

Policy and Procedures

Safeguarding (Child Protection)

(including safer recruitment, allegations against staff and low-level concerns)

Approved by:	Board of Trustees
Date:	Autumn 2026
Review Date:	Autumn 2027
Relating to:	 DURHAM SIXTH FORM CENTRE

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Links with other policies:

This Policy operates in conjunction with a range of other policies and documents including the following:

- Business Continuity Plan
- Climate for Learning and Attendance Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Confidential Reporting Code (Whistle-Blowing Policy)
- Cyber Security Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Educational Visits: Risk-Assessments
- Equality Information Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Job descriptions of all relevant roles
- Looked After Children & Previously Looked After Children Policy
- Mental Wellbeing Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Provider Access Statement
- Privacy Notices
- Restrictive Intervention, Including Use of Reasonable Force and Other Physical Contact
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Security Lockdown Policy
- Security Policy and Procedure
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Statement of Intent - Curriculum
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions
- Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guidance
- Vetting Policy

1. Policy Introduction and Purpose Statement

- 1.1. Children and young people maximise their potential in an environment which is safe, secure and supportive of all their needs, including any needs they have for protection from abuse.
- 1.2. Our Trust is committed to promoting the welfare of our students by working in partnership with parents and carers, the Local Authority (LA) and multi-agency partners in family help and child protection, in accordance with locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, procedures and practices.
- 1.3. Our Policy applies to members of the school and Trust community in its widest sense. Thus, this includes children and young people, their parents/carers, school and Trust staff, Governors and Trustees, volunteers, visitors, specialist staff, and the local and wider community where they interface with the school and Trust. Within its framework, the Policy outlines entitlements and responsibilities in securing the protection of children and young people who attend the school.
- 1.4. To emphasise the caring ethos of our Trust and school, the staff, Governors and Trustees are committed to the following principles:
 - The welfare and wellbeing of each child/young person is of paramount importance and we create and encourage an environment where they feel able to talk, knowing that they will be listened to.
 - We recognise our Policy works on the premise that abuse takes place in all communities and that school staff are particularly well-placed to identify and refer concerns and to act to prevent children and young people from being abused.
 - We respect and value each child/young person as an individual.
 - The protection of children and young people from abuse is a whole-Trust issue, and the responsibility therefore of the entire Trust community. All staff are aware that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and they are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding.
 - Safeguarding children and young people permeates all aspects of our work, with a preventative role to inform and boost the resilience of all students by enhancing protective factors in their lives.
 - We recognise our Policy should be accessible in terms of understanding and availability. Regular training will ensure all adults in the Trust are aware of indicators of concern or abuse and of colleagues who act as the Designated Safeguarding Leads to whom such information should be promptly reported. There are three appointed Designated Safeguarding Leads in Durham Sixth Form Centre. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (Assistant Principal) is the strategic lead, overseeing safeguarding culture, policy and high-level case management. There are two Designated Safeguarding Leads (Director of Year) who are the operational leads, managing day-to-day safeguarding concerns.
 - Our Policy will be developed and kept up to date with information from our relevant partners in early help and child protection as well as national documentation issued by HM Government and the Department for Education (DfE).
 - We will use the school curriculum to resource our children and young people to protect themselves from abuse, both as victims and as potential perpetrators.
 - The Trust and school run in an open, transparent way.
 - We ensure that Trust and school leaders, including Governors and Trustees, exercise strategic oversight of all aspects of safeguarding. The Designated Safeguarding Leads and the Principal/CEO provide updates (including updates on staff safeguarding training) at Local Governing Board and Trust Board meetings. A Governor is assigned to provide oversight of safeguarding at DSFC. The Link Governor meets with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Assistant Principal) each half term to review systems, policies and processes. Link Governor Monitoring Reports are written and shared with all Governors and Trustees. Safeguarding monitoring visits, focussing on systems, policies and processes, are also carried out annually by a Trustee who meets with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Assistant Principal) and a report of findings is shared with all Governors and Trustees. The Single Central Record (SCR) is also periodically reviewed by a Governor and/or a Trustee.

2. Safeguarding and Child Protection Training Summary

- 2.1. Our Trust and school complies with the advice laid down in [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2026\)](#) and [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2026\)](#) to undertake regular training.
- 2.2. A record of those trained may be found in Appendix C and in the Single Central Record, where appropriate. Certificates are kept digitally in staff folders, where appropriate, to verify the attendance of individuals. Child protection and safeguarding training form a key part of our induction processes. All staff receive regular updates and training regarding child protection and safeguarding, including online safety, as necessary and at least annually.
- 2.3. Training for the Designated Safeguarding Leads and other designated teachers in the school is also undertaken regularly and updated at least every two years.
- 2.4. We recognise that, as a minimum, schools should ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Leads undertakes Prevent awareness training and is thus able to provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children and young people from the risk of radicalisation ([the Prevent duty: an introduction for those with safeguarding responsibilities](#), DfE Updated 2023 and [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\)](#), HM Government).
- 2.5. Please see Appendix C for a safeguarding training log.

3. Important Contacts

Role	Name	Contact details
Designated Safeguarding Lead / Assistant Principal	Steven Robinson	0191 3830708 steven.robinson@durhamsixthformcentre.org.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead / Director of Year	Jessica Clayton	0191 3830708 jessica.clayton@durhamsixthformcentre.org.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead / Director of Year	Rachel Thexton	0191 3830708 rachel.thexton@durhamsixthformcentre.org.uk
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Sharon Lewis/ Louise Brookes	03000 268835 CYPSLADOsecure@durham.gov.uk
First Contact Service		03000 267979 firstcontact@durham.gov.uk

4. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

- 4.1. This Policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2026\)](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2026\)](#), and the [Academy Trusts: Governance Guide](#).
- 4.2. This Policy is also underpinned and shaped by guidance and legislation contained in a variety of documents including:
 - Part 3 of the schedule to the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of students in the school.
 - [The Children Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children.
 - The [Education Act 2002](#) and the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#).
 - Local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements and Procedures: <https://durham-scp.org.uk/>.

- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the [Serious Crime Act 2015](#), which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.
- [Statutory guidance on FGM](#), which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM.
- [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#), which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children.
- Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#), (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and The Crime and Policing Act 2026), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children.
- [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\)](#): HM Government, which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.
- [The Prevent duty: an introduction for those with safeguarding responsibilities](#) - DfE Updated 2023.
- [The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation](#) - DfE Updated 2023, which is support for those working in education settings with safeguarding responsibilities.
- [Managing risk of radicalisation in your setting](#) - GOV.UK 2023, which outlines radicalisation risk indicators and guidance regarding the risk assessment framework.
- [The Human Rights Act 1998](#), which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the [European Convention on Human Rights](#) (ECHR).
- [The Equality Act 2010](#), which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and race).
- [The Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#) - Equality and Human Rights Commission 2022, which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- [Children missing education](#) - DfE Updated 2025, which outlines procedures for locating missing students and the removal of students from roll.
- [Working together to improve school attendance](#) - DfE 2026.
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) - DfE 2015.
- [Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools Guidance for schools in England](#) - DfE 2026
- Information Sharing Agreement: County Durham Safeguarding Adults Inter- Agency Partnership - [Good practice guidance for professionals - Durham Safeguarding Adults \(safeguardingdurhamadults.info\)](#).
- [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education](#) - DfE.
- [Operation Encompass statutory guidance](#) - Home Office 2025, which explains that the police must notify any relevant education establishment of any incidents involving domestic abuse.

4.3. This Policy is in line with multi-agency guidance and procedures that we adhere to in working with our three safeguarding partners in the [Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) (Durham County Council, Durham Constabulary and the Clinical Commissioning Groups). Current documentation can be accessed in the [practitioners section](#) which includes guidance on matters such as managing allegations against staff or volunteers (LADO), thresholds guidance, early help and safeguarding.

