



"All equal, all different, all achieving together"

Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy



[Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership](#)

Source documents:

- Children Act (1989 and 2004 amendment)
- Education Act (2002 and 2011)
- Education and Inspection Act (2006)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2021)
- Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges (July 2021)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (September 2021)
- Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act (September 2021)
- Mental health and behaviour guidance in schools guidance (November 2018)
- Preventing youth violence and gang involvement (August 2013)
- Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines (February 2020)
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (July 2018)
- The Academy Staffing (England) Regulations 2009
- Education (Independent Academy Standards) Regulations 2014
- Serious Crime Act (2015)
- Statutory Guidance on FGM
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Guidance on the Prevent Duty (under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015)
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 (and 2018 amendment)
- Childcare Act (2006)
- The National Minimum Standards for Residential Academies
- The Teacher Standards 2012
- <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/children-and-young-people/bristol-safeguarding-children-board-professionals>
- DfE advice COVID-19: Safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers (July 2021)
- 'When to call the police' (NPCC)
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR
- Data Protection: toolkit for schools. Includes compliance with GDPR.

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Introduction

Learn@ MAT is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and secure environment in our academies for children and young people, staff, volunteers and visitors. To ensure children and

young people can develop in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence, and, where adults are clear about the procedures in place to ensure a child and young person's welfare and safety. Learn@ MAT believe that, 'the welfare of the child and young person is paramount', therefore protecting children and young people is an essential part of all we do as educators. We are all part of a wider safeguarding system for children and young people. This system is described in statutory guidance, 'Working together to safeguard children'.

Safeguarding is defined as protecting children and young people from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children and young people's health or development; ensuring that children and young people grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and, taking timely action to enable all children and young people to achieve their best possible outcomes.

All academy leaders across Learn@ MAT will ensure that they have in place this safeguarding and child protection policy. This policy will be personalised to complement the academies own safeguarding and child protection procedures to meet the needs of the children and young people within their academy. All policies related to safeguarding and child protection must be understood and adhered to by all academy staff, academy councillors, trustees and visitors. These policies must be in line with current government legislation and guidance.

Learn@ MAT is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by:

- the provision of a safe environment in which children and young people can learn
- fulfilling our statutory (legal) responsibilities to identify young people who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm
- giving young people the opportunity to talk about any personal, academic or welfare concerns at all times, with any member of staff of their choosing.

All staff at Learn@ MAT, including supply staff and volunteers, have a role and responsibility to safeguard children and young people attending our academy, irrespective of their role within the academy by;

Identifying concerns early and providing help for young people, to prevent concerns from escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under The Children Act 1989. In such cases, a single assessment should be undertaken by a lead professional who could be the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), special educational needs and disabilities co-ordinator (SENDCO), doctor (GP), family support worker, health visitor or academy nurse;

Sharing appropriate information irrespective of whether this is reported by other young people, members of the public, parents or relatives of young people attending our academy. The designated safeguarding lead will determine what action, if any will, follow and record their decisions. Staff must consider at all times, what is in the best interests of the child or young person.

Reading and demonstrating an understanding of the most recent version of the standalone Department for Education (DfE) publication 'Keeping Children Safe in Education: Information for all academy and college staff' or 'Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education.'

The Learn@ MAT academy trustee with responsibility for safeguarding and child protection is **Eileen Flynn** via email: Eileen.Flynn@learnmat.uk or alternatively Louise Shepherd from the central team, email: Louise.Shepherd@learnmat.uk who is clerk to trustees and company secretary.

The designated safeguarding lead in each Learn@ MAT setting will support staff in their safeguarding duties, including liaising with other services, where there are concerns relating to the welfare of any of our children and young people.

Equality Statement

Some children and young people have an increased risk of abuse. Additional barriers can exist for some children and young people with respect to recognising or disclosing it. As a trust we are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children and young people's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children and young people have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

COVID-19

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) remains in force throughout the response to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Learn@ MAT recognises and follows the interim guidance on safeguarding in schools and other providers during the coronavirus outbreak. Reference is made to some potential implications to our safeguarding policy and procedures in the Risk Assessment for COVID-19 for each academy.

We continually update our risk assessments and where necessary policy and procedures in line with <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>

2. Aims

The Trust will ensure that all potential risk to children and young people are identified to minimise their risk and to keep them safe. We will ensure that:

- we protect children from maltreatment;
- we prevent impairment of children's mental and physical health and development;
- the young people grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- where necessary we ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children and young people's welfare and ensure they have the best outcomes;
- all our staff are aware of and understand their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding;

- all our staff are highly trained and competent in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues.

3. Statutory Responsibilities

All action taken by Learn@ MAT will be in accordance with:

- **Current legislation:** Children Act 1989 and 2004; Education Act 2002 and 2011 and Education and Inspection Act 2006 and all other sources highlighted at the start of this Policy.
- **Statutory guidance:**
Working Together to Safeguard Children, which sets out the multiagency working arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and protect them from harm; in addition, it sets out the statutory roles and responsibilities of Academies
Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) is statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education which all academies and colleges must have regard to when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This is updated by the DfE each year and all staff, academy councils, trustees and members must have read the most up to date version of KCSiE referenced in our annual staff handbooks.
- **The Teacher Standards 2012** state that teachers, including headteachers, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.
- **DBS checks and monitoring.** All new staff and governance members are enrolled on the on-line DBS updating service which alerts us to any change in an employee's DBS information. They are given 5 days to produce their up-to-date DBS to the headteacher (in the case of a headteacher to the CEO) who will decide if the new information needs to be disclosed to LADO and internal investigation/review. We are currently in the process of transferring all staff to this online system by December 2021 at the latest and where they have not yet transferred, an academy refers an employee for an updated check every three years.

In addition, the Academies **must** follow specific guidance and advice provided by the Department for Education (DfE) in relation to the wider safeguarding agenda e.g. behaviour, health and safety, bullying, e-safety and medical needs.

4. The curriculum and opportunities to teach safeguarding

All our academies provide Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) on their timetable. This includes Relationships and Sex Education in line with the statutory guidance from the DfE on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (July 2020). This provides a framework in which our academies can look at aspects of abuse and neglect as part of an objective and safe approach to discuss challenging issues, which many of our young people have experienced.

E-safety is taught across the curriculum in a way that empowers the young people to learn how to use the power of the internet in a safe and appropriate way. Through the E-safety curriculum, our young people will be taught about the commerce risk when working online to include online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and financial scams. (See separate E-safety policy at each academy). Headteachers in our academies will carry out an annual review to their approach of online safety. This review will be supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks their children and young people face.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Headteacher

All individual Academies and Alternative Provisions (AP) within Learn@ MAT, in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, has at least one Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is the headteacher or a senior member of staff, who undertakes lead responsibility for safeguarding within each setting. Details of DSL and Deputy DSL are available in each individual academy Safeguarding Policy Appendices and on the websites. Each academy is responsible for providing accessible information of who their DSL is and in their absence their deputy. They will also provide information for 'out of hours' contact such as an e-mail address.

