported) Were other children and /or adults involved? Has a crime been committed and/or have any harmful sexual behaviours been displayed?

- what is the child's age, development, capacity to understand and make decisions (including anything that might have had an impact on this e.g., coercion), and family and social circumstances? What is the nature of the relationship between the children involved? Are they in a current or previous intimate personal relationship, do they live in the same household or setting, attend the same school/education setting, classes, or transport?
- what are the relative chronological and developmental ages of the children? Does the victim or perpetrator have a disability or learning difficulty? Are there any differentials in power, social standing, or authority?
- is the behaviour age appropriate or not? Does it involve inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation?
- are there any risks to the child victim or alleged perpetrator themselves and others e.g., other children in school/education setting, adult students, school/education setting staff, in the child's household (particularly siblings or other children related to the household), extended family, peer group or wider social network? Are there any links to child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation or gang related activity?

Immediate consideration should be given to how best to support and protect the victim and alleged perpetrator and any other children involved/impacted. Where the report involves rape and assault by penetration, the alleged perpetrator must be removed from any classes they share with the victim. There must also be careful consideration on how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator apart on school premises (including any before or after school activities).

For all other reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment and forms of child-on-child abuse, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator and considerations regarding shared classes and school's premises should be considered immediately.

All decisions will be made in the best interests of the children involved and should not be perceived to be a judgement on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator. In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated on a case-by-case basis with the designated safeguarding lead taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as local authority children's social care and the police as required. The designated safeguarding lead will refer to relevant assessment tools and guidance as appropriate, such as:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2025\) part five](#)
- [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation at school](#)
- [Behaviour in schools](#)
- [School suspensions and permanent exclusion](#)
- [Stop it Now Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool](#)
- [Southend Threshold Document](#)
- [Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures](#)
- [When to call the police – guidance for schools and colleges](#)

When appropriate the designated safeguarding lead may seek further advice from local or national safeguarding contacts as outlined in [Key safeguarding contacts](#).

Whenever there is an allegation of abuse, including concerns about sexual harassment and violence, made against a child, the designated safeguarding lead and other appropriate staff will draw together separate risk and needs assessments and action plans to support the victim and the alleged perpetrator. These will consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support
- whether there have been other victims
- the alleged perpetrator/s
- all the other children (and if appropriate staff) at the school, especially any actions that are needed to protect them from the perpetrator/s, or from future harms
- the time and location of the incident and any action required to make the location safer
- when information can be disclosed to staff and others, including the alleged perpetrator and parents/carers

Whenever local authority children's social care and/or the police are involved, the school will work in collaboration to ensure the best possible support and protection is provided for both the victim and the alleged perpetrator.

All reports of Child-on-Child abuse (including sexual harassment and/or sexual violence) will be recorded in the child's safeguarding/child protection file. This will include all decision making, risk and needs assessment and plans.

Where appropriate incidents may be managed internally (low level needs), via early help (emerging needs) or through local authority children's social care (complex/serious needs or child protection concerns); reports to the police will be run in parallel with children's social care as outlined in the [Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures](#).

All risk and needs assessment and action plans whether internal or multi-agency will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. If things do not improve or deteriorate the situation should be reconsidered.

Where the victim or alleged perpetrator transfers to another school, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure the new provider will be made aware of any on-going support needs (and will discuss this with the victim and where appropriate their parents, as to the most suitable way of doing this) as well as transferring the safeguarding/child protection file. In the case of the alleged perpetrator, where appropriate, this will also include potential risks to other children and staff.

**Any suspicion or allegations that a child has been sexually abused or is likely to sexually abuse by another child (or adult) or where there are concerns about any other form of abuse, a referral must be made immediately to local authority children's social care and where appropriate, the police**

## Section 7: Online Awareness – Keeping children safe on line

### Online safety

Alleyn Court recognises that our children are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but we recognise it also presents challenges and risks. Any pupil can be vulnerable online, and their vulnerability can fluctuate depending on their age, developmental stage and personal circumstance. We want to equip our pupils with the knowledge needed to make the best use of the internet and technology in a safe, considered and respectful way, so they are able to reap the benefits of the online world.

The range of online risks could be categorised as:

**content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example pornography, fake news, suicide, racist or radical and extremist views;

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

**conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying

**commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and / or financial scams

All staff in our school are aware of the risks to children online and we seek to help children keep themselves safe online in a range of ways - further information about our approach to online safety is available in our Online Safety Policy.

### Filtering and Monitoring

When children use the school's network to access the internet, they are protected from inappropriate content by our filtering and monitoring systems which are regularly reviewed for their effectiveness.

