



Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Head Teacher:	Chris Boddy
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):	Chris Boddy & Helen Hutchinson
Designated Governor for Child Protection:	Alan Davies
Chair of Governors:	Keith Anderson

Contact Information

School telephone number:
(0191) 4385008

School email address:
admin@whitemereprimary.org

Contents

- 1. Introduction**
 - 2. The Designated Safeguarding Lead**
 - 3. Recognising Abuse**
 - 4. Child Protection Procedures**
 - 5. Safe Practice**
 - Safe Recruitment
 - Allegations against Staff
 - Supporting Children
 - Supporting staff
 - Visitors
 - 6. Confidentiality**
 - 7. Links to other policies**
 - 8. Implementation and dissemination**
 - 9. Useful contacts**
- Appendices**

1. Introduction

At White Mere the health, safety and well-being of all our children is of paramount importance to all our staff. Our children have the right to protection. They have a right to be safe in our school.

This policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers and takes into account the current statutory guidance provided by the Department for Education (DfE) and local guidance issued by Gateshead Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). These duties are set out in the Education Act 2002, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2015.

The aim of the policy is to provide all members of staff and volunteers, children and young people, and their families with a clear and secure framework for ensuring that all children in the school are protected from harm, both while at school and when off the schools premises. We will ensure that parents/carers are made aware of the policy through its publication on our website. Copies of this policy are also available from our school office.

The actions we take to promote the well-being of children and protect them from harm are not only carried out by the school's leadership, they are everyone's responsibility.

All staff and volunteers involved with children have a responsibility to be mindful of issues related to their safety and well-being and assume a duty to report any concerns.

All staff will work to ensure that:

- Children and young people feel listened to, valued and respected.
- Staff are aware of indicators of abuse and know how to share their concerns appropriately.
- All paid and unpaid staff are subject to rigorous safer recruitment procedures.
- All paid and unpaid staff are given appropriate support and safeguarding training.

School Commitment

Our staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse because of the day to day contact with children, and training they receive on an annual basis, and are committed to referring those concerns via the Designated Safeguarding Leaders (DSL).

Any concerns should be shared with the DSLs using our 'Pink Slip' system – these are located outside the staff room, in the school office and in Early Years.

In White Mere the DSLs are the Headteacher, Chris Boddy, the Deputy Headteacher, Helen Hutchinson, and the KS1 Leader, Fiona Orrock. A pathway for 'How to Respond to a Safeguarding Concern' is available in every room in school. School also receives safeguarding training and advice from Clennell Educational Solutions.

2. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL takes the lead responsibility for child protection, including support for other staff and information sharing with other agencies, developing policies and staff training. In White Mere the DSLs are the Headteacher, Chris Boddy, the Deputy Headteacher, Helen Hutchinson, and the KS1 Leader, Fiona Orrock.

DSL Responsibilities include:

- Act as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns.
- Refer suspected abuse and neglect to the Referral and Assessment Team (0191 4332536 and for out of hours referrals, 0191 4770844). Referrals are made by the DSLs and should be made in writing, following a telephone call to:
<https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/DocumentLibrary/LSCB/CP-ref-form-June-15.doc>
- Keep written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.
- Ensure that they or another member of staff attend Case Conferences, Core Groups, or other multi agency planning meetings, contribute to assessments and provide a written report that has been shared with parents.
- Ensure that there are clear procedures, known to all staff, which are followed where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Develop and update the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies ensuring that staff and children/families/parents are aware of them.
- Provide support and advice to all members of staff within the setting regarding child protection concerns.
- Ensure that cover is provided for the role when absent from the setting.
- Ensure that a child's Child Protection file is copied for the new educational establishment when a child moves educational settings, and that this file is transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file.
- Ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and maintain training records.
- Co-operate with any requests for information from the Local Authority, such as child protection training returns and self-evaluative forms for safeguarding and child protection, in compliance with Section 11, Children Act 2004.
- Provide an annual report for the Head Teacher/Governing Body, detailing any changes to policy and procedures, training undertaken by all staff and governors, number and types of incidents/cases and number of children subject to a child protection plan.
- Apply confidentiality appropriately and in line with HM Gov [Information Sharing Guidance 2015](#)

3. Recognising Abuse

In the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- Undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

- Preventing children from becoming victims of bullying, grooming, verbal abuse or intimidation through the use of social media, including “sexting” (refer to e-Safety Policy and Appendix 4).