4.4. This Policy also complies with our Funding Agreement and Articles of Association.

5. Equality Statement

- 5.1. Some children and young people have an increased risk of abuse, both online and offline, 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 and young people's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children and young people have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.
- 5.2. We give special consideration to children and young people who:
- Have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or health conditions.
 - 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 situations - for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence.
 - Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage or radicalisation.
 - Are asylum seekers.
 - Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs.
 - Are looked after or previously looked after.
 - Are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or frequently.
 - Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated.

6. The Five Main Elements to the Policy

- 6.1. There are five main elements to the Policy:
- Establishing a safe environment in which children and young people can learn and develop.
 - Ensuring we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children and young people.
 - Training and supporting staff to equip them to appropriately recognise, respond to and support children and young people who are vulnerable and may need safeguarding.
 - Raising awareness of other safeguarding issues, boosting resilience and equipping children and young people with the skills needed to keep them safe.
 - Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.

Establishing a safe environment in which children and young people can learn and develop

- 6.2. KCSIE 2026, para. 419, states that *'Good safeguarding requires a continuing commitment from governing bodies, proprietors, and all staff to ensure the safety and welfare of children is embedded in all of the organisation's processes and procedures and consequently enshrined in its ethos'*.
- 6.3. This links to the Trust and school's overall safeguarding arrangements and duty of care to all students. Please see the 'Links with other policies' section on page 3 for a list of relevant policies.

Use of our facilities/premises for non-school/Trust activities

- 6.4. Where we hire or rent out Trust facilities/premises to organisations or individuals we will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children and young people safe in line with KCSIE 2026, para. 206 & 207:
- We will seek assurance that the provider has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed).
 - We will ensure that arrangements are in place for the provider to liaise with us on these matters where appropriate, whether the children and young people who attend are on our roll or not.
 - As a condition of use, these safeguarding requirements will be included in any transfer of control agreement and failure to comply will lead to termination of the agreement.

- We will expect providers to have the safeguarding arrangements set out in the following guidance in place: [Out of school settings: safeguarding guidance for providers](#) - DfE 2026.

Students Arriving and Leaving DSFC on Local Authority Arranged Transport

- 6.5. Where transportation is provided it is organised by the Local Authority. The Local Authority carries out all relevant checks to ensure that the individuals responsible for transportation have the relevant, current and expected qualifications and checks. This includes a driving licence, insurance and DBS check. If issues arise, the school works with the Local Authority to resolve any problems as quickly as possible.

Ensuring we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children and young people

- 6.6. At least one person conducting any interview for any post at the Trust will have undertaken safer recruitment training. Staff, Governors and Trustees who have received Safer Recruitment training are listed on Appendix C.
- 6.7. We will comply with the requirements outlined in local multi agency safeguarding arrangements 'Key Safeguarding Employment Standards' and in the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP) Child Protection procedures as well as national documentation in KCSIE 2026.
- 6.8. Our Trust/school will refer to its responsibilities regarding safeguarding and child protection in all adverts, job descriptions, and/or to its profile in the Trust/school in the general information distributed with application forms. Annex B in KCSIE 2026 has specific details of the role of the Designated Safeguarding Leads.
- 6.9. Our Trust/school will adhere to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (amended 2020) and the Exceptions Order 1975 taking account of any declarations at the point of interview and not during shortlisting from application.
- 6.10. Our Trust/school will undertake appropriate pre-employment checks, including online searches, on all staff working in the school including criminal record checks (DBS checks), barred list checks and prohibition checks together with references and interview information, as detailed in Part Three: Safer Recruitment in KCSIE 2026. We will also ensure that relevant staff are made aware of their responsibilities to disclose anything relating to [Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 - GOV.UK](#).
- 6.11. We will follow good practice advice and inform shortlisted candidates that online searches will be carried out.
- 6.12. As outlined in KCSIE 2026, para. 309-314, the level of DBS certificate required, and whether a check for any prohibition, direction, sanction, or restriction is required, will depend on the role that is being offered and duties involved, para. 315-344. As most staff will be engaging in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS certificate which includes barred list information will be required for most appointments. Risk assessments will be undertaken to determine the level of checks needed for any volunteers within our Trust and school and we follow guidance in relation to volunteers given in KCSIE 2026, para. 381-387, which includes changes made due to [The Crime and Policing Act 2026](#). From 1 September 2026, the removal of the supervision exemption under The Crime and Policing Act 2026 means that any volunteer undertaking regulated activity will strictly require an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information, regardless of whether they are supervised.
- 6.13. In our Trust and school:
- The school operates a lanyard ID system. All staff and students at DSFC wear an identity lanyard. Any student without a lanyard is challenged. Well practiced procedures and strategies are in place to support students that regularly forget their lanyard. Visitors to the school site sign in at Reception and are given the appropriate lanyard, linked to their DBS status. Staff are trained to

challenge any visitors to the school site that are not wearing a lanyard and that are unsupervised. All persons without a lanyard will be challenged upon entry to site by the Gate Officers.

- Volunteers without a DBS check will not be left unsupervised with groups of children and young people, nor will they be in areas where they cannot be fully seen by the supervising teacher or member of staff. An assessment of the volunteer's relevant skills and experience will be made before they are granted access to students, this will include ensuring that content will be age appropriate and relevant.
- In accepting the offer of help from volunteers, especially those unknown, staff are aware that schools in general are attractive places for 'unsafe' volunteers.
- Schools may be places where those with unhealthy interests in children and young people seek to find employment (paid or otherwise). We will be vigilant about all inappropriate behaviour with children and young people that gives cause for concern. The Confidential Reporting Code (Whistle-Blowing Policy) is shared with, and can be accessed by, all staff.
- We ensure that appropriate DBS checks are carried out before employing supply staff. We will obtain written notification that the appropriate checks have been completed. We will also check that the member of supply staff is the same person for whom these checks have been made.
- Our Local Governing Board and Trust Board will be aware of their responsibilities in connection with staff appointments and similarly aware of their liabilities, in line with the Recruitment and Selection Policy, the Vetting Policy and guidance in KCSIE 2026.
- Members of our Local Governing Board and Trust Board will have an enhanced DBS check. They will also be subject to a Section 128 check.
- Volunteers and helpers will not be given tasks beyond their capabilities and therefore where they might feel under pressure.
- Volunteers and helpers should feel able to discuss difficulties with the teacher or lead member of staff, who will respond with advice and additional guidance and supervision.
- Volunteers and helpers will not have the opportunity to feel that they are in charge and thus in a position of power, which may then be abused.
- Volunteers, helpers and staff new to the school and Trust are given documentation that covers behaviour guidelines for staff and volunteers.

Alternative Provision (KCSIE 2026, para. 208-213 & 402)

- 6.14. Where we place a child/young person with an alternative provision provider (AP Provider), we will understand that we continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that student and will ensure that we are satisfied that the provider can meet the needs of the student by:
- Obtaining written confirmation from the AP Provider that appropriate checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment.
 - Including written confirmation that the AP Provider will inform us of any arrangements that may put the child/young person at risk (i.e. staff changes), so that we can ensure ourselves that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff.
- 6.15. We will always know where a child/young person is placed in alternative provision during school hours to provide assurances that the child/young person is regularly attending, and the placement continues to be safe and meet the child's/young person's needs:
- We will have records of the address of the alternative provider and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the child/young person is attending.
 - We will regularly review the alternative provision placements.
 - Our reviews will be frequent (at least half termly).
- 6.16. Where a safeguarding concern arises, the placement will be immediately reviewed, and terminated, if necessary, unless or until those concerns have been satisfactorily addressed.
- 6.17. The DfE has issued two pieces of statutory guidance to which commissioners of Alternative Provision should have regard:

- [Alternative Provision](#) - updated 2025 and
- [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school](#) - updated 2023.

6.18. The department has also published voluntary national standards for non-school alternative provision, [Non-school alternative provision: voluntary national standards](#) - 2025.

