



Darlinghurst

ACADEMY

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

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SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR Darlinghurst Academy

Key Contacts within the academy

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD (DSL) Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (SENCo) Designated Teacher for Looked after Children Designated Mental Health Lead	Tracy Grant
DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD (DDSL)	Leanne Hahn
DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR:	Johan Zweistra

Key contacts within the Local Authority

CSPOC (Children's Single Point of Contact) Children's Social Care, Southend City Council: Where schools have concerns for the safety and welfare of a child or young person. OUT OF OFFICE HOURS: To make URGENT referrals CHANNEL Helpline LADO	01702 215007 (option 1) Log in to Southend City Council Children's Services Portal www.earlyhelp.southend.gov.uk (secure) 0345 606 1212 0800 011 3764 01702 534539 LADO@southend.gov.uk
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Key Safeguarding National Contacts

Organisation	Description and contact details
NSPCC helpline for adults	Helping adults protect children 24 hours a day. For help and support, including anyone needing advice about female genital mutilation, children and young people affected by gangs, concerns that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, contact the NSPCC trained helpline counsellors on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text 88858 • Tel: 0808 800 5000 • Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC Helpline Report Abuse in Education	Bespoke helpline for children and young people who've experienced abuse at school, and for worried adults and professionals who need support and guidance including for non-recent abuse: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tel: 0800 136 663 • Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice	Free advice and support for professionals concerned about how Child Protection issues are being handled in their organisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tel: 0800 028 0285 • Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Organisation	Description and contact details
UK Safer Internet Centre professional advice line	Helpline for professionals working with children and young people in the UK with any online safety issues they may face themselves or with children in their care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tel: 0844 381 4772 Email: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
Police Anti-Terrorist Hot Line number	Tel: 0800 789 321
National Domestic Abuse Helpline	Hosted by Refuge , Helpline Tel: 0808 2000247
Prevent Duty	Police Anti-Terrorist Hot Line Tel: 0800 789 321 Government advice and trusted resources to help safeguard students from radicalisation, build resilience to all types of extremism and to promote our shared values. Educate Against Hate - Prevent Radicalisation & Extremism Guidance on how to make a Prevent referral: Making a referral to Prevent - GOV.UK
Operation Encompass	Information and resources for schools Home : Operation Encompass
Report harmful online content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK Safer Internet Centre – report online harm. A national reporting centre that has been designed to assist anyone in reporting harmful content online CEOP – to report online sexual abuse or the way someone has been communicating online Report online material promoting terrorism or extremism
Report Abuse in Education helpline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people who have experienced abuse at school and parents and teachers who are concerned about sexual abuse in education settings can call the Report Abuse in Education helpline on 0800 136 663 or email help@nspcc.org.uk
Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stop it now! For worries about a child's sexual behaviour, 0808 1000 900. Includes Shore which provides a safe and anonymous place for young people to get help and support. The aim is to prevent harmful sexual behaviours among young people.
Safer Recruitment	Guidance can be found in KCSIE, but further advice on Safer Recruitment for schools and colleges using recruitment and supply agencies can be found within the Better Hiring Institute's Education Supply Chains 'A Better Hiring Toolkit' advice: Better Hiring Toolkit for Education Supply Chains.pdf .
Children missing in Education	Statutory guidance for schools and local authorities, including policy checklist: Children missing education - GOV.UK (Sept 2025)
Mandatory reporting of Female Genital Multilation (FGM) by teachers	Via Police - 101

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Section 1: Introduction/Context

Context

Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

This Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is for all staff, parents, governors, volunteers and the wider community and enables Darlington Academy to carry out its functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in line with key statutory guidance and legislation, including:

- Department for Education's statutory guidance publications for schools and local authorities, including:
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children (2018)
- EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers (2025)
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Safeguarding Reforms 2025 - Foundation Years
- Human Rights Act (1998) and Equality Act (2010), including the Public Sector Equality Duty Public Sector Equality Duty: guidance for public authorities - GOV.UK

- Data Protection Act (2018) and UK GDPR
- Prevent Duty Guidance (2023) and The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation (2023)
- Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures

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

As defined in [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (2023), safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (anyone under the age of 18) as:

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

In accordance with Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) we ensure that all safeguarding and welfare arrangements are adhered to including those relating to, but not limited to:

- Staff qualifications, training and support (including Annex C compliance)
- Supervision of staff
- Staff taking medication or other substances
- Smoking and vaping
- Managing behaviour
- Staff: child ratios
- Paediatric first aid (Annex A compliance)
- Safer eating
- Toilets and intimate hygiene
- Child absence
- Use of mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities.

Child Protection Policy Statement

Darlinghurst Academy maintains an attitude of *"it could happen here"* and an academy wide approach to *this*. We recognise that everyone in the academy has a role to play to keep children safe. The best interests of the child are at the heart of our work to identify and act swiftly on concerns, share information, and ensure that children feel listened to, are taken seriously, and are safe. We will:

- ensure that all children are safeguarded while on or off academy premises
- be proactive about anticipating and managing risks that children face in the wider community and online.
- have a Prevent action plan/risk assessment
- be part of Operation Encompass. This operates in all police forces across England, helping police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children and families. There is statutory obligation on police forces to share Operation Encompass notifications with schools, and we work in partnership with all/any relevant agencies
- implement any local or national learning where appropriate, e.g. learning from case reviews or audits.
- ensure that all relevant policies are updated to reflect 'lessons learnt' and consideration given to the wider cultural issues within the school/education setting.
- recognise the vital role we play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements working, as set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2023).
- understand our role within local safeguarding arrangements and operate in accordance with the Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures, (SET) including the local Threshold document.

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

Our academy is committed to keeping children safe and maintains an attitude that it "could happen here." Consequently, we aim to:

- Create a culture of vigilance where the welfare of our pupils is promoted and where timely and appropriate safeguarding action is taken.
- Establish and maintain an environment where pupils feel safe and secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensure that pupils know that there are adults within the academy who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- Ensure pupils receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. This includes identifying emerging problems and those children who may benefit from early help.
- Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities which equip pupils with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and to develop healthy and safe relationships.
- Protect children from harm and to ensure that they are taught in a way that is consistent with the law, our values and to promote respect for all others.
- Facilitate understanding of wider issues within the context of learning about the values on which our society is founded and our system of democratic government.
- Provide a curriculum which actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Promote tolerance of and respect for people of all faiths (or those of no faith), races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientation
- Make parents/carers aware of the academy policies and practice for safeguarding and ensure that, wherever possible, every effort will be made to establish open and honest effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from partner agencies.
- Promote positive mental health and resilience. Positive mental health is the concern of the whole community, and we recognise that the academy plays a key part in this. Our Trust wants to develop the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all pupils and staff, as well as provide specific support for those with additional needs. We understand that there are risk factors which increase someone's vulnerability and protective factors that can promote or strengthen resiliency. The more risk factors present in an individual's life, the more protective factors or supportive interventions are required to counter balance and promote further growth of resilience.
- Understand that both the mental and physical health are relevant to safeguarding and need to be monitored by staff. All staff (including support staff) need to inform a DSL immediately of any mental health concerns that are accompanied by a safeguarding concern.
- Some children have an increased risk of abuse and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children from diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs or disabilities.
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality.
- Have English as an additional language.
- Are known to be living in difficult circumstances for example in temporary accommodation or where there is substance abuse or domestic violence issues.
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage or radicalisation.
- Are asylum seekers.
- Are at risk due to having family members that have mental health issues
- Are looked after or previously looked after
- Have or have had a social worker