Filtering refers to the technology preventing access to harmful or inappropriate content, whilst monitoring refers to the practical steps staff take to ensure harmful or inappropriate access is not made. Monitoring can include:

- Physical monitoring
- Live software monitoring
- Monitoring user logs
- Monitoring individual devices

We make sure that any school devices used away from the school site are also subject to filtering and monitoring procedures.

The School ensures compliance with the DfE's 'cyber security/filtering and monitoring standards for schools' by;

- Identifying and assigning roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
- Reviewing the filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
- Blocking harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
- Having effective monitoring strategies in place that meet our safeguarding needs.

Each year our designated safeguarding lead, along with our Computing and a Trustee, review our filtering and monitoring procedures to ensure that they effectively prevent access to harmful or inappropriate content. They also ensure that the systems we have in place to report any difficulties with the system are understood by all staff and reports are effectively managed.

All our staff undertake training to understand the risks of poor filtering and monitoring and know how to share their concerns.

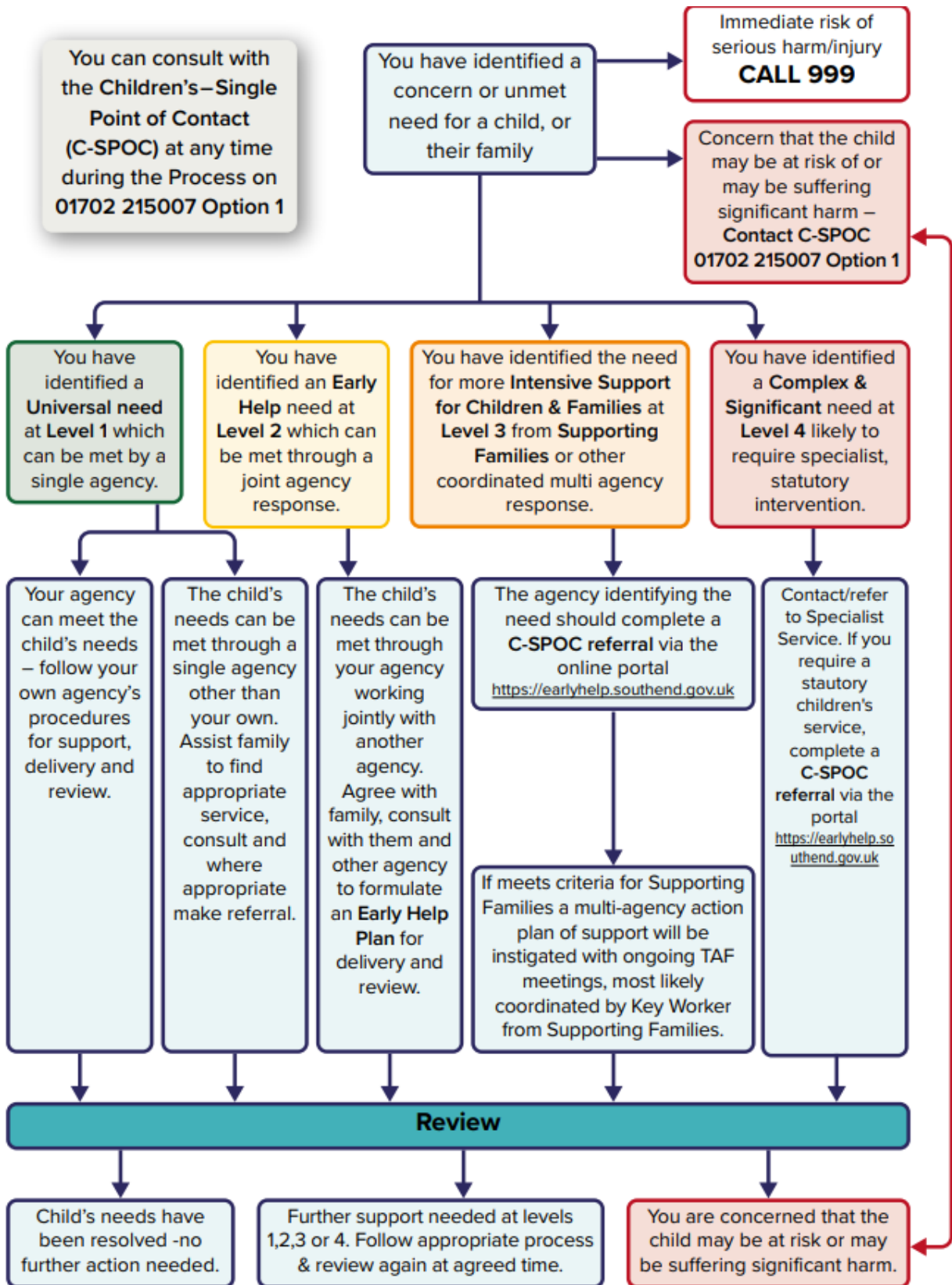
Further details of the school's policy and procedures in relation to online safety can be found in the school's Online Safety Policy which also includes detail on the use of mobile and smart technology in School, including the School's management of the associated risks, and the School's filtering and monitoring arrangements to ensure that children are safe from harmful and inappropriate content, including terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet through the School's systems.