Training and supporting staff to equip them to appropriately recognise, respond to and support children and young people who are vulnerable and may need safeguarding

- 6.19. To ensure that we train and support our staff to be equipped to recognise, respond to and support children and young people who are vulnerable and may need safeguarding, we will include:
- Creating the right culture and environment so that staff feel comfortable to discuss matters both within and outside (including online) the workplace.
 - The Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy and Procedures which, amongst other things, also includes the policy and procedures to deal with child-on-child abuse and online safety.
 - The Climate for Learning and Attendance Policy (which includes measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying, including LGBT+). This Policy takes the [Behaviour in Schools Guidance](#) - DfE Updated 2024, into account.
 - The staff Code of Conduct (non-maintained school) Policy.
 - The safeguarding response to children and young people who go missing from education.
 - The role of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (including the identity of the Designated Safeguarding Leads and their responsibilities and the identity of their deputies).
- 6.20. Copies of policies and a copy of Part One of KCSIE 2026 will be provided to all staff and volunteers at induction and at least annually. All staff, volunteers and supply staff are **required to read this in full** and to sign a confirmation document confirming their understanding and engagement with the document.
- 6.21. All staff, volunteers and supply staff will be made aware of:
- Our local 'early help' process and their role in it.
 - The process for making referrals to Children's Social Care and sections 17 and 47 that may follow a referral, along with the role they may be expected to play in such assessments.
 - What to do if a child/young person tells them they are being abused or neglected, along with maintaining an appropriate level of confidentiality, involving only those who need to be involved, and never promising a child/young person that they will not tell anyone about their abuse.
 - The safeguarding issues that often overlap and can put children and young people at risk of harm, see KCSIE 2026, para. 29, including:
 - Drug taking and/or alcohol misuse
 - Unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education
 - Serious violence, criminal exploitation (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation
 - Consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes.
 - The systems in place (and they will be well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible) for children and young people to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously.
 - How allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated and dealt with.
 - Clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any other children affected by child-on-child abuse will be supported.
 - The practical government guidance document [Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings](#), Safer Recruitment Consortium, 2022.
 - The need to act immediately if they have any concerns about a child/young person's welfare. Staff are reminded during training that early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision.

- 6.22. All adults working in the Trust and school will complete annual safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated. Training is delivered in a number of ways including via certificated courses accredited and delivered by the National College and via in person training delivered by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Assistant Principal) who is responsible for ensuring that the training reflects new priorities and concerns within the County and other multi-agency local priorities. Adults will also receive updated training and guidance throughout the year as necessary. The date and the names of delegates at these sessions are recorded and held securely to ensure all staff are appropriately trained.
- 6.23. Safeguarding is embedded in all our work within the Trust and the school and adults are regularly reminded of key messages in order to maintain heightened awareness of safeguarding and child protection issues. We do this in the following ways:
- Staff training.
 - Updates in staff weekly briefings.
 - Google sites.
 - New staff induction procedures and booklet.
 - Professional development.
 - Faculty audits.
 - Staff Dashboard.
 - Safeguarding Dashboard.
 - Termly safeguarding quizzes (which check staff's engagement with training and their knowledge).

Staff responsible for leading on and coordinating safeguarding

- 6.24. Our Designated Safeguarding Leads, deputies and Pastoral Support Managers are given sufficient time and training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their roles. This will be updated at least every two years and records of this training are kept. In addition to this formal training, their knowledge and skills will continually be updated and refreshed through a range of means (for example via e-bulletins, attendance at safeguarding networks, information sharing at team meetings or through reading), at regular intervals, as required, and at least annually, to enable them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role.
- 6.25. The following staff are responsible for leading on and coordinating child protection and safeguarding work within the school:
- Steven Robinson (Designated Safeguarding Lead (Assistant Principal)).
 - Jessica Clayton (Designated Safeguarding Lead (Director of Year)).
 - Rachel Thexton (Designated Safeguarding Lead (Director of Year)).
 - Sue Diston (Pastoral Support Manager).
 - Ashleigh Dwyer (Pastoral Support Manager).
 - Lucy Shearer (Pastoral Support Manager).
 - Joanne Smith (Pastoral Support Manager).
 - Stephen Joel (Director of Student Support (SEND)).

Raising awareness of other safeguarding issues, boosting resilience and equipping children and young people with the skills needed to keep them safe

- 6.26. We raise other related issues with children and young people and their parents/carers in the following ways:

Children and Young People

- 6.27. We are mindful that children and young people are kept safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in the school. We have Smoothwall filtering and monitoring systems in place for this and other potentially risky content. Our named member of the Senior Leadership Team, who is a Designated Safeguarding Lead, reviews these records regularly to see whether it links up with other safeguarding concerns about particular individuals. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Systems Support Manager review the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards at least once every academic year, to ensure DSFC operating systems are compliant. Online safety is continually emphasised in line with KCSIE

2026, para. 162-166, and [Teaching online safety in schools](#) - DfE Updated 2023.

- 6.28. Other themes are addressed through our curriculum, policies, CORE and RHSE programmes, assemblies, outside visitors and trainers. These may be part of our typical, planned curriculum or in response to issues arising in the Trust/school, the community or nationally.
- 6.29. Our CORE programme covers related themes including:
- Healthy Relationships.
 - Healthy Sex.
 - Driving Safely.
 - Sex and Relationships Education (SRE).
 - Drinking Sensibly.
 - Healthy Eating.
 - Drug Awareness.
 - Online-Safety.
 - Prevent.
 - Consent.
 - Wellbeing.
- 6.30. Names and photographs of staff are on display in school and on the Student Dashboard, so students know who they can speak to if they have concerns (school, family or community issues):

Durham Sixth Form Centre Safeguarding Team



Mrs R Thexton
Director of Y12
Designated Safeguarding Lead



Mr S Robinson
Assistant Principal
Designated Safeguarding Lead



Mrs J Clayton
Director of Y13
Designated Safeguarding Lead



Mrs S Diston
Y12 Pastoral Support
Manager



Miss L Shearer
Y12 Pastoral Support
Manager



Mr S Joel
Director of Student Support
(SEND)



Mrs A Dwyer
Y13 Pastoral Support
Manager



Mrs J Smith
Y13 Pastoral Support
Manager

Parents/Carers

- 6.31. Our Trust and school websites, Parent Dashboard, Student Dashboard, Safeguarding Dashboard, A-Z Guide, Parent Welcome Presentation and various other means of communication reinforce the message that our Trust and school is committed to the welfare and protection of all children and young people in its care. School and Trust staff and Governors and Trustees take this duty of care very seriously.
- 6.32. Weekly briefings, letters to parents/carers, the Reach More Parents App, the Trust and school website, Google sites and Parents Evenings/consultations are used to disseminate and reinforce key safeguarding and child protection information.
- 6.33. Parents/carers are told that it is essential that school records are kept up to date. Parents/carers are asked to keep the school informed of any changes. We will accordingly update records held to reflect:
- Current address and telephone contacts. We are aware that, as a school, it is good practice to hold more than one emergency contact number for each student, this is particularly important for children and young people who are a safeguarding or welfare concern.
 - Which adults have parental responsibility.
 - Court orders which may be in force.
 - Children and young people on the Child Protection list.
 - The child/young person's name at birth and any subsequent names (taking care over unusual spellings).
 - Any other changes to home circumstances.

Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse

- 6.34. The culture of our Trust and school is that 'it could happen here'. Staff are trained to identify indicators of abuse and are aware of circumstances that could potentially make children and young people more vulnerable to abuse.
- 6.35. All staff, including part-time, peripatetic and adults working with children and young people in the school should be informed who the Designated Safeguarding Leads are. Crucially, this also applies to work-placement students, trainee teachers and supply staff who might be the fresh face that a child/young person might disclose something to. All trainee teachers have completed accredited training in both safeguarding and Prevent. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (Assistant Principal) also leads a session for all trainee teachers regarding school procedures and policies.