Darlinghurst Academy is committed to keeping pupils safe and work in partnership with outside agencies and the police to ensure awareness of county lines, Child Sexual Experience (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and support the work of the police in counteracting this threat. It is vital that we work in partnership with parents to support the well-being of all our pupils. Parents should share any concerns about

the well-being of their child with the academy, so that appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented.

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them and to provide a safe environment in which they can learn and achieve their full potential. However, there are key people within the academy and the Local Authority who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those in our academy with these specific responsibilities (the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)) are shown on the cover sheet of this document. However, we are clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play.

All staff and governors will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to keep children safe, as set out in KCSIE (2025), by receiving:

- safeguarding training at induction
- safeguarding training appropriate to their roles and responsibilities and which is regularly updated
- online safety knowledge and for children to be taught about safeguarding, including in relation to keeping themselves safe online and digital literacy.
- attendance information, including administrative, pastoral, or family support staff, and senior leaders
- data protection information (including recording protocols) and cyber security, relevant to the roles staff undertake
- training for those involved with the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children including Safer Recruitment
- support and training for those involved with Managing Allegations against staff.

All staff and governors know and understand their responsibilities and have knowledge of the policies which are part of the suite of safeguarding policies and related procedures (referenced previously in this policy), as well as the safeguarding response to child-on-child abuse, roles and names of the key staff for safeguarding.

The governing body

The governing body ensures that the policies, procedures and training in our academy are effective and comply with the law at all times. It ensures that all required policies relating to safeguarding are in place, that the child protection policy reflects statutory and local guidance and is reviewed at least annually.

The governor for safeguarding arrangements is named on the front cover of this document. This governor takes strategic responsibility at governing body level for safeguarding arrangements in our academy. The governing body ensures there is a named DSL and at least one DDSL in place (also named on the front cover).

The governing body ensures the academy contributes to inter-agency working, in line with statutory and local guidance. It ensures that information is shared and stored appropriately and in accordance with statutory requirements.

The governing body ensures that all adults in our academy who work with children undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction as appropriate and that it is regularly updated. All staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, with further updates throughout the year, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to keep our children safe.

The governing body ensures our pupils are taught about safeguarding (including online safety) through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. We work in accordance with government regulations which make the subjects of Relationships and Health Education mandatory.

The governing body and academy leadership team are responsible for ensuring the academy follows recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children. It adheres to statutory responsibilities to check adults working with children, including those in the early years, and has recruitment and selection procedures in place (see the 'Safer Recruitment' policy for further information). It ensures that volunteers are appropriately supervised in the academy.

The Principal

The [Teachers' Standards 2012](#) (updated 2021) state that teachers (which includes headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties. The Principal works in accordance with all statutory requirements for safeguarding and is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the governing body are followed by all staff.

The Principal will also ensure that the relevant staff ratios are met within the EYFS and that all children in the EYFS are assigned a key person.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy / Deputies)

The DSL in the academy has ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. Their role includes managing child protection referrals, working with other agencies, ensuring all staff are appropriately trained and raising awareness of all safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures. They ensure that everyone in the academy (including temporary staff, volunteers and contractors) is aware of these procedures and that they are followed at all times. They act as a source of advice and support for other staff (on child protection matters) and ensure that timely referrals to Southend Children's Social Care (CSPOC – Children's Single Point of Contact) are made in accordance with current [SET Procedures](#). They work with the local authority and other agencies as required and ensure that information is shared appropriately.

Further guidance on the role of the DSL can be found in Annex C of [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\) \(DfE, 2025\)](#).

The Deputy DSL is trained to the same standard as the DSL. If for any reason the DSL is unavailable, the Deputy DSL will act in their absence.

All academy staff

Everyone in our academy has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment in which our children can learn. Any child may benefit from early help and all staff members are aware of the local early help process and our role in it. They are aware of signs of abuse and neglect so they are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. All staff members are aware of and follow academy processes (as set out in this policy) and are aware of how to make a referral to Social Care if there is a need to do so. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they must act on them immediately and speak with the DSL (or deputy) – they do not assume that others have taken action.

All staff will:

- Read and understand Part 1 of KCSIE (2025)
- Receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training
- Be aware of the academy's systems and processes which support safeguarding
- Know what to do if a child tells them they are, or might have been, abused, neglected or exploited including specific issues such as FGM

ALL adults in the academy have a duty to keep children safe by:

- acting in the best interests of children to protect them on and offline
- identifying children who are at risk of harm or have been harmed, or need additional help to keep safe
- taking swift, timely and appropriate action to safeguard children who need extra help or who may be suffering, or likely to suffer harm
- adhering to safe recruitment processes to ensure all adults in the academy have the appropriate vetting checks in place
- clearly following managing allegations processes to address any concerns (including low-level concerns) about an adult's behaviour towards a child
- understanding the broader aspects of safeguarding in the context of care and education, such as behaviour, Special Educational Needs, attendance and educational visits.

All adults in the academy follow the SET Procedures, including the suite of safeguarding policies, information, and guidance to support safeguarding for all Southend-on-Sea Schools, as listed below:

- Allegations against staff, volunteers and people in positions of trust who work with children
- Sharing Information
- Safer Recruitment
- Children Missing from Care, Home and Education
- Children Missing Education Guidance. The academy will submit referrals made using Children Missing Referral Form
- Code of Conduct for staff
- Academy Trust Governance Code
- Attendance Policy
- Discipline and Dismissal at Work policy
- Disciplinary procedure
- Dismissals procedures
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Behaviour policy guidance
- Letter of Assurance for visiting council staff (from the respective Head of Service)
 - Education Performance, Partnerships & Safeguarding Team
 - Specialist Support Services
 - SEND, Access & Inclusion Team
 - Early Years Services

Visitors including Contractors Responsibilities

Visitors, including contractors, will read the academy's safeguarding procedure information (provided upon signing in at the office) so that they can follow protocol.