The broad areas of responsibility for the designated safeguarding lead are:

- To provide a comprehensive induction programme for all staff and ongoing regular training and professional development in all matters regarding safeguarding
- To support and advise staff on matters of child welfare (including contributing to early help assessments) and safeguarding and to liaise with relevant agencies, including Children's Services and or Police where abuse and neglect are suspected
- To help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and school and college leadership staff. Their role could include ensuring that the school or college, and their staff, know who these children are, understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort; supporting teaching staff to identify the challenges that children in this group might face and the additional academic support and adjustments that they could make to best support these children.
- To fulfil statutory responsibilities in relation to children and young people subject to a child protection plan by attending child protection conferences and implementing the multiagency child protection plan.
- Inform the headteacher who will liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where there are concerns about the conduct of, or an allegation is made against, a member of staff or volunteer at the academy. The headteacher will also inform the chief executive officer (CEO) of Learn@ MAT of such a concern and referral, who will support the headteacher in ensuring they manage the process appropriately, respecting the rights of all those involved and maintaining best Safeguarding practice and procedures.
- To liaise with the three safeguarding partners (Education, Social Care and Health) and work with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children. NSPCC – when to call the police should help the DSL understand when they should consider the police and what to expect when they do.
- If there is an allegation against the head then the chair or vice chair of the academy council will liaise with the LADO with the guidance and support of the CEO for Learn@ MAT.
- To provide up to date monitoring data in regard to child protection concerns and referrals to other agencies regarding concerns on the Trust monthly monitoring form every month.
- To provide an annual report to the academy council on safeguarding and child protection activity within the Academy, including any referrals to LADO. The CEO will ensure that all LADO referrals are reported to **Eileen Flynn**, the safeguarding lead trustee for Learn@ MAT.

- During term time, the DSL will be available during academy hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding issues or concerns.
- The DSL will be given time, training resources and support to fulfil their important roles fully and effectively.

Learn@ MAT provide access to external supervision by a Mental Health Adviser, **Mike Armiger** Mike.Armiger@learnmat.uk through our regular DSL support meetings. It is essential that those who deal with such complex and emotional cases receive regular opportunities to discuss their work with an appropriate person.

6. All staff across the trust

- Must recognise that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people is everyone's responsibility.
- Must make sure their approach is child-centred, so that they consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the young person.
- Have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which young people can learn.
- Must report any concerns about a child or young person immediately or as soon as practicable, on the same day, with the designated safeguarding lead or in their absence, the deputy safeguarding lead.
- Must read and demonstrate their understanding of KCSiE September 2021: information for all academy and college staff, or read Keeping Children Safe in Education Part One and Appendix 1 of this document in its most up to date version.
- Understand that early information sharing is vital for the effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision.
- Must know and be aware of who the designated safeguarding lead is and their deputies if they are not on site or available for consultation.
- Must know who the local authority designated officer (LADO) and know when and how to contact them.
- Must know who the chair of their academy council and the safeguarding lead of the academy council and how they can be contacted
- Must access, read and understand this policy as part of their induction and revisit the policy at the annual whole academy trust safeguarding training held by Learn@ MAT. This includes the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education.
- Must be aware of and follow the academy's procedures in order to identify those young people in need of early help and to take appropriate action where there are concerns for the welfare and protection of children and young people. Appendix 1 sets out the Learn@ MAT safeguarding structure procedure to be followed. Appendix 2 names the DSL in each Academy and Appendix 3 shows a copy of the child protection concern reporting form.
- Must attend safeguarding training on a regular basis and demonstrate their understanding.
- Must be aware of the signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child sexual exploitation (CSE), female genital mutilation (FGM) and radicalisation (Prevent). (Appendix 4 clarifies these further for staff). They must be able to

identify cases of children who may need help or protection, and feel confident and able to speak to the DSL if they are unsure.

- Must be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.
- Must be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of the academy and can occur between children outside of the school environments. All staff, but especially the DSL (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 and serious youth violence.
- Must adhere to the academies code of conduct and the behaviour management policy and procedure. The teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers (and headteachers should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.
- All staff are responsible for ensuring they have an up to date enhanced DBS certificate, as an employee they will automatically be put on the online system. If they are involved in any criminal proceedings which may affect their DBS and their ability to work with children they must make their headteacher/CEO aware of this immediately. (See also our DBS Policy and procedures).
- Must read and demonstrate an understanding the 'Behaviour Policy' for their academy.
- Must read and understand the Learn@ MAT code of conduct policy for staff.

In addition

- If a young person makes a disclosure, it is important that staff should listen first and then report this as soon as is practical, on the same day, to the designated safeguarding lead. They should then make a contemporaneous record (on the approved Child Protection Concern Form) the date, approximate time, the disclosure as told to them, sign and date the record (when made).

(NB: records can be made, transmitted and stored electronically)

- Under no circumstances should a young person be asked to write down their concerns, disclosure or allegation made against a member of staff or volunteer at the academy. In asking young people to make a written record important contextual information is often lost, especially if they have poor literacy skills, communication difficulties, or English is not their first language. An audio recording can be taken and/or written notes by the listener. This should be with the permission of the young person and that permission recorded at the time the recording begins.

7. The academy council

The academy Council (AC) will approve the academy safeguarding policy at each annual review and hold the headteacher responsible for its implementation.

The AC will appoint a senior member as their lead on safeguarding (link counsellor) to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the AC. This must be a different person to the DSL.

The chair of the AC will ask the CEO to act as 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against a headteacher (see Appendix 5). In the very serious situation of an allegation against the CEO of Learn@ MAT the chair of the board of trustees will liaise with LADO and our Human Resources Adviser in managing such a case.

The AC will ensure at least one member of any recruitment process has completed the safer recruitment training and that all safeguarding processes are maintained throughout the recruitment process from advertisement to pre-appointment checks.

- To monitor the quality and impact of the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (July 2020).

8. The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

- ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers are informed of this policy as part of their induction and understand what is expected of them regards all aspects of keep a child and young person safe
- communicating this policy to parents/carers when their child joins the academy and via the academy website
- ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, including updates, and are able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding
- acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer (see Appendix 5).
- to inform CEO of any safeguarding concerns which will involve third parties such as LADO, police and social care
- to ensure that the curriculum offered and delivered at the academy includes personal, social and health education and incorporates, The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019).

9. The CEO

The CEO is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

- to inform the trustee safeguarding lead and the chair of the board of trustees of any safeguarding concerns which have been reported to LADO.
- ensure systems and processes are in place across Learn@ to monitor and review all child-protection concerns and how effectively these are dealt with; monitor and review the quality of practices across Learn@; and monitor and review the Safeguarding policy and procedures annually or sooner to reflect changes to government legislation and guidance.

10. Allegations of abuse made against teachers and other staff

- If you witness inappropriate professional conduct by another member of staff (including supply staff and volunteers) towards a child or young person

or

- a child or young person makes an allegation against a colleague (including a supply member of staff or a volunteer), then you must report this immediately to the headteacher or, in their absence, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead on site.

If an allegation is made against the headteacher then this must be reported immediately to the Chair of the AC and CEO, who will inform the Designated Lead Trustee and Chair of the Board of Trustees.

If an allegation is made against the CEO then this must be reported immediately to the chair of the board of trustees; Stephen.Bradshaw@learnmat.uk

- Learn@ MAT Policy and procedure on the management of allegations is available on the academy websites (See Appendix 5).

11. Boarding Academies and children's homes

Children and young people may be particularly vulnerable in residential settings and there are additional requirements for our residential special academy.