Additionally there is a responsibility to protect children from sexual exploitation (see Appendix 3).

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. Detailed below are specific types of abuse:

- **Physical abuse:** this 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 parent/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 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 a high level of 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

- **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 as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

More detailed information on recognising the signs of abuse can be found at Appendix 1. The specifics of *Forced Marriage* and *Female Genital Mutilation* is referenced in Appendix 2.

4. Child Protection Procedures

All staff should feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role. Information about possible abuse may come to a member of staff in several ways - direct allegation from a child that has been abused, through a friend, relative or other child, through a child's behaviour or through observation of an injury to the child.

You may have a concern about a child's well-being based on:

- Something the child /parent has told you.
- Something you have noticed about the child's behaviour, health, or appearance.
- Something another adult/professional said or did.

Even if you think your concern is minor, the DSLs may have more information that, together with what you know, represents a more serious worry about a child. **It is never your decision alone how to respond to concerns – but it is always your responsibility to share concerns, no matter how small.**

In White Mere the DSLs will decide the course of action once your concern has been shared with them.

The DSLs will decide if there is a need to find out more regarding your concern – whether the child needs to be questioned or the parent consulted for questioning.

If any questions are to be asked, they need to be open questions. It is important to remember that any questioning should be limited to the minimum necessary to seek clarification and strictly avoiding 'leading' by making suggestions or asking questions that suggest an answer. It is vital that subsequent enquiries should not be prejudiced by detailed questioning in school.

The DSLs will decide what will happen next, following any questioning of a pupil related to your concern. The options **may** include:

- Asking the parent/carer to come in to school to answer some questions to clarify anything that the DSL needs to know further;
- An immediate referral to the LSB's Referral & Assessment Team;
- A telephone call to the police to report a specific concern;
- No further action being taken.

With regard to the pupil, do not promise to keep what s/he tells you secret as you may need to inform the child or third party that they are obliged to pass on information to other members of staff such as the DSL and/or Head Teacher, according to circumstances, as well as to other local agencies.

Following a disclosure by a child or any other person, it is your responsibility to share that information with the DSL. If the DSL is not available you still have the responsibility to deal with your concern. You could:

- Discuss it with a member of the Leadership Team, or
- Make a referral yourself to the LSB.

You should use our 'Pink Slip' system – these are located outside the staff room, in the school office and in Early Years. Include as much information as possible, eg what was said, what happened, what you noticed - speech, behaviour, mood, drawings, games or appearance, was anyone else present, if child or parent spoke, record their words rather than your interpretation.

The DSLs will usually take advice from the Referral and Assessment Team Duty Worker.

The DSLs may make a referral to Referral and Assessment Team Duty Worker. The referral will note previous intervention by the school with the child, any relevant history relating to the child, their siblings or the family. The DSL shares information with other relevant professionals, recording reasons for sharing information and ensuring that they are aware of what action the other professionals will take as a result of information shared.

The DSLs inform parents that they have made a CP referral, if the parent does not already know. On occasion the Duty Officer may suggest a delay in informing the parent in cases of suspected abuse, or where informing the parent may put the child at further risk, to prevent the child being harmed or intimidated (and retracting their disclosure).

The DSLs remain in close communication with other professionals around the child and with the family, in order to share any updates about the child.

If a child protection investigation is undertaken, the DSLs and other key school staff will:

- Work closely and collaboratively with all professionals involved, to keep the child safe.
- Attend an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) when invited and provide updated information..
- Attend any subsequent Child Protection Review Conferences (RCPC's).
- Attend Core Group meetings and take an active role in the implementation of the protection plan.

5. Safe Practice

Single Central Record (SCR)

The SCR must now record information about Agency Staff:

- Name of the agency who supplied the person (*Useful, but not statutory*)
- Has written confirmation of checks been received? Yes/No
- Date the confirmation was received: dd/mm/yyyy
- Has a DBS certificate has been provided? Yes/No

(For further information, see 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016' (KSCIE paragraph 112)

Safer Recruitment

White Mere takes all possible steps to prevent unsuitable people working with children, as directed to do so in the Safeguarding Children in Education (2015) Act which outlines Safer Recruitment processes in education settings. Safer Recruitment processes aim to:

- Deter potential abusers by setting high standards of practice and recruitment.
- Reject inappropriate candidates at the application and interview stages.