Section 3: Forms of Abuse/Specific Safeguarding Issues

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (DfE, 2025) describes abuse in the following way:

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

Abuse may be caused by an adult, adults or by another child or children inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. (See appendix 2) The harm can involve:

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

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

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

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

- any concerns that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect (or Acts of Omission)
- child on child abuse, absence from school
- bullying, including cyber/online bullying and prejudice-based bullying, anti-social behaviour, hate crime, discriminatory, racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls, including misogynistic practices
- harmful sexual behaviours
- sexual harassment, online sexual abuse, and sexual violence between children. Including abusive messaging, upskirting and sharing of sexual imagery
- child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation, including county lines, modern slavery
- radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour or behaviours covered by PREVENT duties
- risks linked to using technology and social media, including online bullying; the risks of being groomed online for exploitation or radicalisation; and risks of accessing and generating inappropriate content, for example youth produced sexual imagery
- abuse within intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship' abuse)
- substance misuse – drugs and/or alcohol
- gang activity and serious violence, particularly affecting young males who have been excluded, have experienced trauma and have been involved in offending
- domestic abuse
- faith or culture linked abusive practice such as forced marriage, marriage/civil partnership under the age of 18, female genital mutilation and so-called 'honour-based' abuse or adultification.
- children with Perplexing Presentations (PP) in whom illness is fabricated or induced (FII)
- homelessness

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

For the purposes of this policy, we use the terms 'victim' and 'perpetrator' as this is in line with KCSIE 2025. As an academy we recognise that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way. *As an academy we are conscious that the use of appropriate terminology will be determined, as appropriate, on a case-by-case basis and the sensitivity required for each situation.*

In addition, staff are aware of other types of abuse and safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. We understand that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and / or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education and consensual / non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images can be signs that children are at risk.

Our academy recognises that there are a number of specific safeguarding issues about which staff need to be aware, including:

- child criminal exploitations (CCE)
- child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- children absent from education,
- children removed from the register
- domestic violence
- e-safety
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Mental health
- Child on child abuse, which may include bullying (including cyberbullying), on-line abuse, gender-based abuse, sexting or sexually harmful behaviour. (see section 4)
- Prevention of radicalisation

- children with special educational needs and disabilities,
- children looked after (CLA)
- Violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Private fostering
- children missing from home or care,
- drugs,
- fabricated/induced illness,
- faith abuse,
- forced marriage,
- gangs and youth violence,
- teenage relationship abuse,
- trafficking,

Further information regarding some of these issues can be found below and these issues are also addressed in Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (DfE, 2025)

Whilst the academy will ensure that staff avail themselves of opportunities to raise their awareness and gain knowledge regarding these areas, we recognise that expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support in relation to these issues. Government guidance is available on the GOV.UK website and links are provided within Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (DfE, 2025)

Other organisations also provide specialist information such as:

- NSPCC - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-vabuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/>
- TES-<https://www.tes.com/teaching-resources>
- MindEd - <https://www.minded.org.uk/course/view.php?id=402>

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

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

Child criminal exploitation is a geographically widespread form of harm which is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity (county lines is when drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas and seaside towns). Our academy works with key partners locally to prevent and respond to child criminal exploitation.

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

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

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

All staff are aware of indicators which may signal that children are at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from the academy, 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 has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

Children who are absent from education

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have, are entitled to a full-time education. Our academy recognises that a child who is absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including abuse, neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines and will follow the academy's procedures for unauthorised absence and for children absent from education. It is also recognised that, when not in school, children may be vulnerable to or exposed to other risks, so we work with parents and other partners to keep children in school whenever possible.

Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency (Missing Education and Child Employment Service, Social Care or Police). Parents are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers to the academy, to enable us to communicate with someone if we need to.

Our academy complies with [Children missing education \(DfE, August 2024\)](#) and [Southend on Sea City Council Early Help and Family Support Children Missing Education Guidance](#)

Our academy must inform the Local Authority of any pupil who has been absent for a continuous period of 10 days or more without a good reason, and the academy has satisfied all avenues of enquiry and is unsuccessful tracing the pupil.

We work in accordance with the Southend City Council's Protocol for Children Missing from Education and our own attendance policy.

Our academy also complies with the regulations regarding [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#) and Southend's guidance <http://www.southendlearningnetwork.co.uk/Services/4834>. Our academy notifies the Elective Home Education Team via secure email to ehes@southend.gov.uk at the earliest opportunity and, when relevant, immediately provides a copy of the parents written notification to home educate and the date they came off roll.

Children removed from admission register

The academy will notify the Local Authority when it is about to remove a pupil's name from the admission register under any of the grounds set out in the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) and [Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024](#).

When removing a pupil's name, the notification to the Local Authority will include:

- a) the full name of the pupil,
- b) the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil normally resides,
- c) at least one telephone number of the parent,
- d) the pupil's future address and destination school, if applicable, and
- e) the ground in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register.

The academy will make all reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the Local Authority, before deleting the pupil's name from the register, if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f) (iii) and (h) (iii)

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Domestic abuse is not limited to physical acts of violence or threatening behaviour, and can include emotional, psychological, controlling or coercive behaviour, sexual and/or economic abuse. Our academy recognises that exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious, long-term emotional and psychological impact on children. We work with other key partners and will share relevant information where there are concerns that domestic abuse may be an issue for a child or family or be placing a child at risk of harm.

Operation Encompass operates in all police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children and families. We work in partnership with relevant agencies.

So-called 'honour-based violence' (including Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse.

As of October 2015, the [Serious Crime Act 2015 \(Home Office, 2015\)](#) introduced a duty on teachers (and other professionals) to notify the police of known cases of female genital mutilation where it appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. Our academy will operate in accordance with the statutory requirements relating to this issue, and in line with local safeguarding procedures.

A *forced marriage* is one entered into without the full consent of one or both parties. It is where violence, threats or other forms of coercion is used and is a crime. Our staff understand how to report concerns where this may be an issue.

Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBA, they must contact the DSL as a matter of urgency.

Mental health

Our staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. We understand that, where children have suffered abuse or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Where we have concerns, this may impact on mental health, we will seek advice and work with other agencies as appropriate to support a child and ensure they receive the help they need.

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

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

Online safety

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

The range of online risks could be categorised as:

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

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

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

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

All staff in our academy are aware of the risks to children online and we seek to help children keep themselves safe online in a range of ways. Further information can be found in our e-safety policy.

In addition, when children use the academy's network to access the internet they are protected from inappropriate content by our filtering and monitoring systems which are undertaken at least half-termly. Filtering refers to the technology preventing access to harmful or inappropriate content, whilst monitoring refers to the practical steps that we take to ensure harmful or inappropriate access is not made. This includes:

- physical monitoring – half termly
- live software monitoring
- monitoring user logs

School devices used away from the academy site are also subject to filtering and monitoring

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parent/carers may be familiar with generative chat bots such as ChatGPT. Darlington Academy recognises that AI has many uses including enhancing teaching and learning and in helping to protect and safeguard pupils. However, AI may also have the potential to facilitate abuse (e.g. bullying and grooming) and/or expose pupils to harmful content for example in the form of "deep fakes" where AI is used to create images, audio or visual hoaxes that look real. We will treat any use of AI to access harmful content or to bully pupils in line with this policy, the academy's Anti-bullying policy and the Promoting Positive Behaviour policy.