All academies that provide residential accommodation and/or are registered as children's homes must comply with the relevant National Minimum Standards for their sector and work closely with the local authority and, where relevant, any local authorities that have placed their children there.

The relevant guidance for each sector is available on www.gov.uk and includes:

- National Minimum Standards for Boarding Academies
- The National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Academies
- The National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under 18 by Further Education Colleges
- The National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes Boarding Academies and children's homes

12. What you should look out for in regard to accessing Early Help

Many of our young people benefit from early help and many are already part of a child in need plan. For those who are not, signs for staff to be aware of are a child who:

- is disabled with additional special needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health Care Plan);
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups;
- is frequently missing from care or home;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse;

- a child going missing from education (CME) is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff should follow the academy's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future. Initially concerns will be shared with the Attendance and Welfare Officer for that academy, who will investigate the case in detail and in conjunction with the Local Authority (LA) officers for that child. If concerns remain following the home visit and review by the attendance officer then the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed and the concern will be escalated to the relevant LA officer.

Anybody can make a referral. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration and consider the escalation of concerns policy <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/children-and-young-people/bristol-safeguarding-children-board-professionals>. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point e.g. via Early Help if they do not reach the threshold for Children's Services intervention

13. Types of abuse and neglect

Abuse and neglect are defined as the maltreatment of a child or young person whereby someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

The following are the definitions of abuse and neglect as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). However, the ultimate responsibility to assess and define the type of abuse a child or young person may be subject to, is that of the Police and Children's Services. Our responsibility is to understand what each category of abuse is and how this can impact on the welfare and development of our children and where we have concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of abuse and neglect (one or more categories can apply) to take appropriate action as early as possible

<p>Physical abuse:</p> <p>This is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.</p>	<p>Neglect:</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Sexual abuse:</p>	<p>Emotional abuse:</p>

<p>This 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</p>	<p>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.</p>
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In addition to the above there are other areas of safeguarding that the academy has a responsibility to address and these include:

<p>Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) including Trafficking and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)</p> <p>Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse</p>	<p>Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)</p> <p>Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There are a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. This is a form of honour-based violence.</p>
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<p>can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.</p> <p>It also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.</p>	<p>Whilst all staff should speak to the DSL with regard to any concerns about FGM, there is a specific legal duty on teachers. If a teacher or Education Support Staff (HLTA/Learning Mentor/LF), in the course of their work in the academy, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the member of staff must report this to the police.</p>
<p>Peer on Peer Abuse can take various forms and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • serious bullying (including cyber bullying); • physical abuse, such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; • sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; • sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment. Which may be stand alone or a broader pattern of abuse; • causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or engage in sexual activity with a third party; • consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes' images or videos • up skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause victim humiliation, distress or alarm; • sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); 	<p>Forced marriage</p> <p>This is not the same as an arranged marriage, as it involves coercion and force and is not a marriage based on free choice. It affects both males and females. As with FGM above this is part of 'Honour –Based abuse', which is defined as abuse in the context of preserving 'honour' often within a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. Staff are aware of these complex issues in regard to potential 'honour-based violence' immediate direct communication is made with First Response (social care) by the DSL rather than the family.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. <p>The Academies in Learn@ MAT have a separate Anti-Bullying policy accessible on the academy website. We work in partnership with Stand Against Racist Incidents (SARI) to tackle all forms of hate crime within our Academies and provide help and support for the victim and the perpetrator.</p>	
<p>Domestic violence, Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG) and teenage relationship abuse</p> <p>This involves any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behavior, violence or abuse between those who are, or have been in relationships or family members regardless of gender or sexuality and is applicable to teenagers engaged in abusive relationships.</p> <p>Domestic abuse can impact on children when they witness it at home and/or suffer it in an intimate relationship. Operation Encompass is in operation in our area police and ensures that if the police are called to a case of domestic abuse where a young child is present they will inform the DSL/Key adult for that child before they arrive to school the next day.</p> <p>Serious Violence</p> <p>There are a number of indicators which may signal children and young people are at risk from, or involved with serious violent crime. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased absence • a change in friendships or relationships • significant decline in performance • signs of self-harm • change in well being • signs of assault or unexplained injuries 	<p>Gangs and youth violence</p> <p>All staff are aware of the indicators of a young person being at risk of involvement in serious crime. Such as unusual absences from school., a change of friendships or relationships, with older individuals or groups, significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in well-being. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs. Teachers and designated staff have a range of powers in relation to discipline to tackle problems, including violence, in the academy environment. Such powers cover disciplinary actions, the power to restrain violent young people, and the power to search young people for prohibited items. All our Academies request and expect referring LA's, schools and agencies to inform them at consultation stage of any known involvement a young person may have in gangs. We require our local community police officers to keep us up to date on all relevant information regarding our young people and their involvement in gangs and/or youth violence.</p> <p>County Lines is a specific type of gang involvement and drug related crime. All staff are aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to monitor and counteract these issues locally, and who to refer concerns to. These local services have been set up as part of the Home Office strategy to 'prevent youth violence and gang involvement and its criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance'. (DfE, 2019a).</p>

<p>Drugs</p> <p>As part of our academy’s duty to promote young people’s wellbeing, we have a role to play in preventing drug misuse as part of our pastoral responsibilities (health and wellbeing/Healthy Academies) and to support the Governments drug strategy (2010) to provide information, advice and support to young people via the curriculum</p>	<p>Fabricated or induced illness</p> <p>This supplementary guidance. Safeguarding Children in whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced (2008) sets out a national framework within which agencies and professionals at local level – individually and jointly – draw up and agree upon their own more detailed ways of working together where illness may be being fabricated or induced in a child by a carer who has parenting responsibilities for them</p>
<p>Child and Adolescent Mental Health</p> <p>All staff should be aware that Mental Health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.</p> <p>Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.</p> <p>Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood. Adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children’s experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.</p> <p>Good mental health and resilience are fundamental to our physical health, our relationships, education and to achieving our potential. Learn@ MAT has a designated ‘Mental Health Lead’ at each Academy and an overarching MAT Lead Practitioner who ensures a comprehensive and effective strategy for Mental Health and Wellbeing is in place across Learn’ MAT. We engage respected specialists to advise and support us in ensuring the welfare of our young people and our staff is given paramount importance.</p>	<p>Faith abuse</p> <p>The National Action Plan to Tackle Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief is intended to help raise awareness of the issue of child abuse linked to faith or belief and to encourage practical steps to be taken to prevent such abuse. We have adopted the Bristol policy in regard to the Spiritual and Cultural Religious Education programme (SaCRE) and deliver knowledge and understanding of faiths across the World alongside a comprehensive Personal, Social and Health Education programme (PSHE).</p> <p>Elective Home Education</p> <p>Learn@ MAT recognises that home education can mean some children and young people are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their needs. Academies across the trust will work with local authorities and key professionals to coordinate a meeting with parents once they have expressed an intent to educate their child at home.</p>

Radicalisation:

The Academy is aware of its responsibilities under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, specifically Section 26, and the Prevent Strategy to safeguard young people who are at risk of radicalisation by identifying and risk assessing individual who may be drawn into terrorism, violent or non-violent extremism. We provide a safe environment for our young people to explore, understand and discuss sensitive topics including terrorism and extremist ideology. We use the curriculum and pastoral support to educate our young people and to enable them to challenge these ideas. Staff are aware of the risk posed by other students and adults who may have been radicalised and the impact of radicalisation via social media. Staff have received appropriate training and have the knowledge and confidence to identify young people at risk of being drawn into terrorism and extremism and challenge extremist ideals. Our IT filters are regularly reviewed in order to prevent access to terrorist and extremist materials on line at the Academy.