- Prevent abuse to children by developing robust policies and agreeing on safe practice.

Our interview panel includes a member of the Leadership Team who has undergone Safer Recruitment Training. When interviewing potential staff, we ensure that:-

- There is an open recruitment process;
- There is a rigorous interview where we can explore the candidates attitude towards children and young people, their ability to support the schools agenda for safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children, any gaps in employment history and any concerns/discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate or referee;
- We verify the applicants identity and any academic or vocational qualifications;
- References are taken up by direct contact with referees;
- Evidence of the date of birth, address and right to work in the UK is sought;
- An enhanced disclosure via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is processed.

A job offer is only made subject to the necessary checks above being satisfactory. All staff are provided with a job description with 'safeguarding the well-being of children' being a specified part of all staff roles, a clear code of conduct/safer working practice guidance and be required to work a probationary period.

Allegations of Abuse Against Staff

Allegations of abuse can be made by children and young people and they can be made by other concerned adults. All allegations against staff or volunteers should be immediately brought to the attention of the Headteacher. The Head Teacher should take the following actions:

- Ensure that the child reporting the allegation is safe and away from the member of staff against whom the allegation is made.
- Contact the LADO immediately (0191 4333554).
- Contact the parents/carers of the child, following advice from the LADO.
- Attend strategy meetings convened by the LADO and act upon the decisions made at these meetings.
- Make a referral to the Children's Service where the child resides, if appropriate.
- Suspend the member of staff or review his/her working arrangements, pending the investigation, following advice from the LADO and other key professionals.

If an allegation is made against the Head Teacher, this should be brought to the attention of the Chair of Governors. In all cases the LADO should be notified.

The LSCB website provides information on who to report allegations to the LADO. http://gatesheadlscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_alleg_staff.html

Suspension should be considered when:

- There is a cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm or
- The allegation warrants investigation by the police or
- The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal

Any disciplinary investigation should be carried out once the child protection investigation has been completed.

Supporting Children

We recognise that children who are abused, or who witness violence or domestic abuse, may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They can feel helpless, humiliated and feel a sense of blame. School may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in their lives. Many other aspects of school provision support the aims of this policy. Schools play an important role in making children and young people aware both of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable, and of how they can help keep themselves safe.

When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum - The non-statutory framework for personal, social and health education (PSHE) provides opportunities for children and young people to learn about keeping safe. PSHE curriculum materials provide resources that enable schools to tackle issues regarding healthy relationships, including domestic violence, bullying and abuse. Discussions about personal safety and keeping safe can reinforce the message that any kind of violence is unacceptable, let children and young people know that it is acceptable to talk about their own problems, and signpost sources of help.
- A school ethos which provides a positive, supportive and secure environment which gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- Application of the school behaviour policy which will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they remain valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Effective liaison with other support services for pupils who have been harmed or abused or at risk of being harmed or abused.
- Ensuring that when a pupil who is subject to a child protection plan or where there are other safeguarding concerns, transfers to a new school, their child protection file is transferred to the new school immediately and securely (see record keeping) and inform child's social worker.

Supporting Staff

- All staff have been given the school's Staff Code of Conduct (2018) so will have access to advice and guidance on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour. This guidance covers appropriate dress, the use of appropriate boundaries, social contact outside setting (including on social networking sites), the receiving and giving of gifts and favouritism and the safe use of technology. In the event of any complaint or allegation against a staff member or volunteer, the Headteacher should be notified immediately. If it relates to the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors should be informed without delay.
- Staff may find issues relating to child protection upsetting and may need support which should be either provided directly by the school or sourced elsewhere by them.
- All adults in the school receive regular training to raise their awareness of abuse, and to improve their knowledge of the child protection procedures that have been agreed locally. The maximum period of time before refresher training must take place is three years.

Visitors

- No visitors, including tradespeople, should be allowed to wander around the premises unaccompanied when children and young people are present.
- Staff should be alert to strangers frequently waiting outside a venue with no apparent purpose.

- Children should not be collected by people other than their parents unless written notification has been received in advance.

Children Missing Education

When children are added to the admissions register in SIMS, the school must record the expected start date of the pupil. If the child does not arrive on the start date, the school should contact the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

For admissions to the school, apart from at the Reception intake in September, schools are required to notify the local authority “within five days” when a pupil’s name is added to the admission register and provide all the information held within the admission register about the pupil”.