The School will liaise with parents to reinforce the importance of children being safe online and the systems the School uses to filter and monitor online use.

### **Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras**

The School's policy on the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting can be found in the School's Online Safety Policy. Without prior permission from the Headteacher, staff are not permitted to use their personal mobile devices or cameras in School. Photographs or videos of pupils should be taken on a school device. SLT may use their personal mobile devices or cameras in School; however, they, in line with whole staff guidance, must erase images – remembering to delete their deleted as well. Staff who act in breach of this may be subject to disciplinary action. Parents are not permitted to use their mobile phones or camera in or around the EYFS setting without prior approval from the SLT.

# Appendix A: Southend Threshold Guidance Process



## Appendix B: Concerns Form

"Any member of the staff, including volunteers, must record any concerns about a child. This form must be completed as soon as possible after the discovery of the concern. If the concern is about:

- The welfare of a child, it must be sent to the designated safeguarding lead
- The behaviour of any member of staff, it must be sent immediately to the Headteacher or the Chair of Trustees or if the allegation is against the Headteacher the allegations should be reported directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Please refer to the school's managing allegations policy

If the concerns are immediate, please inform an appropriate person straight away."

### Concerns about a child or young person

<b>Child's full name:</b>		<b>Date of birth:</b>	
		<b>Class/year/form:</b>	
<b>Concern identified by:</b>		<b>Role:</b>	
<b>Date of concern:</b>		<b>Time of concern:</b>	
<b>Witness/es:</b>		<b>Place of incident:</b>	
<b>Name of alleged person (s) responsible for the harm/potential harm:</b>			
<b>Not known</b>		<b>Volunteer</b>	
<b>Learner in this school</b>		<b>Member of staff</b>	
<b>Learner in another school/setting please specify</b>		<b>Trustee</b>	
<b>Family member</b>		<b>Other, please specify</b>	

#### **Concern/Incident/Disclosure: Why are you concerned about this child? What have you observed and when? What have you been told and when?**

Please provide a description of any incident/s or anything you see or have been told by a child, or another person. Record any visible injuries or ask the child/young person to point to where else it is sore/hurts. Do not remove or lift clothing for the purpose of the examination unless the injury site is freely available because of treatment or take photos of injuries. If photos of injuries are required for evidence purposes, then this should be done by the police.

Remember to make clear what is fact and what is hearsay/opinion. Note the language and terminology used by the child, or adult, and be clear about who has said what.

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

**Has any action already been taken in relation to this concern?**

For example, child taken out of class, first aid

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Name of person concerns reported to	Date