Private Fostering

This is essentially when arrangements are made privately for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. A relative, under the Children Act 1989, is a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of the full or half blood or by marriage) or step-parent. A private foster carer may be a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child, or someone previously unknown to the child's family who is willing to privately foster a child. The period for which the child is cared for and accommodated by the private foster carer should be continuous, but that continuity is not broken by the occasional short break.

Learn@ MAT has a responsibility to refer to Children's Services any private fostering arrangement. Children's Services will undertake an assessment to ensure the needs and welfare of the child or young person is being met and that adults caring for them have access to advice and support.

14. Confidentiality

All aspects of Child protection concerns, allegations, records and referrals must be dealt with in a professional and confidential manner. It is essential that all concerns are passed on in a timely and efficient way which ensures a child and young person's safety is of paramount concern in our actions. A formal electronic process is in place across all our Academies, (C-Poms – Child Protection online monitoring system), which ensures accurate records are maintained and shared securely. The Learn@ MAT GDPR practices and policy reinforce the need for timely but secure information sharing in regard to Safeguarding.

Information must only be shared on a 'need to know' basis, but you do not need consent to share information if a child or young person is suffering, or at risk of serious harm.

Staff should never promise a child or young person that they will not tell anyone about an allegation, as this may not be in the child's best interests.

Confidentiality is also explained in this policy with respect to record-keeping in section 14, and allegations of abuse against staff in appendix 5.

15. Recognising abuse and taking action

Staff, volunteers, Academy Councillors, Trustees and Members must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue.

- **If a child is in immediate danger**

Make a referral to children's social worker immediately if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm and already known to Social Services. Anyone can make a referral.

Bristol City Council First Response Team Telephone Number: 0117 903 6444

Bristol City Council First Response Team (Out of Hours) Telephone Number: 01454 615165

Pass on immediately to the DSL who will make a 'First Response' referral for any new case/concern through the locally agreed procedures using the appropriate portal.

Tell the DSL (see section 4) as soon as possible if you make a referral directly.

Further information on who and how to make local referrals is available on:

<https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>

- **If a child or young person makes a disclosure to you**

If a child or young person discloses a safeguarding issue to you, you should:

- listen to and believe them
- allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions
- stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset
- tell the child or young person they have done the right thing in telling you
- do not tell them they should have told you sooner
- explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on
- do not promise to keep it a secret
- write up your conversation as soon as possible in the child or young person's own words.
- stick to the facts and do not put your own judgement on it
- sign and date the write-up and pass it on to the DSL
- when required make a referral to children's social care and/or the police directly (see 10.1), and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so

If you discover that 'Honour –based violence' including FGM has taken place or a pupil is at risk of such violence as FGM

- The Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises 'all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs.
- FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.
- Possible indicators that a pupil has already been subjected to FGM, and factors that suggest a pupil may be at risk, are set out in appendix 4.

- **Any teacher who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a pupil under 18 must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it.**
- The duty above does not apply in cases where a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine young people.
- Any other member of staff who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a pupil under 18 must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.
- Any member of staff who suspects a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or discovers that a pupil age 18 or over appears to have been a victim of FGM, must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures. All DSL's will have had up to date training in local referral procedures.

If you have concerns about a child or young person (as opposed to a child or young person being in immediate danger)

- Appendix 1 illustrates the procedure to follow if you have concerns about a child's welfare and the child is not in immediate danger.
- Where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action. Alternatively, make a referral to local authority children's social care directly (see 'Referral' below).
- You can also contact the charity NSPCC on 0808 800 5000 if you need advice on the appropriate action.

16. Early help

If early help is appropriate, the DSL will support you in liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate.

The DSL will keep the case under constant review and the Academy will consider a referral to local authority children's social care if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.

17. Referral

If it is appropriate to refer the case to local authority children's social care or the police, the DSL will make the referral or support you to do so.

If you make a referral directly, you must tell the DSL as soon as possible.

The local authority will make a decision within 1 working day of a referral about what course of action to take and will let the person who made the referral know the outcome. The DSL or person who made the referral must follow up with the local authority if this information is not made available, and ensure outcomes are properly recorded.

If the child's situation does not seem to be improving after the referral, the DSL or person who made the referral must contact the local authority and make sure the case is reconsidered to ensure the concerns have been addressed and the child's situation improves.

18. If you have concerns about extremism

- If a child is not at immediate risk of harm, where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action. Alternatively, make a referral to local authority children's social care directly if appropriate (see 'Referral' above).
- Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include [Channel](#), the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team.
- The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, that Academy staff, Academy Councillors, Trustees and Members can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a pupil. You can also email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk. Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.
- In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:
 - think someone is in immediate danger
 - think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
 - see or hear something that may be terrorist-related

19. Concerns about a staff member, supply staff or volunteer

- If you have concerns about a member of staff, supply staff or volunteer, speak to the headteacher. If you have concerns about the headteacher, speak to the chair of the academy council.
- You can also discuss any concerns about any staff member, supply staff or volunteer with the headteacher.
- The headteacher/chair of the academy council/DSL will then follow the procedures set out in appendix 5, if appropriate.

20. Allegations of abuse made against other young people

- We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'.
- Most cases of young people hurting other young people will be dealt with under our academy's Behaviour Policy, but this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:
 - is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
 - could put young people in the Academy at risk
 - is violent
 - involves young people being forced to use drugs or alcohol
 - involves sexual exploitation or sexual abuse, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including sexting)

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

- you must tell the DSL and record the allegation, but do not investigate it
- the DSL will contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- the DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved – both the victim(s) and the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made – with a named person they can talk to if needed
- the DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate

We will minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse by:

- challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour
- being vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female young people, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- ensuring our curriculum helps to educate children and young people about appropriate behaviour and consent
- ensuring children and young people know they can talk to staff confidentially by 1:1 sessions with their key worker and/or learning mentor
- ensuring staff are trained to understand that a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy.

22. Notifying parents

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child or young person with their parents or carers. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure.

Other staff will only talk to parents/carers about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL.

If we believe that notifying the parents/carers would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the local authority children's social care team before doing so.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents/carers of all the children involved.

23. Mobile phones, cameras and On-line Safety

Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones into our academies for their own use, but will limit such use to non-contact time when young people are not present. Staff members' personal phones will remain in their bags or cupboards during contact time with children and young people.

Staff will not take pictures or recordings of young people on their personal phones or cameras.

We will follow the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 when taking and storing photos and recordings for use in the academy.

Young people often enjoy the feedback of videos and photos of themselves and their learning and achievements. The academies will provide academy resources to do this and such images will be treated with respect, in line with the signed agreements made regularly with parents and the young person, following our policy on use of photographs and personal images. No personal images will be shared publicly (web-site, Newspapers, TV, Twitter, Facebook or newsletters) without approval of the young person and their parent/carers in line with our Data Protection Policy.