Prevention of radicalisation

As of July 2015, the [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\)](#) placed a new duty on schools and other education providers. Under section 26 of the Act, schools are required, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

As outlined in KCSiE 2025 the academy adheres to the definitions and guidelines below:

'Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools' or colleges' safeguarding approach.

- Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.
- Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.'
- Staff should inform the DSL immediately of any forms of radicalisation or concerns around a child and any actions taken.

In accordance with KCSiE (2025) we:

- teach a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life and must promote community cohesion
- are a safe space in which children / young people can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas
- are mindful of our existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues

Our academy operates in accordance with local procedures for PREVENT and with other agencies, sharing information and concerns as appropriate. Where we have concerns about extremism or radicalisation, we will seek advice from appropriate agencies and, if necessary, refer to Social Care and / or the Channel Panel. (CHANNEL is a national programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

Serious violence

All staff are aware of the risk factors and indicators which may signal that children are at risk from or involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from the academy, 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 well-being, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that a child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

Private Fostering

As an academy we make sure that privately fostered children are properly and safely cared for. Local Authorities are under a legal duty to ensure the welfare of a privately fostered child is being promoted and safeguarded and are therefore required to undertake assessments of proposed or actual private fostering arrangements. As such, we will always inform the Local Authority when we are notified about such an arrangement or become aware of one.

"A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (that is to say without the involvement of a Local Authority) 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.

Private foster carers may be from the extended family such as a cousin or great aunt. However, a person who is a relative under the Children Act 1989, i.e., a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of full blood or half blood or by marriage) or step-parent will not be a private foster carer. 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."

Children Looked After (CLA)

Our academy has a Designated Teacher for pupil who are looked after. The Designated Teacher attends CLA Reviews, PEP meetings and liaises with the child's Social Worker and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) as well as with the Local Authority Virtual School Headteacher, who is responsible for the progress of children looked after. A previously looked after child remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe.

Pupils with a social worker

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. We recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health challenges. The DSL and all members of the academy will work with and support social workers to help support and protect vulnerable children

Contextual safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside our academy. All staff are aware of contextual safeguarding and the fact they should consider whether wider environmental factors present in a child's life are a threat to their safety and / or welfare. To this end, we will consider relevant information when assessing any risk to a child and share it with other agencies to support better understanding of a child and their family.

Section 4: Child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and harassment

The attitude by all staff and adults of '*it could happen here*' is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse. Even if there are no reported incidents or concerns does not mean it is not happening.

If staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they should speak to the DSL or their deputy

The academy recognises that children may abuse their peers physically, sexually, and emotionally. There is a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse; abuse is abuse and this will not be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'boys being boys' or 'part of growing up' as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

The academy takes child-on-child abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult and addresses it through the same processes as any safeguarding issue. All reports and concerns will be responded to, including those alleged to have taken place outside of the academy and online. It is recognised that children who abuse others and any other child affected by child-on-child abuse are likely to have considerable welfare and safeguarding issues themselves.

What is child-on-child abuse?

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

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice based and discriminatory bullying):
- abuse within intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and /or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and /or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm
- initiating/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

Incel ideology and its associated behaviours are not legally defined as "child on child abuse" in themselves; rather, they are a radical, extremist online subculture that can lead to behaviours that constitute child on child abuse when they manifest offline.

Child-on-child abuse can also include causing someone to engage in extremist or radicalising behaviour. Child-on-child abuse exists on a continuum, and different forms of abuse may overlap. It can affect children of any age, sex, be between two children or through a group of children abusing a single child or group of children. Sometimes vulnerable children are targeted. For example:

- those living with domestic abuse or with intra-familial abuse in their histories
- young people in care
- those who have experienced bereavement through the loss of a parent, sibling, or friend
- black and minority ethnic children are under identified as victims but are over identified as perpetrators
- there is recognition it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys are likely to be perpetrators. However, both girls and boys can experience child-on-child abuse, but they are likely to experience it differently e.g. girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to homophobic taunts/initiation/hazing (rituals and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group)
- evidence shows that children with disabilities or children identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning are at greater risk

Child-on-child abuse is influenced by the nature of the environments in which children spend their time - home, school, peer group, online and community - and is built upon notions of power and consent. Power imbalances related to gender, social status within a group, intellectual ability, economic wealth, social marginalisation etc, can all be used to exert power over a peer.

- child-on-child abuse involves someone who abuses a 'vulnerability' or power imbalance to harm another and has the opportunity or is in an environment where this is possible
- while perpetrators of child-on-child abuse pose a risk to others, they are often victims of abuse themselves

Preventing child-on-child abuse

There is a whole academy approach to preventing child-on-child abuse, including child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment; this forms part of the whole school/education setting approach to safeguarding. At Darlinghurst Academy we seek to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by ensuring an approach that prepares learners for life in modern Britain. We have a clear set of values and standards, including the academy's values (A-D leads to Excellence) which are upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of academy.

The academy:

- provides a safe environment
- promotes positive behaviour
- takes steps to address inappropriate behaviour
- has effective systems in place where children can confidently raise concerns knowing they will be taken seriously
- provides safeguarding through the curriculum via relationships education/relationships and sex education, online safety, and other curriculum opportunities.

This may include targeted work with children identified as vulnerable or being at risk and developing risk assessment and targeted work with those identified as being a potential risk to others.

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

The academy deals with a wide continuum of behaviour by children on a day-to-day basis and most cases will be dealt with via school-based processes including:

- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- e-safety policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Procedures for children to report child-on-child abuse

As outlined previously even if there are no reports, all staff understand it does not mean it is not happening; it may be the case that it is not being reported. Children may not find it easy to tell staff about the abuse and children may have additional barriers to disclose. Children may show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice or react to. In some cases, victims may make indirect reports via a friend, or staff may

overhear conversations. All staff have been trained to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it. Any concerns should be recorded on the Safeguard system (as with all safeguarding concerns) and immediately notified to the DSL or Deputy. Including the completion of a pink notification form which MUST be handed to them directly. A decision will then be made on the best way forward, on an individual basis. (see appendix 1)

Action following a concern about child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse may be a one-off serious incident or an accumulation of incidents. Adults may be able to easily identify some behaviour/s as abusive however in some circumstances it may be less clear. Reports of sexual violence and harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. In all cases the initial response to a concern is very important. Members of staff will take all concerns seriously and reassure the child/family that they will be supported and kept safe, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward. Conversations should be managed with two members of staff present (preferably one being the DSL or deputy) wherever possible, however it is recognised that this may not be possible in all cases.