When a pupil leaves the school, the name of the pupil’s new school and the expected start date at the new school must be recorded in SIMS.

The school must inform the local authority and supply the following information:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- at least one telephone number of the parent with whom the pupil lives;
- if applicable, the full name and address of the parent with whom the pupil is going to live, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there;
- the name of pupil’s destination school and the pupil’s expected start date there, if applicable;
- the grounds under which the pupil’s name is to be deleted from the admission register
(For further information, see KSCIE Appendix A)

6. Confidentiality

We regard all information relating to individual child protection issues as confidential, and we treat it accordingly. We pass information on to appropriate persons only.

We comply with the government requirements set out in DHS Circular LA 83/14, and by the LA, with regard to confidentiality. The files we keep on children are open to those children's parents or carers. Information from third parties will not be disclosed without their prior consent. Access to these files may be withheld in certain prescribed cases where there are instances of actual or alleged abuse (see DfES Circular 16/19). Working notes are not subject to disclosure, but will be summarised and then kept on file. These guidelines of ours are in line with the safeguards on disclosure of information set out in the Education (School Records) Regulations 1989.

7. Links to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies regarding the safety and well-being of children. Together these make up the suite of policies to safeguard and promote the well-being of children in our school. Our suite of policies are set out below:

- Anti-bullying including On-line Bullying
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- e-Safety

- Racial Equality
- Complaints Procedures
- Freedom of Information Act
- Health & Safety
- Physical Intervention
- Sex Education
- Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND)
- Staff Code of Conduct Handbook
- Staff Discipline and Grievance Procedures
- Tackling Extremism & Radicalisation (Prevent)

In addition Gateshead Interagency Child Protection Procedures outlines response to specific safeguarding issues and can be accessed via: <http://proceduresonline.com/gateshead/lscb/> and broad government advice can be accessed on the issues listed above at the GOV.UK website.

For further information on the Government's *Prevent Duty for Schools* please press Ctrl and click the right side of the mouse [here](#)

For a link to the Government's *Prevent Strategy Document*, please press the Ctrl button and click the right side of the mouse [here](#)

8. Implementation and Dissemination

This policy is reviewed annually by the DSL and then approved by the Governing Body.

All current members of staff have read and agreed to the child protection policy – all new members of staff will read and agree to it before the start of their employment.

All children, young people and their families will have access to and agree to the policy before enrolment. It is important for families to be aware of actions staff may take if there are any concerns for a child or a young person's safety, and for them to understand that they might not be consulted before action is taken. Knowing about child protection procedures ahead of time helps parents to engage better in the process, meaning that change is more likely to take place.

Useful contacts – Gateshead Council Safeguarding Unit

Referral and Assessment Team (R&A) – Duty System

Tel: (0191) 433 2505 / 433 2349 / 433 2410 / 433 3417

email: R&Aduty@gateshead.gov.uk

Gateshead Council's Out of Hours Social Care Duty Team

Tel: (0191) 477 0844

Gateshead Council's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) – Nicholas Leon

Tel: (0191) 433 3554 or 07714 957 868

email: nicholasleon@gateshead.gov.uk

Gateshead Council's Safeguarding Manager – Frances Hands

Tel: (0191) 433 2884

email: franceshands@gateshead.gov.uk

Recognising Signs Of Child Abuse

Categories of Abuse:

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

The following signs may indicate something is wrong:

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

Risk Indicators

The factors described in this section are frequently found in cases of child abuse. Their presence is not proof that abuse has occurred and their absence does not mean that abuse or neglect has not occurred, but:

- Must be regarded as indicators of the possibility of significant harm
- Justifies the need for careful assessment and discussion with designated / named / lead person, manager, (or in the absence of all those individuals, an experienced colleague)
- May require consultation with and / or referral to Children's Services

In an abusive relationship the child may:

- Appear frightened of the parentis
- Act in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development (though full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups)

The parent or carer may:

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

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

Recognising Physical Abuse

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury, or several different explanations, provided
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment
- The parents/carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury
- Parents are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (may represent a "cry for help")
- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries

Bruising

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

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

Bite Marks

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

Burns and Scalds

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

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

Scars

A large number of scars, scars of different size/age or on different parts of the body, may suggest abuse.