We are providing a more blended learning approach for a larger number of young people, which includes increasingly working online. We ensure our IT provider, Oakford IT Solutions, install robust firewalls and appropriate filters in all our systems and these are monitored regularly. All the laptops we provide for working at home are fully compliant with our expectations on filtering access on site. We follow the UK Safer Internet Centre: appropriate filtering and monitoring guidelines.

24. Complaints and concerns about Academy safeguarding practices

Complaints against staff

- Complaints against staff that are likely to require a child protection investigation will be handled in accordance with our procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against staff (see appendix 5).

Other complaints

- Please refer to the Learn@ MAT Complaints Procedure, available on our web-site.

Whistle-blowing

- Learn@ MAT follows a separate policy for whistle blowing which is available on our central web-site at, www.learnmat.uk
- If you have any concerns of malpractice or wrong doing please follow the guidance in this policy. It is hoped that you would raise these concerns in the first instance with the headteacher of the specific Academy and if the concern is about the headteacher's practices then with the chair of the Academy Council. In addition to these contacts you may also contact Jen Southall, Chief Executive Officer of Learn@ MAT, who has overall responsibility for all the Academies within the Trust.
- All concerns raised through the Whistleblowing Policy will be dealt with in complete confidence without reference to the source of any concern raised. To achieve the best practices and outcomes for all our children and young people we need a professional ethos of trust and confidence, which can only be achieved by openness in raising concerns and confidentiality and trust in dealing with them.

25. Record-keeping and sharing confidential information

We will hold records in line with our records retention schedule. We use the C-Poms system of recording, reporting and monitoring child protection.

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

Non-confidential records will be easily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them. We understand that 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent where there is good reason to do so, and that the sharing of information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner but it is not possible to gain consent, it is not reasonable to expect the Academy to gain consent, or to gain consent would place a child at risk.

We understand that we do not provide personal data when the serious harm test under legislation has been met and in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR.

Safeguarding records relating to individual children and young people will be retained for a reasonable period of time after they have left the Academy. (See Data Protection Policy).

All our academies use the C-Poms electronic system of recording information and sharing information securely, with password protection.

The Academy passes on relevant records to any Academy a young person is moving on to through secure means in line with our Data Protection Policy.

Records are kept up to the 25th birthday of a young person and then are reviewed to determine if further retention is required dependent on any ongoing concerns or enquiries. Otherwise they may be disposed of securely at this point.

In addition:

- Appendix 5 sets out our policy on record-keeping with respect to allegations of abuse made against staff

26. Training

All staff

- All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, as well as learning about our whistle-blowing procedures, to ensure they understand the Academy's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect. This training will be regularly updated and will be in line with advice from our local safeguarding children board.
- All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism, other forms of extremism and to challenge extremist ideas.
- Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings) as required, but at least annually. This will include all key updates to statutory guidance for schools in England when they occur.

- Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

The DSL

- The nominated DSL(s) will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years.
- In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and understand safeguarding developments).
- All DSLs will also undertake Prevent awareness training.

Academy Councillors, Trustees and Members

- All Academy Councillors receive training about safeguarding, to make sure they have the information, knowledge and understanding needed to perform their functions and responsibilities.
- All Academy Councillors, Trustees and Members are subject to enhanced DBS checks and Section 128 checks. Any person on the Section 128 list will not be permitted to join our Multi-Academy Trust. These checks are maintained throughout the period a person remains a member of our governance team, and if their situation changes they will be removed from our organisation.

Recruitment – interview/appointment panels

- At least one person on any interview/appointment panel for a post at the MAT/Academy will have undertaken safer recruitment training. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of the Department for Education's statutory guidance, KCSiE, and be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

27. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the CEO. At every review, it will be approved by the full Trust Board.

28. Multi-agency working

Learn@ MAT are committed to working as part of a Multi-agency approach in line with statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.

The three safeguarding partners are the Local Authority for that child (or for allegations of abuse by a member of staff the local LADO for that Academy), the regional clinical commissioning group for that area within the local authority (often the regional health trust), and the chief officer of police for that area. They should be held accountable for ensuring agencies and procedures are in place to safeguard young people in their area, promote the welfare of young people, including identifying and responding to their needs.

All our Academies, including their Academy council, are fully aware of the safeguarding partners they work with and have established systems in place to work with these partners. Each Academy has experienced staff, such as DSL's, Learning Mentors, and Care Leads, who are in regular

contact with relevant agencies appointed by the safeguarding partners and supply information as requested by these other agencies. We are fully aware and compliant with local protocol for assessment and we have an online recording and monitoring system, C-POMS, across all our Academies to ensure we can raise concerns for Early Help at the early stage of concern to support speedy response and help. Staff must be aware that they are part of a wider team responsible for the children and young people in their educational care. Staff may at times have to attend relevant multi-agency meetings and provide relevant reports for such meetings in the best interests of the child.

We are aware of the process to escalate our concerns when it is felt there has been no response or no appropriate response from social care and/or health.

29. The child's wishes

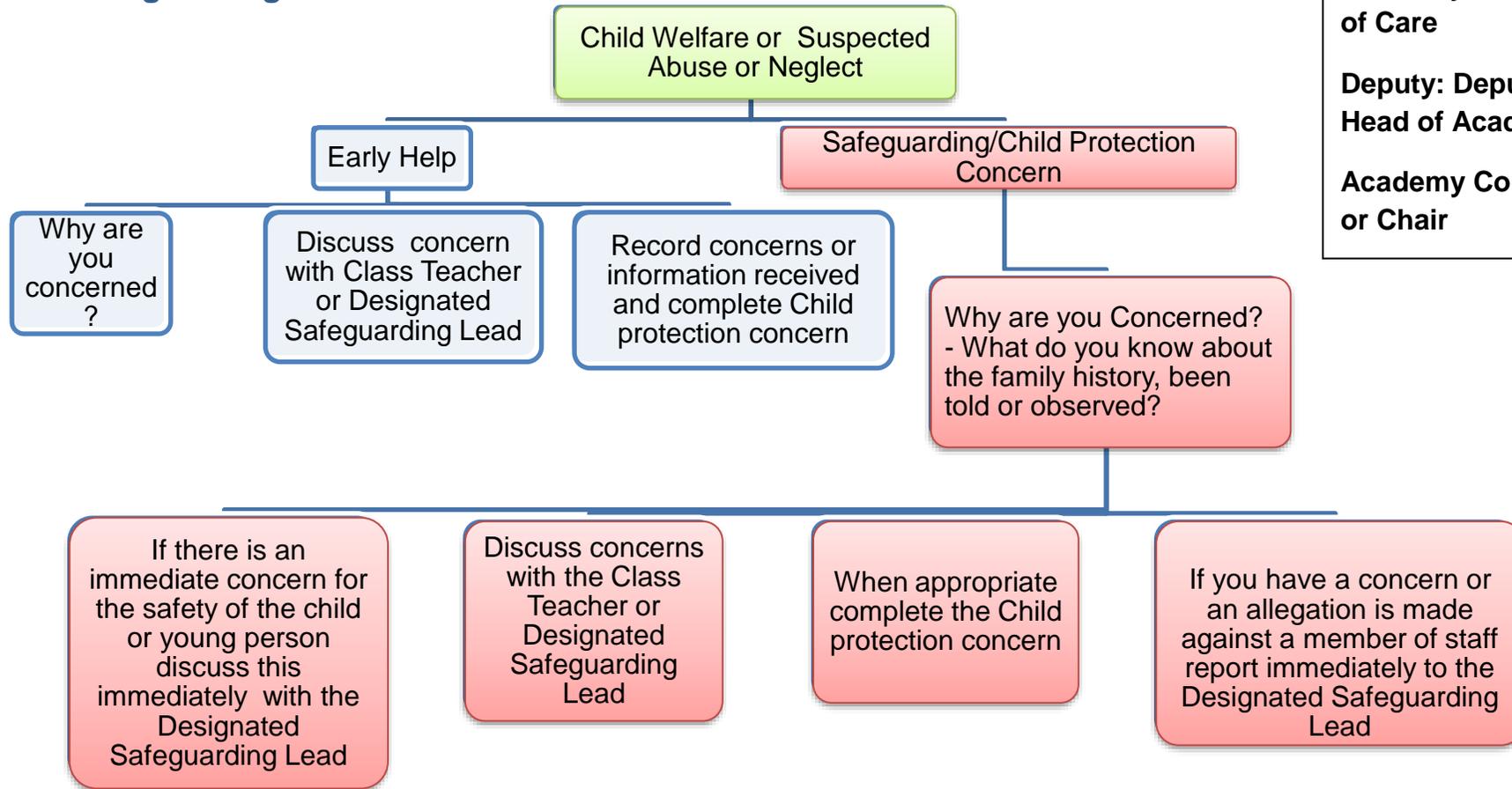
The child's wishes are central to what we do and how we do it. We ensure that throughout any safeguarding process there is opportunity for the young person to express their views and give feedback.

30. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Attendance Policy
- E- safety Policy
- Sex and relationship education Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy

Appendix 1: Safeguarding Procedure



Designated Safeguarding Lead: Headteacher of Academy or Deputy Head/Head of Care

Deputy: Deputy/Assistant Head of Academy

Academy Council: Named DSL or Chair

All records should be dated and contain factual information, include date, context (who, what, when), identify the author and the date the record was made. If there is a specific disclosure or allegation do not ask children and young people to write the account – it is your responsibility to record what the child or young person has said - in their own words, and any parental explanation obtained

Appendix 2: Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

Trustees

Eileen Flynn (DSL)

CEO

Jen Southall

Knowle DGE Academy

Kate Lee-Wells
(Headteacher)

Jo Grayson
(Deputy
Headteacher)

Notton House Academy

Michelle Reysenn
(Headteacher)

Louise Gardiner
(Head of Care)

Lansdown Park Academy

Nick Lee-Wells
(Headteacher)

Paul Todd
(Deputy
Headteacher)

Rush Hill
Victoria Jones
(Operations
Lead)

Sky Academy

David Simons
(Headteacher)

Louise Reah

Rod Cockram
(Head of Care)

Menize Donatien
(Children
Looked After
Lead)

Kate McCathaigh
(E-Safety Co-
ordinator)

St Matthias Academy

Fishponds
Simon Quinn
(Deputy
Headteacher)

Caletta Jordan
(Learning
Mentor)

Brentry
Simon Kershaw
(Assistant
Head)

Soundwell Academy

Craig Abbs
(Headteacher)

Catherine Roberts
(Deputy
Headteacher)

Martha Green
Jo Everitt
Josh Byworth
Leanne Bush
Claire Buttery
Fiona Carter
(DDSL)

Central ALP/Post 16

Robyn Gibb
(Assistant Head
teacher)
Maternity Leave

Jon Jones
(Assistant
Headteacher)
Maternity Cover

George Erlanger
(Employability
Coach)

Yasmin Usherwood
(SEMH Lead)

Appendix 3: Child Protection Concern Reporting Form

CONFIDENTIAL

If you feel a pupil is at risk of emotional, physical, sexual abuse or neglect, please fill in all details as fully as possible and pass the form to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Pupil's name:	
Class:	
Name of person completing form:	
Department:	

Details (as told by pupil, if applicable):

Incident witnessed by:	
Date of concern:	
Signed:	
Name (please print):	

Brief details of phone call to parents/ carers made by tutor:

Further action needed: Yes/ No

Social worker name/ office:	
Contacted by:	
Date:	
How social worker was contacted:	Date:
	Time:
	Method: Fax/ Phone/ Email

Any follow up action:

Headteacher's comments:

These forms are no longer used by Learn@ MAT employees across our Academies as all have adopted the C-POMS on-line system for all staff to log concerns and related information to a concern and on-going case. However, they must be used to record concerns by visitors who will not have access to C-POMS. Training and access codes are provided to all staff as part of their induction programme.

Appendix 4: specific safeguarding issues

Children missing from education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, and such children are at risk of being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation.

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- are at risk of harm or neglect
- come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- come from the families of service personnel
- go missing or run away from home or care
- are supervised by the youth justice system
- cease to attend an Academy
- come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the Academy without a new Academy being named, and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points. All our procedures in this regard are directed and monitored by our Attendance and Welfare Officer for Learn@ MAT. (See Attendance Policy).

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being missing, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures which include making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority children's social care team, and the police, if the child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm.

Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status.

This can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults, but does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be persuaded or forced to share sexually explicit images of themselves, have sexual conversations by text, or take part in sexual activities using a webcam.

Children or young people who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Indicators of sexual exploitation can include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and/or alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time, or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing Academy or education, or not taking part in education

Honour-based Violence: FGM

The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to children affected by FGM or at risk of FGM.

Section 7.3 of this policy sets out the procedures to be followed if a staff member discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out or suspects that a pupil is at risk of FGM.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A pupil confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
- A family/pupil already being known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
 - having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
 - finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)
 - spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
 - having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
 - avoiding physical exercise or missing PE
 - being repeatedly absent from their Academy, or absent for a prolonged period
 - demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour
 - being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations

- asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
- talking about pain or discomfort between her legs.

Potential signs that a pupil may be at risk of FGM include:

- the girl's family having a history of practising FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider)
- FGM being known to be practised in the girl's community or country of origin
- a parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out
- a family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
 - having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM
 - having limited level of integration within UK society
 - confiding to a professional that she is to have a "special procedure" or to attend a special occasion to "become a woman"
 - talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period
 - requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM
 - talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other children or young people about it (although it is important to consider the context of the discussion)
 - being unexpectedly absent from their Academy
 - having sections missing from her 'red book' (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication.

The above indicators and risk factors are not intended to be exhaustive.

Honour-based Violence: Forced marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the 'one chance' rule, i.e. we may only have one chance to speak to the potential victim and only one chance to save them.

If a member of staff suspects that a pupil is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the pupil about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the pupil about the concerns in a secure and private place
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or fm@fco.gov.uk
- Refer the pupil to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or Academy counsellor, as appropriate

Preventing radicalisation

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and other forms of extremism. Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Academies have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk.

We will assess the risk of children in our Academy being drawn into terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding children board and local police force.

We will ensure that suitable internet filtering is in place, and equip our young people to stay safe online in our Academies and at home.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period.

Staff will be alert to changes in young people's behaviour.

The government website [Educate Against Hate](#) and charity [NSPCC](#) say that signs that a pupil is being radicalised can include:

- refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- changes in friendship groups and appearance
- rejecting activities they used to enjoy
- converting to a new religion
- isolating themselves from family and friends
- talking as if from a scripted speech
- an unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- a sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- increased levels of anger
- increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions

- accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter
- possessing extremist literature
- being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations.