Listening to Children and Young People and Receiving Disclosures

- 6.36. We embrace our role as a listening school where children and young people can discuss concerns with any member of staff or adult who works with them. All adults receive training from the Designated Safeguarding Lead regarding how to receive and deal with a disclosure.
- 6.37. Staff (teaching and support) will make time and be available should children and young people approach them with a situation they are worried about.
- 6.38. Concerns must be taken seriously and at face-value. It is easy to make speedy judgments based on previous knowledge of the child or young person.
- 6.39. Staff receiving a disclosure are unable to promise 'keeping a secret' or confidentiality. They will need to explain that, depending on what the child/young person says, they might need to share the information with someone who deals with these concerns in the school.
- 6.40. If the child/young person does not wish to continue and say anything further the adult should pass on the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead that might wish to keep an eye on that student and may well be aware of other issues of concern.

- 6.41. *'Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child. All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting any form of abuse and/or neglect. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.'* KCSIE 2026, para. 14-15.
- 6.42. *'All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or are being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication with children and young people.'* KCSIE 2026, para. 16.
- 6.43. Staff should never speak to another sibling in the family to make enquiries; to investigate concerns is not the role of the school and parents/carers would be rightly aggrieved.
- 6.44. If there is concern about another member of staff or adult working in the school, the matter must be passed straight to the Principal. The member of staff concerned must not be spoken to. See Section 11.

Recording concerns

- 6.45. ALL concerns and disclosures passed to the designated safeguarding team must be recorded on the school's Child Protection Online Monitoring System (CPOMS) or written, signed and dated on the relevant 'Concern' form which can be found on the staff [Safeguarding Dashboard](#). All concerns recorded should be factual; staff should avoid using emotive language and recording their opinions. Records should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as local authority children's social care or the Prevent programme etc. If staff are in doubt as to whether to record something, they should discuss it with a Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 6.46. Staff should write the exact words used by the child/young person. Any original notes/jottings/reminders made by the adult must be stapled to the form or scanned into CPOMS as first-hand information that could be important if a case went to court.
- 6.47. The more relevant details that staff document, the better (e.g.: approximate size, colour of injury, which arm, if burn is scabbing over etc.). Staff can express concern about an injury (open ended questions) but should not ask direct questions. They should never do so in front of other children and young people.
- 6.48.

Please remember:

- i. The child/young person should be allowed to make the disclosure at their own pace and in their own way.
- ii. The member of staff should avoid interrupting except to clarify what the child/young person is saying, but
- iii. The member of staff should not probe for any information that the child/young person does not volunteer.

Concerns about staff members, including supply teachers, trainee teachers, volunteers, contractors or other adults in the school

- 6.49. If there is concern about another member of staff or adult working in the school, the matter must be passed straight to the Principal, who will consider whether an onward referral to the LADO is required. The member of staff concerned must not be spoken to. In the event of a situation where there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to the Principal, this should be reported directly to the LADO, KSCIE para. 76. If the concern regards the Principal, this should be passed on to the Chair of the Trust Board; contact details are available via the Governance Professional, please see our website [here](#) for further information.

Further information is included in Section 11 of this Policy and KCSIE 2026, para. 75-77 & 186-189.

Recording and response of the designated lead professional

- 6.50. All information received is stored securely in electronic or paper form. We provide appropriate levels of access to information. Paper records are kept securely in the student's folder and in a secure locked filing cabinet, away from the student's individual school records. The student's individual file is marked to show the existence of the additional 'concern' file. Our Designated Safeguarding Leads, deputies and Pastoral Support Managers can access these documents in an emergency or in the event of an enquiry for information by the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) Team, for example.
- 6.51. We keep a digital, central 'chronology of significant events' for all children and young people in the school using CPOMS. This informs any other concerns in the school, assists in the event of an emergency or should the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) team make contact about issues beyond DSFC. We ensure that records include:
- A clear and detailed summary of the concern.
 - Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved.
 - Notes of any actions taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

Discussing concerns with the First Contact Service - 03000 267979

- 6.52. We use the local authority Referral Form for notifying First Contact of concerns. Early help referrals are completed online using the following link: [doitonline.durham.gov.uk.service.Early_Help_Referral](https://doitonline.durham.gov.uk/service/Early_Help_Referral) via the Durham County Council CRM system.
- 6.53. Procedures and guidance detailing local multi-agency arrangements, including detailed information about the management of individual cases, may be found at durham-scp.org.uk.
- 6.54. If a concern is taken up as a **referral** under section 47: Child Protection, actual or likelihood of significant harm, parents or carers will be informed of this **unless to do so would place the child/young person at further risk of harm**.
- 6.55. If the child/young person requires immediate medical attention, staff will coordinate for the child/young person to be taken to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department. First Contact will be informed immediately if the injuries are linked to a child protection matter, so an appropriate medic sees the child/young person. The Director of Children and Young People's Services will be informed, and parents/carers will be notified of the action taken.
- 6.56. If the situation is an emergency and staff are unable to speak to First Contact, we will phone the police on 101 and ask to speak to a colleague in the Vulnerability Unit concerning a child/young person.

Police Switchboard: 0345 6060365 or 101

Ask for the nearest local Vulnerability Unit to the school

Logging concerns with First Contact

- 6.57. Discussions of concern and requests for support will be followed up in writing where appropriate, using the Referral Form. Early help referrals are completed online using this [link](#). All information is logged on the CPOMS/student safeguarding file.
- 6.58. If a member of staff feels that the Designated Safeguarding Leads and/or Principal are not taking concerns seriously enough, then it is appropriate for them to tell that person that they are going to consult with First Contact themselves.

- 6.59. **Any staff member** who has a concern about a child/young person's welfare should follow the referral processes set out in KCSIE 2026, Part One.

First Contact Service Telephone: 03000 26 79 79 firstcontact@durham.gov.uk

Attendance at strategy meetings if assessed to be child protection concern

- 6.60. Strategy meetings are one of four multi-agency meetings as part of child protection processes. Local multi-agency procedures have detailed guidance about these meetings www.durham-scp.org.uk. The threshold document is available on the DSCP website [here](#).
- 6.61. School staff may be invited to a strategy meeting. These multi-agency meetings are called to decide whether the threshold for a section 47 enquiry should commence to investigate the concerns that have been raised.
- 6.62. These meetings may be called at short notice and appropriate staff from the school will attend wherever possible. If the school is the referring agency then it should be invited to attend these meetings. The school will offer a venue if there is a suitable room available e.g. one that ensures confidentiality.
- 6.63. Staff should make available any electronic forms or handwritten notes, dated and signed, as well as other records from the concern file including the single agency chronology of concerns. Any further written evidence from the child/young person: stories, drawings etc. will be brought to the meeting.
- 6.64. In school, staff will monitor the child/young person discreetly for any further concerns or signs that are worrying, maintain appropriate records and give support and reassurance to the child/young person.
- 6.65. All information should be treated with discretion and confidentiality and shared in accordance with the National Guidance on information sharing and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018.
- 6.66. If concerns are not substantiated following the section 47 enquiries, our school will work with other agencies to determine what further support the family and child/young person require. The school will continue to monitor and support the child/young person.

7. Overview: Safeguarding

What school staff should know and do: A child/young person centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding

- 7.1. KCSIE 2026, para. 2, states safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children ('Children' includes everyone under the age of 18') is **everyone's** responsibility:
'Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance 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.*
 - *Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.'* KCSIE 2026, para. 3.

Safeguarding within the school

- 7.2. Everyone who encounters children and young people and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children and young people. School staff are particularly important as they are able to identify concerns early and provide help for children and young people, to prevent concerns from escalating. Schools and

their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children and young people by working with our three safeguarding partners in the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership – Durham County Council, Durham Constabulary and the Clinical Commissioning Groups to promote the welfare of children and young people and protect them from harm.

- 7.3. Safeguarding children and young people permeates all aspects of our work as a school, with a preventative role to inform and boost the resilience of all students by enhancing protective factors in their lives. Accordingly this Policy links with many other Trust and school policies, listed on page 2 of this Policy.
- 7.4. This Policy is also linked to local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Current, up to date documentation can be found at [Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) and include:
- Managing Allegations against Staff (Durham online local partnership safeguarding arrangements and policies).
 - County Durham Practice Framework: Early Help assessment and Child and Family Plan, available here: <https://durham-scp.org.uk/practitioners/early-help/early-help-assessment-and-child-and-family-plan/>.