Fractures

Fractures may cause pain, swelling and discolouration over a bone or joint. Non-mobile children

rarely sustain fractures. There are grounds for concern if:

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

Recognising Emotional Abuse

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

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

Recognising Signs of Sexual Abuse

Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and/or fear. This is particularly difficult for a child to talk about and full account should be taken of the cultural sensitivities of any individual child/family. Recognition can be difficult, unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional/behavioural.

Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

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

Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

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

Sexual Abuse by Young People

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

Developmental Sexual Activity encompasses those actions that are to be expected from children and young people as they move from infancy through to an adult understanding of their physical, emotional and behavioural relationships with each other. Such sexual activity is essentially information gathering and experience testing. It is characterised by mutuality and of the seeking of consent.

Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour can be inappropriate socially, in appropriate to development, or both. In considering whether behaviour fits into this category, it is important to consider what negative effects it has on any of the parties involved and what concerns it raises about a child or young person. It should be recognised that some actions may be motivated by information seeking, but still cause Significant upset, confusion, worry, physical damage, etc. it may also be that the behaviour is "acting out" which may derive from other sexual situations to which the child or young person has been exposed.

If an act appears to have been inappropriate, there may still be a need for some form of behaviour management or intervention. For some children, educative inputs may be enough to address the behaviour.

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

Assessment

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

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

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

Recognising Neglect

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

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

Forced Marriage (FM)

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

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

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

What is FGM?

It involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. There are 4 types of procedure:

Type 1 - Clitoridectomy (partial/total removal of clitoris)

Type 2 - Excision (partial/total removal of clitoris and labia minor)

Type 3 - Infibulation entrance to vagina is narrowed by repositioning the inner/outer labia

Type 4 - all other procedures that may include: pricking, piercing, incising, cauterising and scraping the genital area.

Why is it carried out? Those who carry it out are of the belief that:

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

Is FGM legal?

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

Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening

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

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:

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

The 'One Chance' rule

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

Child Sexual Exploitation

"The sexual exploitation of children and young people **under 18** involves situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur through use of technology without the child's immediate recognition, for example the persuasion to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones with no immediate payment or gain. In all cases those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Both girls and boys can be exploited.

The National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children & Young People, 2008

Online Sexual Exploitation includes:

- Befriending through online chat rooms/messaging services
- Online grooming techniques, e.g. stalking, identity pretense , false promises e.g. meeting celebrities, tickets, gifts
- Asking children to take and share indecent images of themselves
- Leverage for further demands, e.g. threat to show other people recorded sexual acts by child/young person
- Arranging offline meeting for purpose of sexually abusing child
- Contact from perpetrators in other countries, & abused online
- Speed of grooming can be **very** quick - leaving little 'thinking time'

The restrained influencing of a child over several months has been largely replaced by rapid escalation to threats, intimidation and coercion.

Governors and School Leaders need to make clear their commitment to deal effectively with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). They should ensure that:

- they identify, and make known to staff & pupils, a designated lead person for CSE who is fully trained and updated regularly
- the designated lead person for CSE and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (if they are different people) work closely together
- all staff are made aware of and understand CSE indicators and referral pathways
- pupils/students are taught about CSE and how to protect themselves and each other
- pupils/students are taught about healthy (including sexual) relationships, peer pressure, bullying, safety, gang activity etc. and how these topics can relate to CSE
- all pupils/students know who to go to for help and support, and to report CSE concerns to, both within and without school/college
- relevant staff work in partnership with other agencies
- procedures are in place to continually gather, record and share CSE information with the Sexual Exploitation Service as soon as practicable, including ongoing data on pupils/students' running away or going missing episodes
- they consider effective ways of raising awareness of CSE with mothers/fathers/carers

What to look out for

ALL children and young people, including those from supportive families, can be vulnerable to sexual exploitation. However, some children and young people are known to be at greater risk, eg those that:

- Have a chaotic home/family life
- Have a history of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of 'honour-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect)
- Have experienced loss/bereavement
- Are associated with gangs through relatives/peers, or are living in a gang neighbourhood
- Have friendships with children/young people who are being sexually exploited
- Have learning difficulties
- Live in residential care, or hostel/bed & breakfast accommodation
- Have low self-esteem/confidence
- Are Young Carers (i.e. have caring responsibilities for parents/family members with mental or physical health problems, or who are misusing substances)

Warning Signs

The following list of indicators is not exhaustive or definitive but it does highlight common signs which can assist professionals in identifying children/young people who may be victims of sexual exploitation:

- going missing from home or care
- absence from school, exclusion, disengagement with school, opting out of education altogether
- underage sexual activity
- inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour
- sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex
- repeat sexually transmitted infections
- in girls, repeat pregnancy, abortions, miscarriage
- receiving money or gifts from unknown sources
- having multiple mobile phones and worrying about losing contact via mobile
- changes in their physical appearance or the way they dress
- going to hotels or other unusual locations to meet friends
- having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- contact with known perpetrators
- hanging out with groups of older people, or anti-social groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual, mood swings, volatile)
- self-harming, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, overdosing, eating disorders
- drug or alcohol misuse
- getting involved in crime
- police involvement, police records
- involved in gangs, gang fights, gang membership

- injuries from physical assault, physical restraint, sexual assault
- increased use of social media, dating sites, image sharing apps etc
- involved in risky online relationships including new contacts with people out of the area
- sharing inappropriate/indecent online images with peers or people only met online
- becoming isolated or estranged from family and friends
- meeting people befriended online

Risk assessment and consent

"In assessing whether a child or young person is a victim of sexual exploitation, or at risk of becoming a victim, careful consideration should be given to the issue of consent. It is important to bear in mind that:

- a child under the age of 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sex (it is statutory rape) or any other type of sexual touching;
- sexual activity with a child under 16 is also an offence;
- it is an offence for a person to have a sexual relationship with a 16 or 17 year old if they hold a position of trust or authority in relation to them;
- where sexual activity with a 16 or 17 year old does not result in an offence being committed, it may still result in harm, or the likelihood of harm being suffered;
- non consensual sex is rape whatever the age of the victim; and
- if the victim is incapacitated through drink or drugs, or the victim or his or her family has been subject to violence or the threat of it, they cannot be considered to have given true consent and therefore offences may have been committed.

Child sexual exploitation is therefore potentially a child protection issue for all children under the age of 18 years and not just those in a specific age group."

What to do next

Any member of staff who suspects or receives information that a child or young person **may be** involved in sexual exploitation (including suspicion that they are being groomed online) should refer their concerns to their Designated Safeguarding Leader, who will refer the matter to Children's Social Care.

Children's Social Care will initiate a child protection enquiry to consider convening a Sexual Exploitation Meeting based on the indicators of risks.

If there are concerns about the involvement of a person who works with children and/or is in a Position of Trust, the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** should be informed!

Where appropriate, the child or young person's wishes and feelings as well as those of their mothers, fathers and carers should be sought and taken into consideration when deciding how to proceed.

However, practitioners should be aware that this may not always be in the child or young person's best interest and may put them at further risk of harm.

Some children or young people may have been trafficked and need support to access services. Practitioners should refer to the 'Designated Competent Authorities' based within the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) and The United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA).

“Sexting”

Sharing photos and videos online is part of daily life for many people, enabling them to share their experiences, connect with friends and record their lives. Photos and videos can be shared as text messages, email, posted on social media or increasingly via mobile messaging apps such as Snapchat, Whatsapp or Facebook Messenger.

Sexting is a significant issue for older teenagers and involves the sharing of indecent images of themselves with others. It may be the intention for the image to be shared only with one person, but invariably these pictures or videos are shared across the internet. Such images can be a part of the early stages of grooming, especially when the potential victim has only “met” the abuser online.

Although sexting is becoming a widespread phenomenon, it is illegal to send or be in possession of indecent images or videos of people under 18 (Protection of Children Act 1978 and Criminal Justice Act 1988).

Why do people send “sexts”?

- Experimental phase prior to being sexually active
- As a joke or a dare
- Fun or flirtatious
- In lieu of sexual activity
- To fit in
- Proud of their body
- To show commitment to a relationship
- Because they are “in love”
- Easy to do – anonymous

Why is “sexting” such a problem?

- It is illegal to send or possess images of under 18s
- Revenge or intimidation after a relationship comes to an end
- Lose control of where the images or videos go
- Lead to depression and suicide of victims
- An aspect of grooming for child sexual exploitation

Our approach to handling concerns relating to “sexting” is reflected in our *Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy* as required by the government’s Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance. In any event of “sexting” the school will liaise with parents/carers and other services where deemed to be appropriate.

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

I confirm that I have read and agreed to the school's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

Signed: _____

Date: _____