Children and young people who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem, or be victims of bullying or discrimination. It is important to note that these signs can also be part of normal teenage behaviour – staff should have confidence in their instincts and seek advice if something feels wrong.

If staff are concerned about a pupil, they will follow our procedures set out in section 7.5 of this policy, including discussing their concerns with the DSL.

Staff should **always** take immediate action if they are worried.

Further information on the Academy's measures to prevent radicalisation are set out in other Trust policies and procedures, including e-safety policy and behaviour policy.

Serious Violence

Staff across the trust will understand the indicators, which may signal a child or young person is at risk of, or involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from their setting, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that a child or young person have been approached by, or involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

Any member of staff across the trust **must** always take immediate action if they are worried

Checking the identity and suitability of visitors

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff and requested to leave their belongings, including their mobile phone(s), in a safe place during their visit if they are accessing spaces used by young people. Otherwise they must be escorted and supervised throughout their visit by a responsible employee.

If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors will be asked to produce photographic identification.

Visitors must sign the visitors' book and wear a visitor's badge.

All visitors to our setting, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. We will not invite into the Academy any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using Academy facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise young people or staff.

Non-collection of children

If a child is not collected or no responsible adult is at home to receive them off Academy transport at the end of the session/day, we will:

Continue to try and contact parent(s)/carer(s) and emergency family contacts on our records; messages will be left on all phone contacts, e-mail addresses and by note if the child is on Academy transport;

We will not leave a child at an address not approved and agreed in advance with the parents, nor if there is no responsible adult (family member over 14yrs or approved family member/friend) there to meet them;

If the child's welfare is already of concern to the Academy and/or other agencies we will record all such late arrival by parents/approved persons on their personal record and a pattern of such behaviour will be discussed formally with parents/carers before being shared with Social Care and if relevant the Hope Virtual Academy (CiC).

If a child has had to be maintained in the extended care of the Academy for more than an hour a phone call to social care, early help will be made and if necessary, the child will be handed to their care for the evening/weekend. Such an occurrence is rare and will necessitate a full multi-agency case review meeting, at which the DSL will represent the Academy.

Upskirting:

This is a criminal offence and is defined as, 'taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.' (DfE, 2019a). Such incidents will be reported to the headteacher and dealt with under disciplinary procedures as well as being reported through the DSL to the appropriate level of social care. Immediate care and support will be provided to the victim and their family from our specialist support team.

Gangs and youth violence.

All staff are aware of the indicators of a young person being at risk of involvement in serious crime. Such as unusual absences from school., a change of friendships or relationships, with older individuals or groups, significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in well-being. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs. Teachers and designated staff have a range of powers in relation to discipline to tackle problems, including violence, in the Academy environment. Such powers cover disciplinary actions, the power to restrain violent young people, and the power to search young people for prohibited items. All our Academies request and expect referring LA's, schools and agencies to inform them at consultation stage of any known involvement a young person may have in gangs. We require our local community police officers to keep us up to date on all relevant information regarding our young people and their involvement in gangs and/or youth violence

County Lines: a specific type of gang involvement and drug related crime. All staff are aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to monitor and counteract these issues locally, and who to refer concerns to. These local services have been set up as part of the Home Office strategy to 'prevent youth violence and gang involvement and its criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance.' (DfE, 2019a).

Missing young people

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child goes missing, we will expect that Academy to follow their absconding policy and record all incidents for monitoring purposes.

Appendix 5: Safer recruitment and allegations of abuse made against staff

I. Safer Recruitment

Learn@ MAT and all the Academies within it follow the Safer Recruitment guidance in KCSiE (September 2021). This covers the particular risks when employing supply staff. We will follow the same processes as outlined below if allegations of abuse arise regarding a person on supply in one of our Academies. The Academy DSL will take the lead in this process. See also the Learn@ MAT Recruitment and Selection Policy.

II. Allegations of abuse made against staff.

This section of this policy applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a potential recruitment or a current member of staff, supply staff or volunteer has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may behave in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children. This could be where a person's behaviour outside of school may suggest 'transferable risk'. For example, where a member of staff, supply staff or volunteer is involved in an incident outside school which did not involve children but could have an impact on their suitability to work with children.

It applies regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place in the Academy. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching and historical allegations of abuse will be referred to the police.

Leaders within the Trust will deal with any allegation of abuse against a member of staff, supply staff or volunteer very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

Suspension

Suspension will not be the default position, and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- Redeployment within the Academy so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned
- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children

- Redeploying the individual to alternative work in the Academy so that they do not have unsupervised access to children
- Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted
- Temporarily redeploying the individual to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative Academy or other work for Learn@ Trust.

Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)

Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the headteacher (or CEO/chair of the AC where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation) – the ‘case manager’ – will take the following steps:

- immediately discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the local authority. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children’s social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police *before* consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police)
- inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children’s social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children’s social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies
- Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the Academy is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children’s social care services, as appropriate
- **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the Academy and their contact details

- **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation
- **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in Academy and/or liaise with the police and/or children's social care services as appropriate
- Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate. (Such as who they can turn to for advice – trade union representatives, or a colleague, for example – and Learn@ MAT arrangements for welfare counselling or medical advice through our approved providers)
- Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children's social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice
- Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case and the outcome, where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process (in confidence)
- Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child

If the Academy is made aware that the secretary of state has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the National College for Teaching and Leadership.

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the Learn@ MAT Board will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the Academy's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

Timescales

- Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious will be resolved within 1 week
- If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, we will institute appropriate action within 3 working days
- If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, we will hold this within 15 working days

Specific actions

Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution

The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services.

Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the Academy ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the case manager and the Academy's Human Resources adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the case manager and personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to refer the matter to the NCTL to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

Individuals returning to work after suspension

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.

The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the Academy.

Unsubstantiated or malicious allegations

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the headteacher, or other appropriate person in the case of an allegation against the headteacher, will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the pupil(s) who made it, or whether the police should be asked to consider whether action against those who made the allegation might be appropriate, even if they are not a pupil.

Confidentiality

The Academy will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The case manager will take advice from the local authority's designated officer, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared
- how to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality
- what, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
- how to manage press interest if, and when, it arises.

Record-keeping

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case. Such records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- Notes of any action taken and decisions reached (and justification for these, as stated above)

If an allegation or concern is not found to have been malicious, the Academy/Trust will retain the records of the case on the individual's confidential personnel file, and provide a copy to the individual. We will retain these records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

The records of any allegation that is found to be malicious will be deleted from the individual's personnel file.

References

When providing employer references, we will not refer to any allegation that has been proven false, unsubstantiated or malicious or any history of allegations where all such allegations have been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious.

Learning lessons

After any cases where the allegations are *substantiated*, we will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the Academy's/Trust's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- The duration of the suspension
- Whether or not the suspension was justified
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual

Appendix 6

Domestic abuse: The hidden legacy of the pandemic

Written by: [Pete Henshaw](#) | Published: 02 September 2020 SecEd



Image: Adobe Stock

[Comment on this article](#)

Domestic abuse in the family can have significant implications for the welfare and wellbeing of young people – and lockdown has seen a dramatic rise in cases. Sara Alston looks at what we can expect as pupils return in September

Hidden within the effects of the [Covid-19 pandemic](#) is a terrifying rise in domestic abuse.