Safeguarding throughout school life

Caring Ethos

- 7.5. We aim to create and maintain a **caring ethos** where all children, young people and adults feel safe, secure and valued. If children and young people feel happy and enjoy school this will encourage good attendance and then create conditions in which they can do their best in every area of school life. Our school operates as a listening school where children and young people are able to approach adults with concerns. These will be taken seriously and relevant local multi-agency safeguarding procedures followed without delay if there is a risk/likeness of, or actual, **significant harm**.
- 7.6. In order to promote a caring environment, DSFC uses a plethora of support mechanisms which include:
- Pastoral Support Managers.
 - Directors of Years.
 - Assistant Principal.
 - SEND Team.
 - Progression Team.
 - Attendance Officer.
 - Health & Wellbeing Officer.
 - Teachers.
 - Emotional Health Resilience Nurse.
 - School Counsellor.
 - St Nic's staff.
 - Student Mentors (Asdan qualified).
 - Peace of Mind.
 - Progress Tutors.
 - Academic Mentors.
 - Digital support e.g. student and staff Dashboards, Google sites and briefing notes.

Curriculum

- 7.7. Children and young people have access to an appropriate curriculum, including the teaching of RSE and Health Education, differentiated to meet their needs. This enables them to learn to develop the necessary skills to build self-esteem, respect others, defend those in need, and resolve conflict without resorting to violence. Children and young people learn skills to question and challenge to enable them to make informed choices now and later in life. A protective factor for children and young people is personal resilience including strong social and emotional skills. All work with children and young people which boosts confidence and self-esteem is valuable to protect them from peer pressure and outside influences detrimental to their physical and mental wellbeing.

- 7.8. Children and young people are encouraged to express and discuss their ideas, thoughts and feelings through a variety of activities and have access to a range of cultural opportunities which promote respect and empathy for others. As part of our new Prevent duty under s.26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 we are aware of the importance of building students' resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views. Schools can build students' resilience to radicalisation by providing a safe environment for debating controversial issues and helping children and young people understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making.
- 7.9. CORE, Politics, Sociology, Art, Drama, English, Pride Society and Debate Club are some of the areas of the curriculum and our enrichment offer in which children and young people can discuss and debate important issues including lifestyles, health, safety and wellbeing (physical and emotional), sex education and healthy relationships, family life, childcare and parenting, forced marriage, domestic abuse, religious beliefs and practices as well as human rights issues. Through these, we support children and young people to recognise and manage risk, make safer choices, and recognise when pressure from others threatens their personal safety and wellbeing. They can develop effective ways of resisting pressure, including knowing when, where and how to get help.

Attendance

- 7.10. We recognise that improving attendance is everyone's responsibility. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual children/young people and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere students want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all students are keen and ready to learn.
- 7.11. Some students find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work in partnership with students and parents collaboratively to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources.
- 7.12. We agree to fulfil our statutory reporting duties around attendance and ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place to respond to children and young people who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods - KCSIE 2026, para. 124 and 219/[Working together to improve school attendance](#) - DfE 2026.

Universal services and specialist support staff

- 7.13. The following **professionals** are also available to support individual students at DSFC:
- Health & Wellbeing Officer.
 - Attendance Officer.
 - Assistant Principal.
 - Directors of Years.
 - Pastoral Support Managers (PSM).
 - Progress Tutors.
 - School Counsellor.
 - One Point Hub (various depending on home address of student).
 - Academic Mentors.
 - Director of Student Support and SEND team.
 - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).
 - Child and Young People's Service (CYPS).
 - Progression Team.
 - Sexual Health Workers.

- Durham Constabulary - Driving Safely and Drinking Sensibly.
- Lifeline.
- One Punch.
- Durham LGBT+.

7.14. The following **visitors** also contribute to our work to safeguard and promote the welfare of our students:

- Community Support Officers.
- Dieticians.
- Personal Trainers.
- Specialist Nurses e.g. Diabetes Nurse and Sexual Health Nurse.
- First Aiders.
- Local Authority Health & Safety Advisors.
- Smoking Cessation Workers.
- MIND.
- If You Care, Share.
- Local Parish.
- Casualty Reduction Team.
- St Nics.

Childcare arrangements before and after lessons (including extra-curricular activities)

7.15. The school has a vast range of enrichment activities. These all provide further opportunities for students to develop positive and caring relationships with adults and peers, who themselves will be trained (Asdan qualified) to be aware of signs and behaviours that could suggest concerns. Supportive relationships outside the home, such as those with adults in the school and other children and young people, are additional protective factors that boost children and young people's resilience. Staff will always work with children and young people in a professional way and are reminded to respond to disclosures sensitively and appropriately. All adults in the school know the names of the Designated Safeguarding Leads and are made aware of their responsibility to pass on any issues of concern without delay and make a written record.

7.16. Examples of the kind of enrichment activities offered at DSFC include:

- Art Club.
- Astronomy Club.
- Badminton Club.
- Basketball Club.
- Chess Club.
- Christian Union.
- Choir.
- Debate Club.
- Film Society.
- Film Production Society.
- Horror Club.
- Medicine Society.
- Middle English.
- Model UN Club.
- Music Club.
- Musical Theatre Society.
- Pride Society.
- Ritangle Club (Online Mathematics Competitions).
- Roll for Charisma (Dungeons and Dragons Club).
- SpIn (Special Interests Club).
- The Big Questions in Life.
- Web-Crafting Club.

- Women in STEM.
- Writing Club.

Working with parents and carers

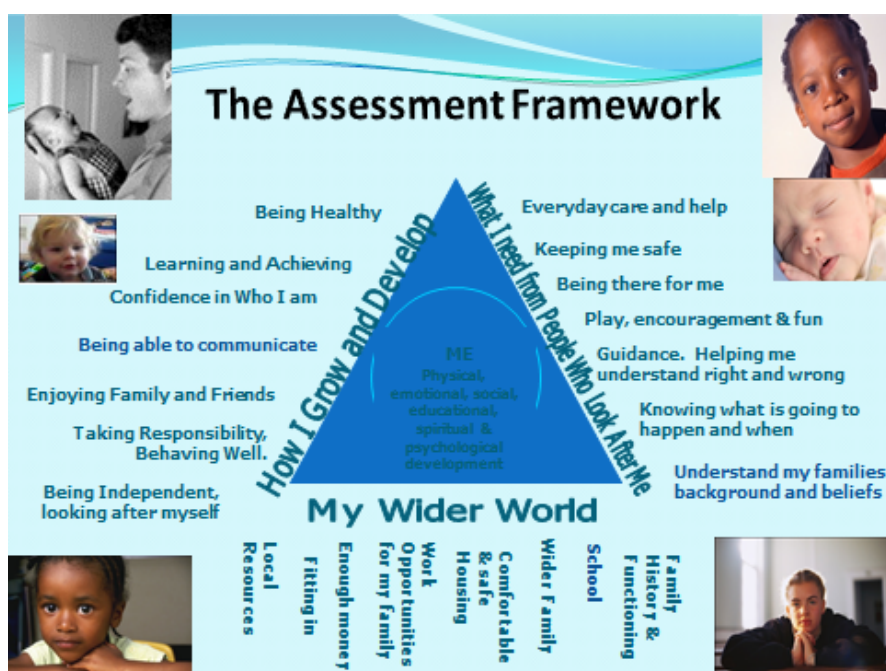
- 7.17. Our school believes in effective communication with parents and carers. We welcome parent/carers views and concerns about the welfare of their children and young people and use this feedback to regularly review our practices. Parent/carers views are obtained in the following ways:
- Online surveys.
 - Questionnaires at events such as Y12 Open Event.
 - Reach More Parents App.
 - Parental drop ins.
 - School website.
 - Consultation evenings/parental events.
 - Year 12/13 Parents Welcome Evening.
 - Information evenings.
- 7.18. We keep parents/carers informed about important and topical issues, including child protection elements of safeguarding, in the following ways:
- Reach More Parents App.
 - Newsletters.
 - A-Z Guide.
 - Letters.
 - Social media (X/Facebook).
 - Google sites e.g. Safeguarding.
 - Website.
 - Consultation evenings.
 - Parent/Student Dashboard.
 - Weekly briefing notes (emailed).
- 7.19. We aim to have good working relationships with parents and carers and to work in partnership with them through transparency and honesty. However, we should not forget that their child's/young person's needs and welfare are our paramount concern, thus obtaining consent to take matters further is **not** always appropriate.