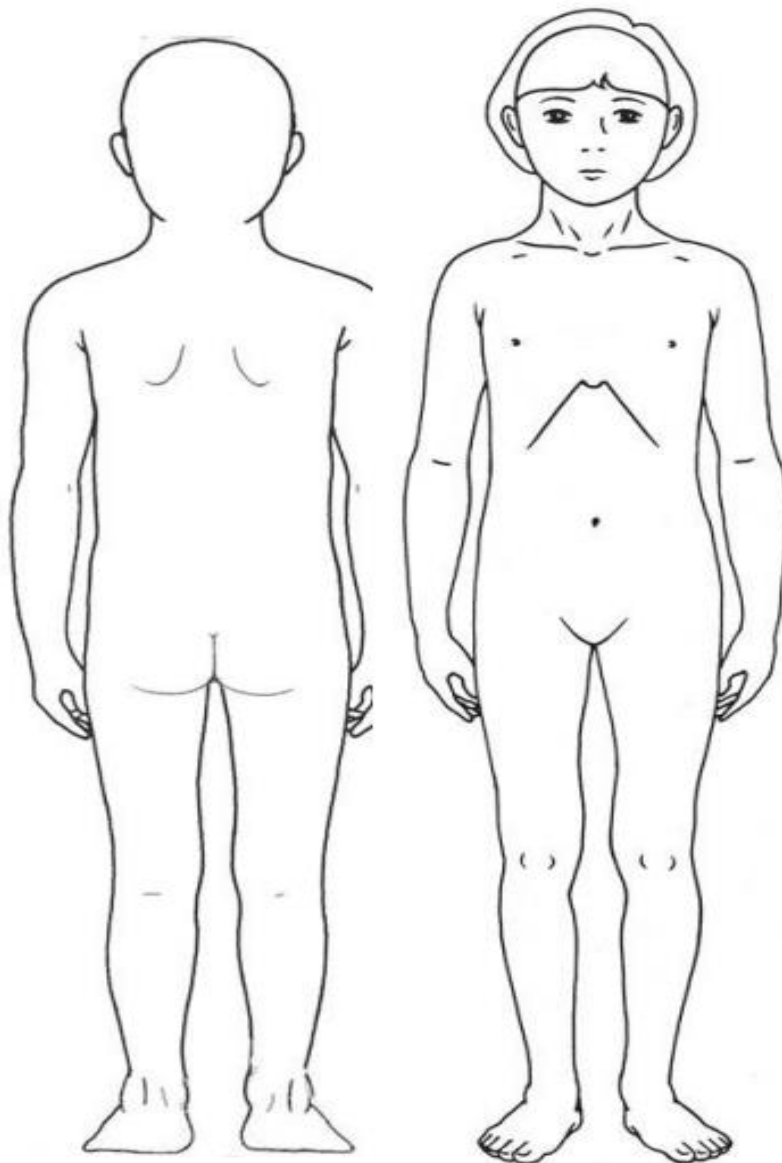
Action to be taken / recommendations from designated safeguarding lead

Name of person completing form	Signature	Date and time

## Appendix C: Body Map

This body map is designed to accurately record any concerns about possible physical abuse particularly if it is felt that the injury is non-accidental or thought to be following a pattern, any injuries or marks should be recorded on the body map. The body map should be completed and stored alongside the concerns form in line with the school's policy.

Child's details			
Name		Date of Birth	
Person completing the form			
Name		Role	



## Appendix D: Types of Abuse – Signs and Indicators

### Indicators of abuse and neglect

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\) \(DfE, 2025\)](#)

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

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

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

**Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

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

occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion 13 from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

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

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

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or in groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals (especially when they are older children). It is important in these circumstances that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts, money, or new possessions
- children who associate with other children involved in exploitation
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late,
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

The experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same; however, staff should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too.

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 victims. 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.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child abuse, which can happen to boys and girls from any background or community. It may occur over time, or be a one-off occurrence. In Southend, the definition of [Child Sexual Exploitation \(CSE\) from the Department of Education \(DfE, 2017\)](#) has been adopted:

*“Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.”*

It is understood that a significant number of children who are victims of CSE go missing from home, care and education at some point. The school is alert to the signs and indicators of a child becoming at risk of, or subject to, CSE and will take appropriate action to respond to any concerns. The designated safeguarding lead will lead on these issues and work with other agencies as appropriate.

The below CCE indicators can also be indicators of CSE, as can:

- children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends,
- children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections, display sexual behaviours beyond expected sexual development or become pregnant.

The DfE has published guidance on this entitled '[Child Sexual Exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners](#)'.

## **Prevention of radicalisation**

As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools have a duty to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. This has become known as the 'Prevent Duty'.

Where staff are concerned that children are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalised, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Safeguarding Lead has received training about the Prevent Duty and tackling extremism and is able to support staff with any concerns they may have.

Staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) making a Prevent referral.

We use the curriculum to ensure that children understand how people with extreme views share these with others, especially using the internet. We are committed to ensuring that our pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that aims to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Teaching the school's core values alongside the fundamental British Values supports quality teaching and learning, whilst making a positive contribution to the development of a fair, just and civil society.

Recognising Extremism Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- showing sympathy for extremist causes
- glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures
- making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school
- evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent.)
  - secretive behaviour
  - online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
  - intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
  - graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes
  - attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
  - verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views
  - advocating violence towards others

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

The school operates in accordance with local procedures for PREVENT and with other agencies, sharing information and concerns as appropriate. Where we have concerns about extremism or radicalisation, we will seek advice from appropriate agencies and, if necessary, refer to Social Care and / or the Channel Panel.

### **Children who are absent from education and missing from education (CME)**

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about others safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay.

Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. We will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not at school. This means we must have at least two up to date contacts numbers for parents/carers. Parents should remember to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change.

In response to the guidance in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\) \(DfE, 2025\)](#)

the school has:

- Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
- Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions).
- Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
- Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll when they:
  - a. leave school to be home educated
  - b. move away from the school's location
  - c. remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
  - d. are permanently excluded

We will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school, but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority. When a pupil leaves the school, we will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date.