The victim will not be given the impression they are creating a problem or made to feel ashamed for making a report or their experience minimised. Abuse which has occurred online or outside of the school/setting is treated as seriously as that which has occurred within the academy.

When an allegation is made by a child against another child, the DSL or Deputy, alongside other staff where applicable, will consider if the issues raised indicate that the child and/or alleged perpetrator may have low level, emerging needs, complex/serious needs, or Child Protection concerns.

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

- what are the wishes of victims in terms of how they want to proceed?
- what is the nature, extent and context of the behaviour including verbal, physical, sexual (including sharing of nudes/semi-nudes) and/or online abuse? Was there coercion, physical aggression, bullying, bribery or attempts to ensure secrecy? What was the time, location, duration, and frequency? Is the incident a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse? Were other children and/or adults involved? Has a crime been committed and/or have any harmful sexual behaviours been displayed? Remember there may be other forms of abuse, in addition to what has been reported.
- what is the child's age, development, capacity to understand and make decisions, (including anything that might have had an impact on this, e.g. coercion), family and social circumstances? What is the nature of the relationship between the children involved? Are they in a current or previous intimate personal relationship? Do they live in the same household or setting? Do they attend the same school/setting, classes, or transport?
- what are the relative chronological and developmental ages of the children? Does the victim or perpetrator have a disability or learning difficulty? Are there any differentials in power, social standing, or authority?
- is the behaviour age appropriate or not? Does it involve inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation?
- are there any risks to the victim or alleged perpetrator themselves and/or others e.g., other children, adults, students, staff, others in the child's household (particularly siblings or other children around the child), extended family, peer group or wider social network? Are there any links to child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation or gang related activity?

Immediate consideration should be given to how best to support and protect the victim and alleged perpetrator and any other children involved/impacted.

Where the report involves rape and assault by penetration, the alleged perpetrator will be removed from any classes they share with the victim. A risk assessment or plan will lay out how to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator apart on academy premises (including any before or after school activities) and on transport to and from school.

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

All decisions are made in the best interests of the child/ren involved and should not be perceived to be a judgement on the guilt by the alleged perpetrator. In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated on a case-by-case basis with the DSL, in conjunction with the Principal, taking a lead role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as children's social care Local Authority and the police as required. The DSL will refer to guidance and seek advice from local or national safeguarding contacts as required.

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

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

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

All reports of child-on-child abuse (including sexual harassment and/or sexual violence) will be recorded on the relevant Safeguard log. This will include all decision making, risk and needs assessment plans.

Where appropriate incidents may be managed internally (low level needs), via Early Help (emerging needs) or through children's social care at the Local Authority (complex/serious needs or Child Protection concerns); reports to the police will be run in parallel with children's social care. All risk and needs assessments, and any action plans, whether internal or multi-agency, will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. If things do not improve or deteriorate the situation will be reconsidered.

Where the victim or alleged perpetrator transfers to another school, the DSL will ensure the new provider are made aware of any on-going support needs (the most suitable way of doing this is discussed with the victim, and where appropriate their parent/carer), as well as sending the safeguarding/Child Protection file. In the case of the alleged perpetrator, where appropriate, this will also include potential risks to other children and staff.

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

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

Everyone (including staff, supply staff, governors, volunteers, visitors etc.) must follow the protocol if they have concerns about a child's welfare:

- take the action necessary in an emergency to help the child, for example, call 999 for medical assistance or if a crime needs to be reported
- report their concern to the DSL or deputy as swiftly as possible. The concern will be recorded on the Safeguard system, the academy's platform for recording a child protection concern, and hand a pink notification form to the DSL, or, in their absence, the deputy (see appendix 1)
- speak to the DSL or their deputy as quickly as possible if the matter is extremely urgent, or they are unsure

- follow the advice of the DSL or deputy and remember this information is confidential
- ensure record keeping is up to date and accurate. It should be logged as quickly as possible, on the same day and before the child is due to leave the school premises
- seek support for the child if they are distressed
- where an incident arises at the end of the day the child and pink form will be passed to the DSL (or deputy)

Staff must always **immediately** inform the DSL or their deputy if there are any:

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

There will be occasions when there may be the suspicion that a child may be at risk, but there is no 'real' evidence. For example:

- the child may need support with their mental health.
- the child's behaviour, play and or appearance may have changed
- attendance at school may have reduced
- the child's ability to concentrate and focus may have altered
- other behavioural and or physical indicators but inconclusive signs

In these circumstances, the adult should try to give the child the opportunity to talk as the signs noticed may be due to a variety of factors.

It is not the responsibility of the academy or its staff to determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. This is the responsibility of children's social care at the Local Authority. All staff however have a duty to recognise where extra support is needed or where there are complex needs or child protection concerns requiring intensive or specialist support.

Ensure all concerns are recorded using the Safeguard system and the completion of a pink notification form which **MUST** be handed directly to the DSL or deputy. These concerns should be raised with the DSL or their deputy; we do not presume someone else will do this or has done so.

Professionals in all agencies have a responsibility to submit a C-SPOC referral via the [online portal website](#) when it is believed or suspected that a child is a:

Child in Need:

- needs more complex interventions from statutory children's services to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development
- has a permanent and substantial disability which significantly limits their everyday lives

Child in Need of protection:

- has suffered significant harm
- is likely to suffer significant harm

If a child chooses to tell an adult about a concern or abuse

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

If a child or adult talks about any risks to a child's safety or well-being they will need to be told that this information will be passed on – secrets are not allowed to be kept. The point at which you tell them this is a matter for professional judgement.

During the conversation with the child (or their parent/carer or significant adult) the staff member will:

- allow them to speak freely, listen to what is being said without interruption and avoid asking leading questions
- keep questions to a minimum and of an open nature (tell me, explain, describe) i.e., 'can you tell me what happened?' rather than 'did x hit you?'
- remain calm and not overreact – the child may stop talking if they feel that they are upsetting you
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'
- avoid admonishing them for not disclosing earlier. For example, saying 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' or 'I can't believe what I'm hearing'; this may intend to be supportive but be interpreted as they have done something wrong
- do not be afraid of silences – remember how hard this must be for the child or adult
- under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what do other family members think about all this
- do not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort; this may not be comforting to a child who has been abused
- at an appropriate time tell the child or adult that to help them you must pass the information on
- tell them what will happen next. The child or adult may agree to go with you to see the DSL, if not, let them know that this staff member will come to see or contact them before the end of the day
- ensure that children are not asked to write statements about abuse or any concerns that may have happened to them or sign the staff record

Key points to remember

Any adult with a concern about a child's welfare (from the conversation or beyond this) will:

- in an emergency, take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999
- will not assume a colleague or another professional will share information that might be critical to keeping a child safe. Early information sharing is vital in keeping children safe, whether this is when problems first emerge, or when a child is already known to children's social care at the Local Authority.
- report concerns, including any possible [private fostering](#) arrangements, to the DSL or deputy as soon as possible (by the end of the day at the latest) using the Safeguard system and completion of a pink notification form which **MUST** be handed directly to the DSL or deputy.
- if you are unsure speak to the DSL or deputy reporting verbally to them prior to recording (if appropriate).