8. Child Protection within Safeguarding Arrangements for all Children/Young People in DSFC

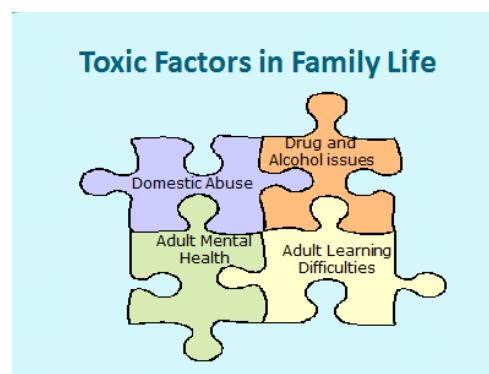
- 8.1. There are a series of layers of care and intervention ranging from safeguarding for all/ universal services (single-agency activities) through to multi-agency work under the Children's Act 1989 and its amendments:
- Safeguarding arrangements in the school.
 - Family Help within universal services.
 - More complex cases requiring Family Help.
 - Child in Need consent required as for Levels 2 and 3.
 - Child Protection.
 - [Durham Safeguarding Children's Partnership guidance and procedures.](#)

Life at Home

- 8.2. The Framework for Assessment triangle, reproduced below, summarises every aspect of a child's life under three headings and is mirrored in the Referral Form for the First Contact Service:
- Child's developmental needs (How I grow and develop).
 - Parenting capacity (What I need from people that look after me).
 - Family and environmental factors (My wider world).



- 8.3. Aspects from all three domains combine in home life and staff and adults in the school should be mindful of these connections as they work with children and young people and their parents/carers in the school.
- 8.4. The school and Trust believes that it is essential to work with parents and carers in the best interests of their children/young people. However, good relationships with parents and carers should not detract from our primary concern which is the welfare of children and young people in this school.
- 8.5. Staff are made aware in training of the 'toxic quad.' issues in home life that could have an impact on the way children and young people are parented (Munroe, 2010). The Government research into Serious Case Reviews reveals that the presence of one or more of the following issues could have a detrimental impact on parenting of children and young people in that household:
- Domestic abuse (violence).
 - Substance misuse (alcohol and or drugs).
 - Adult mental health.
 - Learning Disabilities.



- 8.6. Neglect is the largest category for children being on the Child Protection list (nationally and in Durham). DSCP have produced Neglect Practice Guidance. It can be found within the County Durham Children and Families Practice Toolkit here: [County Durham Children & Families Practice Toolkit \(durham-scp.org.uk\)](http://durham-scp.org.uk).

Signs and behaviours of concern

- 8.7. **All** of our staff are familiar with KCSIE 2026 and their responsibilities highlighted within this (para. 4 to 55).
- 8.8. *'All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse - including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and stalking), criminal exploitation*

(including financial exploitation), serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.’ KCSIE 2026, para. 20.

8.9. Paragraph 17 of KCSIE 2026 emphasises that any child may benefit from support before statutory intervention, including from universal services and community-based Early Help, or the targeted early help level of Family Help. All staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for additional support for a child/young people who:

- Is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs.
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan).
- Has a mental health need.
- Is a young carer.
- Is pregnant and/or is a parent themselves.
- Has exhibited early signs of abusive, violent and/or harmful behaviours.
- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines.
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care.
- Has been repeatedly removed from the classroom, experienced multiple suspensions, is on a part-time timetable, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
- Is at risk of exploitation, modern slavery, trafficking, including criminal or sexual exploitation.
- Is at risk of being radicalised into terrorism.
- Has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending.
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child/young person, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse.
- Is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves.
- Is at risk of honour or faith-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage, and
- Is a privately fostered child/young person.

8.10. *‘All staff should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring - see paragraphs 171-175 for further information) at induction. The training should be regularly updated. In addition, all staff should receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.’ KCSIE 2026, para. 12.*

8.11. In our school we do these regular updates through:

- Weekly safeguarding updates from the Designated Safeguarding Leads.
- Staff/Student/Parent Dashboard.
- Safeguarding presentations in Staff Briefings.
- 1-1 meetings.
- Training and development.
- NQT/New staff training.
- Volunteer training.
- DSCP/LA training.
- Safeguarding Dashboard.
- Weekly Staff Briefing Notes.

8.12. The school understands that it is best practice to discuss concerns with parents/carers before contacting First Contact Service (providing this does not present a delay), unless by doing so the child/young person

would be put at further risk of harm. First Contact Service: 03000 267979.

- 8.13. **Where a child or young person is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately.**
- 8.14. Anyone can make a referral. When referrals are not made by a Designated Safeguarding Lead, a designated safeguarding lead should be informed, as soon as possible, that a referral has been made.

Family Help Assessment Procedure & Practice Guidance

- 8.15. *'All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from Family Help. Family Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.'* KCSIE 2026, para. 6. This relates to work with other universal agencies and following DSCP procedures and guidance.
- 8.16. A Family Help Assessment and Child and Family Plan has been developed by partners, children, young people, parents and carers which will help families get the support they need at the earliest opportunity.
- 8.17. It is much more streamlined, family friendly and signs of safety/wellbeing focussed. The documents can be accessed through the [Children's Services Portal](#).
- 8.18. Our school is aware that *'no single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances'*. Also, that *'if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action'*. KCSIE 2026, para. 3.
- 8.19. Please see Appendix C for the training log which lists names, dates and types of training completed by staff, Governors and Trustees.
- 8.20. This school believes that information sharing is a key element when delivering coordinated services for children and young people. It is essential to enable early help and support and for promoting child protection and welfare. Our staff understand when, why and how they should share information so that they can do so confidently and appropriately as part of their day-to-day practice.
- 8.21. This school works with the consent of parents and carers to jointly undertake assessments where an unmet need has been identified. However, we are aware that it may be necessary to meet with other services and agencies even if this consent for a 'Team around the Family' meeting is not forthcoming. These professionals' meetings are important to share concerns, suggest ways forward along with further work to encourage participation by parents/carers in early help processes. One Point colleagues and Early Help Advisers are also a useful source of advice in these circumstances.
- 8.22. Guidance on Family Help in County Durham can be found here: durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/early-help. This includes information on how to make a request for additional early help and provides details of Locality Early Help Conversations.
- 8.23. Professionals can make a request for (additional) early help by completing an online Early Help Request Form on the [Children's Service Portal](#) or by telephoning the Early Help Triage Team on 03000 267 979, Option 1, Option 2, Option 4, (Mon – Thurs 08.30 – 17.00, Fri 08.30 – 16.30).
- 8.24. Team around the Family (TAF) is an early means of intervention to provide appropriate advice and support for the parents/carers and young person by working with appropriate local agencies through TAF arrangements.
- 8.25. Our local Family Hub, Families First Team and Early Help Adviser contact details are:
- Family Hub: 03000 261 111.

- Families First Team: 03000 265 770.
- Early Help Adviser: EarlyHelpAdvisorSupport@durham.gov.uk.