Last year, 830,000 children experienced domestic abuse in their own homes. In the first three months of lockdown, there was a 70 to 80 per cent increase in calls to domestic abuse helplines. [And this will be only those who are willing or able to request help \(Townsend, 2020; SecEd, 2020\).](#)

These figures are only the tip of the iceberg. There will be many more who are living with unreported abuse. On average, victims live with abuse for two to three years, experiencing 50 incidents of abuse before getting help (SafeLives, 2015). Victims need to be asked multiple times by a professional about their abuse before they make disclosures (Price et al, 2007).

The risks

For families already under strain, the impact of the lockdown restricting social interactions and increasing health and financial worries will have tipped tense situations into abuse. The trauma of lockdown may have been a “trigger event”, sparking violence and abuse.

Lockdown saw an increase in mental health and substance abuse issues which commonly co-occur with domestic abuse (IAS, 2020). The situation will have been exacerbated for many families as their access to outside sources of support including schools, GPs and social workers were cut off.

What is domestic abuse?

The statutory guidance [Keeping children safe in education \(DfE, 2020\)](#) uses the cross-government definition of domestic abuse and violence: “Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling,

coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional.”

Within this definition there is an implicit challenge to many common misconceptions about domestic abuse. It is important that all school staff understand that:

- Domestic abuse is not synonymous with physical assault. The majority of domestic abuse does not include violence (ONS, 2019).
- Victims and perpetrators can be of any gender.
- Domestic abuse occurs in both same and different sex relationships.
- Domestic abuse can be perpetrated by children against their parents and within intimate relationships between children.
- Abuse can occur both within and outside the home, over the phone or online.
- A victim of domestic abuse does not have to live with the perpetrator.
- Risk does not end because a relationship has ended.

Abuse in intimate relationships between children

KCSiE September 2021

In the version of KCSIE 2020 put out for consultation in February 2020, but suspended due to Covid, there was a key strand that looked at domestic abuse within children’s own relationships, particularly those in their later teens. This has not been included in the finalised version, coming into force in September 2021.

Nevertheless, as a Trust we are conscious of this issue and ensure that we provide a safe and supportive place for those who need to seek help. As with adult domestic abuse, acts of abuse range from disparaging comments, constant checking or controlling actions and financial exploitation, to offences of extreme physical or sexual violence. Schools need to consider that age or power discrepancies between the partners could additionally, be an indicator of sexual or criminal exploitation.

The impact on children and young people

The Children Act 2002 recognised as a risk of harm “any impairment to the child's health or development as a result of witnessing the ill treatment of another person” including domestic abuse. The current Domestic Abuse Bill explicitly identifies domestic abuse and coercive control as key risks to children’s health and wellbeing.

In KCSiE, there is clear recognition of the adverse impact and serious long-lasting emotional and psychological impacts for children of witnessing domestic abuse.

The work on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) considers the long-term impact of domestic abuse on children. Domestic abuse impacts children’s mental health and development, including their ability to form and maintain social relationships. It may impact their social understanding and empathy. Children may feel angry, guilty, insecure, alone, frightened, powerless or confused. They may have ambivalent feelings towards both the abuser and the non-abusing parent.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists (2020) has identified impacts including that children may:

- become anxious or depressed

- have difficulty sleeping
- have nightmares or flashbacks
- be easily startled
- complain of physical symptoms such as bed-wetting, tummy aches and other illnesses
- have temper tantrums and problems with school
- behave as though they are much younger than they are
- become aggressive or may internalise their distress and withdraw from other people
- have a lowered sense of self-worth
- begin to play truant, start to use alcohol or drugs, begin to self-harm or develop an eating disorder (for older children).

Children living in a home where domestic abuse occurs are at increased risk of physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect.

How children communicate about domestic abuse

As with any other safeguarding issue, there will be children who make disclosures about the abuse they have experienced. These should be handled in the same way as any other safeguarding concern or disclosure.

Many children will communicate their experiences through their behaviour. Particularly as children return to school after the lockdown, we must question what a child is communicating through their behaviour, rather than responding to the behaviour in a punitive manner as such a response, in turn, could compound and exacerbate the abuse. Many children who have experienced abuse will need to rebuild relationships with staff before they can make a disclosure.

Support to children

Given the huge potential impact on our school communities of domestic abuse we need to consider how we can support children as they return to our sites. Domestic abuse is a child protection issue and the most common cause of children being identified as “in need” and allocated a social worker.

The school’s approach must be reflected in robust safeguarding procedures, policies and practices. Key to this will be safeguarding training to ensure all staff have a full understanding of domestic abuse and its impacts. Schools should be ready to use Early Help Assessments, safeguarding referrals and engage with local and national domestic abuse services to safeguard their children.

The new relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum became statutory from September 2020 (although schools that have had their preparations delayed due to the lockdown have been given until the beginning of the summer term 2021 to start delivery). The statutory curriculum (DfE, 2019) explicitly states that children should be equipped to understand:

- healthy and unhealthy behaviours in themselves and others
- emotions and the impact that these have upon themselves and others
- the impact of a person’s behaviour on those around them
- that rules and expectations exist across society and within relationships
- that abuse is never acceptable
- that domestic abuse is socially unacceptable.

It is key this is used effectively to support children's understanding of healthy and unhealthy relationships.

With the return to school sites, we will need to regard all children as potential victims of domestic abuse. Of course, schools have lists of vulnerable children, but we need to be sensitive to and aware of the experiences of the children who were not on anyone's list.

Abuse does not just happen to those we expect, and we need to be conscious of our own cultural assumptions and expectations, including the risks of staff being groomed by a perpetrator, which may blind us to child's emotional and safeguarding needs.

Our safeguarding responsibilities include the need to ensure an understanding of the risks for all children; they must receive the protection and support they need.

- ***Sara Alston is an experienced SENCO and safeguarding lead who also works as a SEND, inclusion and safeguarding consultant and trainer. Visit www.seainclusion.co.uk. Read her previous articles for SecEd via <https://bit.ly/3koprd8>***

Further information & resources

- DfE: Keeping children safe in education, DfE, June 2020: <http://bit.ly/1XOPREp>
- DfE: Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education, June 2019: <http://bit.ly/2kQwtgL>
- Institute of Alcohol Studies: Alcohol consumption during the Covid-19 lockdown, June 2020: <https://bit.ly/33EpX0C>
- ONS: Partner abuse in detail, England and Wales (for year ending March 2018), November 2019.
- Price, Baird & Salmon: Does routine antenatal enquiry lead to an increased rate of disclosure of domestic abuse? Evidence-Based Midwifery (vol 5), December 2007.
- Royal College of Psychiatrists: Domestic violence and abuse – the impact on children and adolescents, accessed August 2020: <https://bit.ly/3dy9s7w>
- SafeLives: Statistics on domestic violence and abuse, accessed 2020: <https://bit.ly/31jsTwR>
- SafeLives: Insights Idva National Dataset 2013/14, SafeLives, 2015.
- SecEd: Vulnerable children 'hidden and at risk' during coronavirus lockdown, April 2020: <https://bit.ly/2W34Uzm>
- Townsend: Revealed: surge in domestic violence during Covid-19 crisis, The Guardian, April 2020: <https://bit.ly/3fQKnGh>

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