- if the DSL or deputy is not present, ensure the information is shared with the most senior person in the academy. The concerns and any action taken must then be shared with the DSL as soon as it is possible.
- if the concerns are about sharing nudes and semi-nudes do not view, copy, print or share the images.
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends, or family.
- formally record in writing the conversation or record of concerns and this should be on the same day/before the child leaves the premises using Safeguard alongside the completion of the pink notification form which MUST be handed directly to the DSL or deputy
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed. This may be sometime after the disclosure. Speak with the Designated Mental Health lead, Principal, line manager or HR Advisor

Remember: If you are unsure, you should always have a discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy

Role of the DSL/deputy following identification of concerns

Whenever the DSL or deputy receives information regarding concerns about a child, including via police domestic abuse notifications via Operation Encompass, they will:

- review information received and assess if any urgent actions are needed, i.e. medical, actions to secure a child's immediate safety
- check what is known about the child, for example, when they arrived (or not) at the academy today, how they present physically and emotionally, any changes in behaviour
- consider what is already known about the child and their family, including whether any previous concerns have been raised by staff or if they are already known to children's services at the Local Authority (targeted Early Help or Social Care)
- consider what 'checks' need to be carried out and how best these can be achieved
- inform relevant academy staff who have a specific need to know, i.e., class teacher, relevant support staff
- where appropriate use relevant national, local, and education-based risk identifying, assessment tools and guidance to support the identification of needs and decision making, such as school records, assessments, and chronologies, including any contextual factors/placed based risks.
- not directly approach a child or parent/carer about an incident when the academy has received a domestic abuse notification and instead make general enquiries with the child about how they are.
- follow the SET Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures and use the Southend Threshold document to support decision making about the child's needs and the appropriate level of support and intervention. Possible options include internal support via our pastoral team, Team Around the Family and referral to statutory services such as the children's services at the Local Authority
- consider whether the matter should be discussed with the child's parents or carers or whether to do so may put the child at further risk of harm
- if unsure about the action to take, including if a Child Protection referral should be made, seek advice from children's social care at the Local Authority or another appropriate agency
- if the concerns are about radicalisation or violent extremism, contact the Local Authority Education Performance, Partnerships and Safeguarding team for advice and where appropriate make a referral to the police Prevent Team
- where the child has complex needs or where there are child protection concerns, refer as appropriate to children's services at the Local Authority via agreed processes, providing copies of any assessments, plans or any other relevant documents
- notify the appropriate Children's Services at the Local Authority, in writing, of any private fostering arrangements, to allow the local authority to check the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child.
- if a child is at risk of immediate harm, and/or where it is believed a criminal offence has been committed, including sexual violence and harassment, refer to the police. Safeguarding considerations must take priority and include how screening, searching, and confiscating powers will be used safely, proportionately, and appropriately

The term Early Help Assessment is used in this policy to identify our arrangements to identify early needs and which inform support.

Responding to concern or disclosure.

The DSL reviews all available information and uses this to triage the case and take appropriate action in line with the thresholds. This includes referring cases of suspected abuse and neglect to the children's social care at the Local Authority and support to staff who make referrals to:

- children's social care at the Local Authority
- the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme
- where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required, and
- where a crime may have been committed to the police as required

The DSL ensures records are a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern. This includes:

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

Where there is concern for the welfare of a child and a professional is unsure whether the need warrants a referral for statutory involvement at level 4, the practitioner can call the C-SPOC consultation line on 01702 215007 Option 1. Pre-contact consultations can be anonymous unless they become of high concern during the consultation, in which case, the professional who sought the consultation will be asked for the child's details or advised to inform the parent to contact Children's Social Care. A contact record will then be created.

Notifying parents/carers

The academy will normally seek to discuss any needs or concerns about a child with their parent or carer. Where an Early Help Assessment would benefit the child and their family the most appropriate member of staff should approach the parent/carers to take this forward. In situations where there are serious needs or Child Protection concerns the DSL or deputy will contact the parent or carer. However, if the setting believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, then advice will first be sought from children's social care at the Local Authority.

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

In all cases, the academy will consider what support could be offered via pastoral support processes. Support is kept under constant review to ensure that it is effective.

Early help support and assessment (emerging needs)

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

Whenever a child and their family are supported via an EHA, the academy will keep this under constant review and should the child's situation appear not to improve or worsen, consideration will be given to a referral to children's services at the Local Authority.

Referral to children's social care at the Local Authority

Non urgent concerns about a child's welfare will be referred to children's social care at the Local Authority Children's Services Portal using the agreed referral process as outlined in the Southend Threshold document.

If there are concerns that a child is at IMMEDIATE risk of significant harm professionals should telephone the Children's – Single Point of Contact (C-SPOC) immediately on 01702 215007.

Requests for Support made on the telephone must be followed up with a written C-SPOC referral form via the [online portal website](#) immediately following the phone referral.

Where there is imminent danger call the emergency services on 999.

Anybody can make the referral!

In exceptional circumstances, such as in an emergency or a genuine concern that appropriate action hasn't been taken, any staff member can refer their concerns directly to children's social care at the Local Authority using the online portal; however, they should also inform the DSL or deputy (as soon as possible).

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

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

Action following a referral by the DSL or deputy

The DSL, deputy or other appropriate member of staff will:

- where a referral was made by phone, follow up the referral in writing using the online referral system. This is within 48 hours and any existing assessment e.g., the EHA should be attached. In all cases the academy will also include information held about any place-based risks (harm outside of the home)
- be aware that children's social care at the Local Authority should make a decision within one working day of the referral being made about what course of action they are taking and let the academy know the outcome. If the information is not forthcoming, the DSL or (deputy/alternative) should follow this up
- maintain contact with the allocated social worker and support them or other agencies following any referral
- contribute to any strategy discussion or meetings
- support any Section 47 enquiries or statutory assessments that are carried out
- provide a report for, attend, and contribute to any initial and review Child Protection Conference. This includes sharing any reports with parents/carers and where appropriate, the child
- attend core group meetings for any child subject to a Child Protection plan or Child in Need meeting for any child subject to a Child in Need plan
- where a child on a Child Protection plan, Child in Need plan or who is Looked After moves from the school/education setting or if there are unexplained absences from school, immediately inform the child's social worker/key worker in local authority children's social care
- if after the referral the child's situation does not appear to be improving the DSL should press for re-consideration to ensure their concerns have been addressed and the child's situation improves

Section 6: Confidentiality and Sharing Information

The academy recognises the importance of information sharing between the academy and local agencies to effectively safeguard our pupils. All staff will be mindful of the Data Protection Act (2018) and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) obligations. Staff are aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare, rather, they provide the legal framework under which information can, and in some cases, must be shared.