- 8.26. **Durham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):** Where concerns are identified as amber or red on the MASH Process Pathway, our school will cooperate promptly and fully, with relevant information, to inform further assessments undertaken by the MASH team.
- 8.27. **The Extended Role of the Virtual School Head:** This is a strategic role. In Durham a team of professionals work together to provide schools with the Vulnerable Pupil lists through the Schools Portal. This includes all children/young people with a social worker currently open to Social Care and those who have been closed in the last six years.
- 8.28. The Virtual Head updates the Designated Safeguarding Leads through Designated Safeguarding Lead Network Meetings. Where attendance is a concern, the school will work within the framework of the Attendance Toolkit for CWSW (Children with a Social Worker), available on the Schools Portal. The school, by working together with partners, aims to achieve the best outcomes for CWSW by identifying and addressing the child's/young person's needs at the earliest opportunity.
- 8.29. KCSIE 2026 extends the duties of the Virtual Head to provide advice to Informal as well as Formal Kinship Carers. The Previous Children in Care Officer can be contacted via DurhamVirtualSchool@durham.gov.uk.

Child in Need

- 8.30. See Section 17 of the [1989 Children Act/ Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2026\)](#).
'A child in need is defined under the [Children Act 1989](#) as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under [section 17 of the Children Act 1989](#)' (KCSIE 2026, para. 66).
- 8.31. This school recognises the importance of early support and intervention work in more complex cases, undertaken with the consent of parents and carers, and follows the Threshold guidance document which sets out local criteria for action and includes links to additional information which may assist professional judgement in understanding and subsequently meeting a child/young person and family's needs. DSCP toolkits and guidance (including Threshold Guidance) can be found [here](#).

Child Protection and Significant Harm

- 8.32. Section 47 of the [1989 Children Act/ Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2026\)](#)
'Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquiries under [section 47 of the Children Act 1989](#) if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Such enquiries enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment. This includes all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation' (KCSIE 2026, para. 67).
- 8.33. Significant harm is where some children and young people are in need because they are **suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm**. This is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children and young people.

Prepare for the unexpected

- 8.34. Staff are aware from their training that some children and young people might display worrying signs/symptoms or disclose information suggesting abuse, when they have never previously given rise to concern. Staff must contact a Designated Safeguarding Lead for child protection **without delay** so concerns can be discussed with First Contact Service as soon as possible. In all cases it should be borne in

mind that other siblings might be at risk in the household as well as the one presenting concerns in the school.

- 8.35. *'Staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'** where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the **best interests** of the child'* (KCSIE 2026, para. 55).

Low Level Concerns

- 8.36. Please see: KCSIE 2026, para. 510-552.
- 8.37. As part of our safeguarding culture, ALL concerns regarding adults are shared responsibly in line with our safeguarding reporting systems and will be recorded in CPOMS. Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and appropriate actions taken.
- 8.38. We will ensure that:
- Staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others.
 - Staff know how to share any low-level safeguarding concerns and are empowered to do so.
 - Unprofessional behaviour is addressed and the individual is supported to correct it at an early stage.
 - We will provide a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised.
 - We will use concerns to help identify any weakness in the school safeguarding system.
- 8.39. We will instil a culture where staff feel safe to report any concerns using our safeguarding reporting system identified in this Policy. We would also encourage the staff member themselves to report any behaviour that could be classed as a low level concern. Where the report has been made by a third party, as much evidence as possible will be gathered by the Principal from the person reporting the concern, the individual named and any witnesses. All of this will be recorded to determine whether any further action needs to be taken alongside a recorded rationale as to the decisions taken.
- 8.40. In the case of reports about supply staff and contractors, we will report any concerns to their line managers so that any concerning, problematic or inappropriate patterns of behaviour can be identified.
- 8.41. We will retain information regarding low level concerns in line with KCSIE 2026 guidance (see para. 520 which recommends that it is retained at least until the individual leaves the Trust's employment).
- 8.42. KCSIE 2026 para. 521 states that *'schools and colleges should only provide substantiated safeguarding concerns/allegations (including a group of low-level concerns about the same individual) that meet the harm threshold in references. Low-level concerns should not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance. It follows that a low-level concern which relates exclusively to safeguarding (and not to misconduct or poor performance) should not be referred to in a reference.'*

9. Multi-Agency Work in Child Protection

- 9.1. See Appendix A: Summary of multi-agency meetings.
- 9.2. For up-to-date school responsibilities and LA arrangements and procedures please see the local partnership websites - <https://durham-scp.org.uk/practitioners/>.

Initial Child Protection Conference: School responsibilities

- 9.3. See local partnership procedures for more details:
durham-scp.org.uk/about-us/multi-agency-safeguarding-arrangements.
- 9.4. Following the final strategy meeting (some complex cases like forced marriage, fabricated and induced illness and organisational abuse may require several strategy meetings) a decision might be made to hold an Initial Child Protection Conference. This work continues within Family First teams within the County.
- 9.5. A conference will be called if there is thought to be an on-going risk or likelihood of significant harm to the child(ren)/young person/young people. The date will be within **15 working days** after the last strategy meeting.

Attendance at Conference

- 9.6. It is understood that appropriate school staff should make every effort to attend (unless the date coincides with school holidays).

Preparation of a report

- 9.7. The school will prepare a report based upon information and guidance provided on the [Child Protection Conference Report Template](#).

Chronology of significant events

- 9.8. A single-agency chronology should also be produced for this meeting. The detailed 'in house' school chronology should be streamlined to include key relevant incidents noted by the school.

Sharing of the report

- 9.9. The report should be shared with parents/carers of the child/young person at least **two working days** before the conference. Part of the report may also be shared with the young person, where age appropriate. This will give the family a chance to question or clarify any issues raised within the report prior to the conference.
- 9.10. The report will be passed to the Conference Clerk via the e-mail system ready for dissemination to other professionals attending the conference.

Membership of a Core Group

- 9.11. The school recognises that membership of a core group is a responsibility that necessitates time and commitment to attend regular meetings and complete the work detailed in the Child Protection Plan.
- 9.12. The merged multi-agency chronology will be regularly updated as part of this ongoing work.

Review Child Protection Conference

- 9.13. The school will complete the relevant report for the first review conference, after 10 weeks and for any subsequent reviews at intervals of 5 months. The report will detail work undertaken by the school with parents/carers and the child/young person to complete the tasks assigned in the Child Protection Plan. This report should be shared **7 days** before the conference takes place. This report will detail the progress made towards the tasks outlined in the Child Protection Plan.

10. Information-Sharing

- 10.1. Staff at our school are aware of the need to share information appropriately (KCSIE 2026, para. 138 - 150) and ensure arrangements are in place and understood that set out clearly the processes and principles for sharing information within the school and with local authority children's social care, safeguarding partners and other organisations, agencies and practitioners as required.

- 10.2. The government's [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#) includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information (including personal information), and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information.
- 10.3. If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to a Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 10.4. The data protection laws do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. However, if there are concerns that sharing of information with individuals could result in significant harm to any individual, legal advice should be sought before the information is shared.
- 10.5. Our school takes care to ensure that information about a child/young person is only given to the appropriate external people or agencies. Staff will take names and ring back via a main switchboard if unsure. All staff within the school will be aware of the confidential nature of personal information about a child/young person and the need for maintaining confidentiality. They will seek advice about parental responsibility issues if unsure.

Parents/Carers

- 10.6. Where we have concerns about a child's/young person's safety and decide to share information to protect them from harm, we will explain to parent(s) or carer(s) and the child/young person as appropriate what information we intend to share and with whom and why, wherever it is safe and practical to do so. This is unless there are concerns that seeking to discuss a concern could result in a risk of harm to any individual.
- 10.7. Parents/carers must be aware that once matters have been referred to the First Contact Service, the school can only explain the procedure and is not able to give 'progress reports' on the case.

School Staff

- 10.8. School staff are proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks 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 social care.
- 10.9. There is a delicate balance to be struck between alerting members of staff to the concern about the child/young person and the need to protect the child/young person from too many people knowing. Information should only be divulged on a 'need to know' basis. Other members of staff need to know sufficient detail to prepare them to act with sensitivity to a distressed student. They do not need to know details.