When working with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns the school will have regard to the statutory guidance [Working together to improve school attendance \(August 2024\)](#) and [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#)

## **Domestic abuse**

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Domestic abuse is not limited to physical acts of violence or threatening behaviour, and can include emotional, psychological, controlling or coercive behaviour, sexual and/or economic abuse. or they are relatives. The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person. The school recognises that exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious long-term emotional and psychological impact on children. We work with other key partners and will share relevant information where there are concerns that domestic abuse may be an issue for a child or family or be placing a child at risk of harm.

Alley Court is part of Operation Encompass, a national police and early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children who experience domestic abuse. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. Through Operation Encompass the police are required to share information with the school about all police attended domestic abuse incidents which involve any of our children who are related to either of the adults involved in the incident. This sharing of information should occur prior to the start of the next school day. The notification should be sent to the DSL and inform us about the context of the incident and will include the child's perspective. The Operation Encompass notification is stored in line with all other confidential safeguarding and child protection information. Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures. Where appropriate, the police and/or school should make a referral to local authority children's social care if they are concerned about a child's welfare.

Operation Encompass provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members from who may be concerned about children who have experienced domestic abuse. The helpline is available 8am to 1pm, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990.

### **So-called ‘honour-based violence’ (including Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage)**

So-called ‘honour-based’ abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBA, they must contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency.

#### Female genital mutilation (FGM)

If the referral is about a ‘known’ case of female genital mutilation (FGM), in addition to a referral to local authority children’s social care, the individual teacher also has a mandatory reporting duty; see [Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation; procedural information](#) (2015). Under this duty, ‘known’ cases of FGM where a girl under 18 informs the person that an act of FGM has been carried out on her, or where physical signs appear to show that an act of FGM was carried out, this must be reported to the police on 101. This is a personal responsibility in addition to the referral to local authority children’s social care and the professional who identifies FGM and/or receives the disclosure should make the report by the close of the next working day.

#### **Action following referral**

The designated safeguarding lead, their deputy or other appropriate member of staff will:

- where a referral was made by phone, follow up the referral, in writing using the online referral system, within 48 hours and attach any existing assessment e.g., early help assessment. In all cases the school will also include information held about any place-based risks (harm outside of the home)
- the local authority children’s social care should make a decision within one working day of the referral being made about what course of action they are taking and let the school know the outcome. If the information is not forthcoming, the designated safeguarding lead or another appropriate member of staff should follow this up
- maintain contact with the allocated social worker and support them or other agencies following any referral
- contribute to any strategy discussion or meetings
- support any Section 47 enquiries or statutory assessments that are carried out
- provide a report for, attend, and contribute to any initial and review Child Protection Conference. This includes sharing any reports with parents/carers and where appropriate, the child
- share the content of this report with the parent/carer and if appropriate the child, prior to the meeting
- attend core group meetings for any child subject to a Child Protection plan or Child in Need meeting for any child subject to a Child in Need plan

- where a child is on a Child Protection plan, Child in Need plan or who is Looked After moves from the school or if there are unexplained absences from school, immediately inform the child's social worker/key worker in local authority children's social care
- if after the referral the child's situation does not appear to be improving the designated safeguarding lead should press for re-consideration to ensure their concerns have been addressed and the child's situation improves.

A *forced marriage* is one entered into without the full consent of one or both parties. It is where violence, threats or other forms of coercion is used and is a crime. Since February 2023, the age of consent for marriage in England is 18. The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 means that 16 and 17 year olds may not marry or enter a civil partnership, even if they have parental consent. It is an offence, under the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act to cause a child under the age of 18 to enter a marriage in any circumstances, without the need to prove that a form of coercion was used. This includes non-legally binding 'traditional' ceremonies which would still be viewed as marriages by the parties and their families. Any concerns that pupils may be getting married should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## **Mental health**

Staff are 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. School staff are not expected or trained to diagnose mental health conditions or issues, but may notice behaviours that may be of concern. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy. We understand that, where children have suffered abuse or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Where we have concerns this may impact on mental health, we will seek advice and work with other agencies as appropriate to support a child and ensure they receive the help they need.

Positive mental health is the concern of the whole community and we recognise that schools play a key part in this. The school aims to develop the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all pupils and staff, as well as provide specific support for those with additional needs. We understand that there are risk factors which increase someone's vulnerability and protective factors that can promote or strengthen resiliency. The more risk factors present in an individual's life, the more protective factors or supportive interventions are required to counter-balance and promote further growth of resilience.

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