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

If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the DSL, or deputy, who will seek advice from the Data Protection Officer as required

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

Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSL or deputy (or the most senior person on the premises in their absence), Principal or Chair of Governors (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That staff member will decide who else needs to have the information which they will share on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Consent will be sought to share information, where appropriate, however, where there are safeguarding concerns about a child, information will be shared with the appropriate organisations such as children's social care at the Local Authority in line with the law. In most cases concerns will be discussed with parents and carers prior to the referral taking place unless doing so would increase risk.

Section 7: Record Keeping

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, including the rationale for those decisions, should be recorded in writing on the Safeguard system. This includes instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency, such as children's social care at the Local Authority or the Prevent programme etc. If in doubt about recording requirements staff should discuss with the DSL or deputy.

Records of concerns documentation, referrals and other written safeguarding information are kept in a Child Protection file for each child and stored separately from each child's education file on the Safeguard system. Child Protection files are confidential and stored securely and can only be accessed by the DSL, deputy or Principal via Safeguard.

Records will include:

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

The DSL will consider if it is appropriate to share any information with the new education provider in advance of a child leaving the school/setting, e.g. children who have or who have had a social worker and those receiving support through the Channel programme.

When a child leaves the academy, the DSL will ensure a copy of these records will be sent securely as soon as possible (within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term) to any school or other education setting to which the child transfers and a confirmation of receipt obtained. The Child Protection file transfer will be separate to the main pupil file. This will allow the new provider to continue to support the child and have the support in place for when the child arrives.

The DSL, the deputy and key staff will be informed when a child's safeguarding/Child Protection file is received.

Section 8: Support for staff/adults involved in concern

Child neglect, abuse and exploitation are devastating for children and can result in distress and anxiety for staff involved. Support to all concerned is by:

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

Section 9: Interagency Working

It is the responsibility of the DSL to ensure that the academy is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any statutory meeting called for children on the academy roll or previously known to them. Where possible and appropriate, any report will be shared in advance with the parent(s) / carer(s). A report will be made available to a Child Protection Conference Chair, 48 working hours in advance of the Conference, and shared with the parents/carers before the Conference. The member of staff attending the meeting will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the academy has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions and, in the case of a Conference, to express a view, at the end of the meeting, as to whether the child(ren) should be made subject to a Child Protection Plan.

If a child is in the care of the Local Authority or subject to a Child Protection or Child in Need Plan, the DSL will ensure the child is monitored regarding their school attendance, emotional well-being, academic progress, welfare and presentation. If the academy is part of the core group, the DSL will ensure the academy is represented, provides appropriate information and contributes to the plan at these meetings. Any concerns about the Child Protection Plan and / or the child's welfare will be discussed and recorded at the core group meeting, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of significant harm. In this case the DSL will inform the child's key worker immediately and then record that they have done so, and the actions agreed. If there is an unexplained absence of, or injury to a child subject to a Child Protection Plan, the child's allocated Social Worker must be notified immediately.

Section 10: Allegations or concerns about people working with children

All staff members, including those in the early years, have enhanced DBS checks (see appendix 3) and are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in the Staff Handbook. The academy works in accordance with statutory guidance and the [SET Procedures](#) in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity). The current SET procedures provide detailed information regarding this.

At Darlington Academy we recognise the possibility that adults working in the school may harm children; concerns may come from various sources. The Principal has to decide whether this concerns is an allegation or a low-level concern. The term "low-level" concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold for referral to the LADO. The academy has processes in place for reporting any concerns about a member of staff (or any adult working with children). Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff must be referred to the Principal (or the Vice Principal in their absence), as they have responsibility for managing employment issues. Where the allegation concerns an agency member of staff, the Principal (or Vice Principal) will liaise with the agency, while following due

process. Where the concern involves the Principal, it should be reported direct to the Chair of Governor who will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The [SET Procedures](#) require that, where an allegation against a member of staff is received, the Principal, senior named person, or the Chair of Governors must inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at LADO@southend.gov.uk using the LADO referral form within one working day. However, wherever possible, contact with the LADO will be made immediately via email as they will then advise on how to proceed and whether the matter requires Police involvement. This will include advice on speaking to pupils and parents and HR. The academy does not carry out any investigation before speaking to the LADO. The academy will manage these procedures alongside the academy's disciplinary process, if appropriate, in liaison with the academy's HR Advisor.

Staffing matters are confidential and the academy operates within a statutory framework around Data Protection.

Section 11: Use of Reasonable Force

The term 'reasonable force' covers a broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people, such as guiding a child to safety or breaking up a fight. 'Reasonable' means using no more force than is needed. Our academy works in accordance with statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context.

Section 12: Whistleblowing

All members of staff, including those in the early years, and the wider academy community should be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and feel confident any concern will be taken seriously by the academy leadership team. We have 'whistleblowing' procedures in place, and these are available in the Legra Trust Whistleblowing Policy. However, for any member of staff who feels unable to raise concerns internally, or where they feel their concerns have not been addressed, they may contact the [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](#) on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or by email at: help@nspcc.org.uk.

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

Section 13: Use of Academy Premises by Other Organisations

Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, using academy premises, the academy will seek assurances that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding processes in place.

We recognise there are a number of policies that are relevant to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare. These include the following:

Policy or Procedure:

Anti-Bullying
Attendance
Children Missing from Education
Data Protection and GDPR (Legra Policy)
Disability and Equality
Equality Compliance
e Safety (Legra)
Extended academy activities
First Aid
Health and Safety (Legra)
Lockdown Policy
Looked After Children
Management of Allegations made against Staff
PHSE curriculum
Positive Handling
Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing
Promoting Positive Behaviour
Racial Equality
Recruitment and Selection
Relationships and sex education
Residential trips and trips and visits
SEND Policy
Social Media Policy (Legra)
Staff Code of Conduct (Legra)
Supporting Children with Medical Needs
Volunteers and Visitors' Policy
Whistleblowing Policy (Legra)
Young Carers

For a full list of policies – please see our academy website.



Safeguarding Reporting Process

When a safeguarding concern is raised, staff prioritise the safety of the child if they are at risk. Staff know not to investigate but pass all information to the DSL

Staff complete details of concern onto Safeguard (reporting software – icon on desktop or www.safeguardsoftware.co.uk)

1. Create,
2. Search child's name,
3. Select concern type,
4. Detailed description, (include body map if appropriate)
5. Save.

In addition, staff complete a pink Safeguarding form (name of child, date, time) and hand directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). This ensures timely intervention and with all actions carried out before the end of the day. If concern has been raised at the end of the day or when a child is to be collected, the child and pink form are to be handed over to the DSL (or Deputy)

The DSL will investigate the concern and ensure the safety of the child throughout the investigation.

When the safeguarding concern has been fully investigated, referrals made (where relevant), supporting information needs to be added to the case, including actions taken and responses, via Safeguard. Thereafter there will be regular check-ins with the child(ren)

Appendix 2

Indicators of abuse and neglect - as defined by Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025)

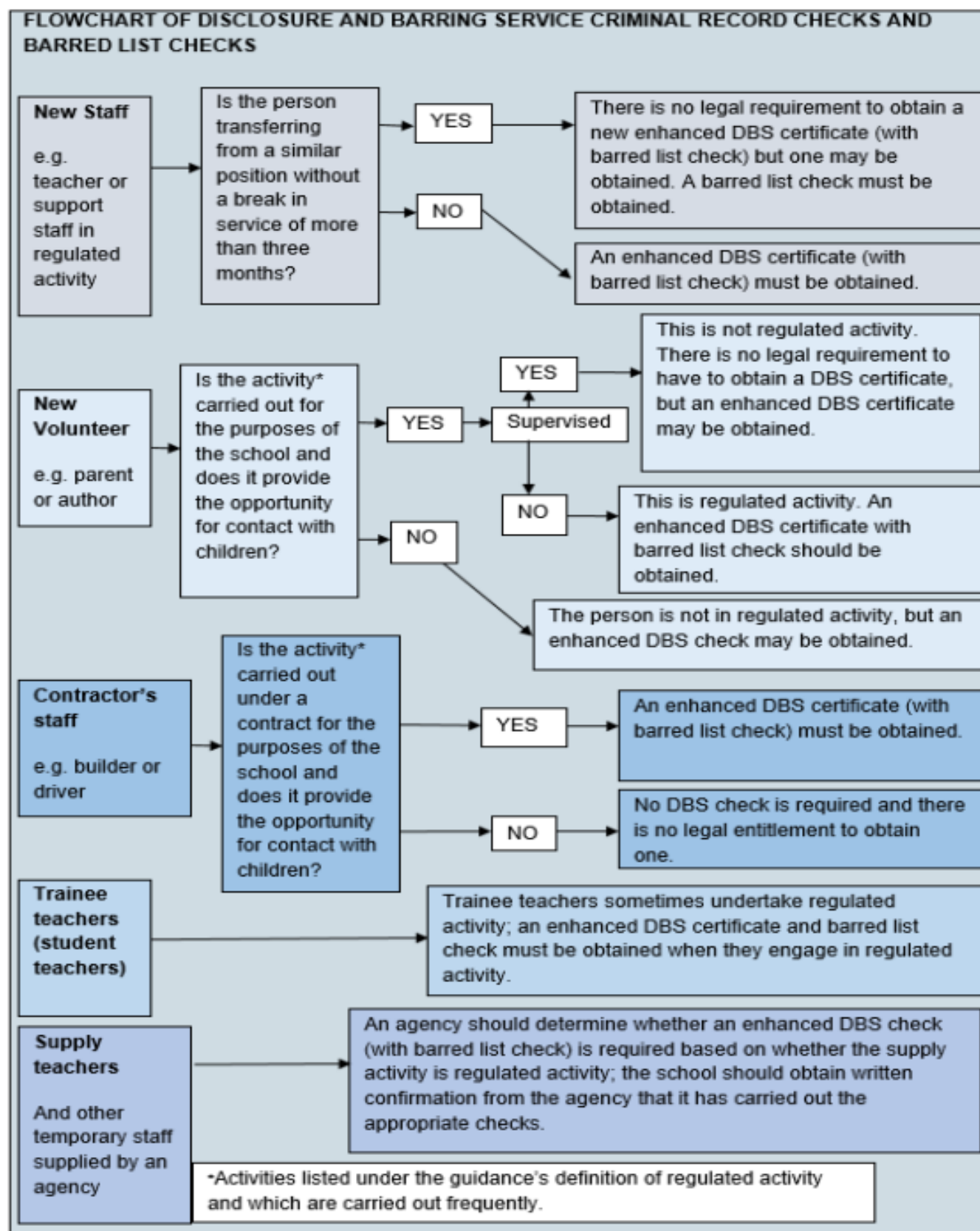
Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to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

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

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

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

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as 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 caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.



Appendix 4 - Southend City Council Early Help Pledge

S afe	We will provide the right support for children and their families at the earliest opportunity, through to specialist and statutory interventions. This will ensure the welfare and safety of vulnerable children and young people.
O pen	We will actively listen and work in an open and honest way with children, young people and their families.
U nderstanding	We will work with all families to help them to thrive and do as well as they can, and not just reduce risk or survive.
T imely	We will ensure our services are of a high standard and deliver best outcomes for children and young people within reasonable timescales.
H onest	We will build on the strengths and resilience of families and communities through building strong relationships and practicing respectfully.
E mpowered	We will empower families to make changes and build resilience, by working in partnership with families and across Partnerships.
N eed	We will ensure families will have access to a number of interventions to support and meet their needs and we will act on what they tell us.
D etermined	We will work hard together to find solutions and to overcome the challenges that we face.

Nothing is more important than the welfare of a child. Parents and carers have the primary responsibility for their children. However, local authorities, working with partner agencies, have specific duties to safeguard and protect the welfare of all the children and young people in their area and everyone who comes into contact with children and young people has a role to play.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children can be defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Working Together to Safeguard Children sets out a clear expectation that local agencies will work together and collaborate to identify children and young people with additional needs and provide support as soon as a problem emerges. Working Together is a statutory guidance and all practitioners working, or having contact with, children and young people are required to read and understand it so they can meet their legal obligation to keep children safe.

Providing early help is far more effective in promoting the welfare of children – and keeping them safe – than reacting later when any problems, for example neglect, may have become more entrenched. The importance of using a child-centred approach in following the child's journey is also emphasised. All services which are provided must be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of the individual child in their family and community context.

Along the continuum of services become increasingly targeted and specialised according to the level of need. Children's needs are not static, and they may experience different needs – at different points of the continuum – throughout their childhood years.

The continuum of need matrix does not provide an exhaustive list but provides examples that can be used as a tool to assist assessment, planning and decision making when considering the needs of children/young people and their safeguarding needs in particular. Any safeguarding indicators of concern should always be considered alongside any related needs. It should be remembered that some children/young people will have additional vulnerability because of their disability or complex needs and the parental response to the vulnerability of the child must be considered when assessing needs and risks.

Where there is an urgent and immediate need to protect a child, dial 999 to contact the Police. Otherwise for all other children/young people who may be at risk of significant harm, contact CSPOC as soon as possible.