Children/young people transferring to another school

- 10.10. When deciding what information to share, we will consider the relevancy of the information, what the receiving setting needs to know and whether the information is clearly presented and suitably contextualised. Staff will use professional judgement to make sure that any information shared is focused and proportionate.
- 10.11. When a child/young person is the subject of a Child Protection Plan and they move to another school the designated lead professional will inform the new school immediately and arrange as soon as possible for the handover of confidential information securely and separately within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term to allow the new school or college to have support in place for when the child/young person arrives (see KCSIE para. 148).
- 10.12. If a child/young person for whom there are other existing serious concerns including SEND needs transfers to another school, the new receiving provider will be informed immediately via their Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or SEND Co-ordinator and written records will follow. Both schools should maintain evidence of the secure transfer and receipt of information. Schools that both use CPOMS should use this system to transfer records securely.

- 10.13. Where a child is changing settings and information indicates a risk to others and/or the individual child, the receiving school is responsible for assessing risk and putting a safety and support plan in place; the Designated Safeguarding Leads from both settings should have a conversation where there are concerns.
- 10.14. Data that is not being transferred to another school should be kept in line with the school's Data Retention Policy, e.g. electively home educated students or moving to full time employment.

Guidance and Protocols

- 10.15. Please see the following guidance:
- [The Data Protection Act 2018](#)
 - [Sharing information to safeguard children and young people in the education sector in the UK | ICO](#)
 - [DfE Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers – 2024](#)
 - [Working together to safeguard children – 2026](#)
 - [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners – Updated 2024](#)
 - [Data protection in schools - Guidance – Updated July 2026](#)

11. Allegations Against Staff Including Supply Teachers, Trainee Teachers, Volunteers and Contractors

- 11.1. See Part Four of KCSIE 2026, para. 431-525.
- 11.2. [The Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership website](#) provides information about dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers (including supply staff) who have contact with children and young people in their work or activities.
- 11.3. Allegations of abuse by adults and peers in schools must be investigated in accordance with the [DSCP procedures](#), and when dealing with any allegation against adults and peers, it is vital to keep the welfare of the child/young person as the central concern. However, as in all child protection issues, a balance needs to be struck between supporting and protecting the child/young person and keeping the effects of possibly false allegations to a minimum. Thus, urgent consideration should be given to the substance of the allegations.
- 11.4. As outlined in KCSIE 2026, in some circumstances schools and colleges will have to consider an allegation against an individual not directly employed by them; for example, supply teachers, trainee teachers or contracted staff provided by an employment agency or business. Where this applies, schools and colleges share safeguarding responsibilities with the employment agency or business. Schools and colleges remain responsible for gathering the facts and managing the safeguarding process, while working closely with the employment agency or business, which will usually lead on any disciplinary action (KCSIE 2026 para. 452-456).

Receiving an allegation

- 11.5. On receiving an allegation, the Principal will proceed in line with recognised procedures - consulting immediately with LA officers (LADO, Local Authority Designated Officer, see contact details in Section 3) and/or informing the First Contact Service. If the LADO is unavailable there should be no delay in discussing with First Contact. **The Principal must not start to investigate.**
- 11.6. If an allegation is made for a person not directly employed by the school/Trust, recognised procedures should be followed. This includes supply staff, sports coaches and any individual or organisation using the school premises for the purposes of running activities for children and young people (for example community groups, sports associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities). Under no

circumstances should a school cease the use of a supply teacher, sports coach etc. due to safeguarding concerns without liaising with the LADO (see KCSIE 2026, para. 453).

- 11.7. Allegations regarding the Principal should be passed to the Chair of the Trust Board. Should this lead to delay, the person receiving details of the allegation should follow the advice above and report the matter immediately to the LADO and First Contact Service. At this stage the Principal should not be informed of the allegation (the same process as for any member of staff/adult in the school). The Chair of the Trust Board should be informed as soon as possible and asked to contact the LADO.
- 11.8. **Where it is suspected that a crime has been committed, then the matter should be reported to the police with immediate effect.**

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
Sharon Lewis/Louise Brookes 03000 268835
First Contact Service
03000 267979
CYPSLADOSecure@durham.gov.uk

Carrying out an investigation

- 11.9. Investigations will be carried out by the appropriate agencies.
- 11.10. In dealing with any allegation the Principal/CEO/Governors/Trustees need to balance:
- The seriousness of the allegation.
 - The risk of harm to students.
 - Possible contamination of evidence.
 - The welfare of the person concerned.
- 11.11. Suspension of the member of staff/adult in school will be considered:
- if there are any grounds for doubt as to the suitability of the employee to continue to work.
 - where suspension may assist in the completion of an investigation.
- 11.12. Suspension will be carried out in line with LA/Trust guidelines. Principals should contact Human Resources for guidance (HRSchools@durham.gov.uk).
- 11.13. Suspension should not be an automatic response. It should only be considered where there is cause to suspect child(ren)/young person/young people is/are at risk of harm or the case is so serious there may be grounds for dismissal. If in doubt, advice should be sought from HR and the LADO. Based on advice and a risk analysis, alternatives may be: redeployment of the individual; providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children and young people; moving the child/children/young person/young people, but only if it is in the best interests of the child/children/young person/young people, their views have been sought and parents/carers have been consulted. See KCSIE 2026, Part Four, para. 431-525.
- 11.14. During the investigation, support will be offered to both the student making the allegation and the adult/peer concerned. The welfare of a child/young person is paramount, and this will be the prime concern, however employers have a duty of care to their employees and should act in accordance with paragraph 468 of KCSIE 2026.
- 11.15. Once police and Intervention and Assessment teams have decided if further action is necessary or not, a meeting will take place with a representative from the school, LADO and HR to decide next steps and if an internal disciplinary investigation is needed.

Recommendations following an investigation

- 11.16. Where recommendations are made to the school regarding the outcome of a Child Protection investigation, the school will advise Children and Young People's Services regarding their response to the recommendation. For example, if a person is suspended and returns to the school, the date of that return should be communicated.
- 11.17. The following definitions are now used when determining the outcome of allegation investigations:
- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.
 - **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm to the person subject to the allegation.
 - **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
 - **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.
 - **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.
- 11.18. Where it is considered that an individual has engaged in conduct that has harmed (or is likely to harm) a child/young person or if a person otherwise poses a risk to harm a child/young person, the Principal and/or Trustees will make a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) and DBS in line with their legal requirement to do so - KCSIE 2026, para. 429-430.

12. Restrictive intervention, including use of 'reasonable force'

- 12.1. See KCSIE 2026, para. 203-205.
- 12.2. Our school has a separate policy, the 'Restrictive intervention, including use of reasonable force and other physical contact policy', which is shared with all staff and is available on our website [here](#). Our school policy relates to the following DfE guidance: [Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools Guidance for schools in England](#) - DfE 2026.
- 12.3. Our policy gives guidance on areas including:
- The underpinning guidance, legislation and obligations, including information contained in the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.
 - Who is allowed to use reasonable force and restrictive interventions.
 - The circumstances in which staff may use reasonable force and restrictive interventions.
 - What forms of reasonable force and restrictive interventions may take place in particular circumstances.
 - What forms of reasonable force and restrictive interventions are not acceptable.
 - How prevention and de-escalation should be used to minimise the need to use restrictive interventions.
 - How the additional vulnerability of students with SEND, mental health problems or medical conditions will be considered.
 - The procedures for recording and reporting incidents when reasonable force has been used.

13. Other physical contact

- 13.1. The 'Other physical contact with students' section of our 'Restrictive intervention, including use of reasonable force and other physical contact policy' states the following:
- 13.2. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a student is proper and necessary. The DfE guidance states that schools should not have a 'no contact' policy and additionally that schools 'should not grant any requests by parents/carers or staff members not to use reasonable force

and/or other restrictive interventions'. Staff should intervene where reasonable in the circumstances to fully protect students.

- 13.3. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with students which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions. This depends on circumstances but examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate include:
- When comforting a distressed student.
 - When a student is being congratulated or praised, for example a pat on the back or a handshake.
 - To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument.
 - To demonstrate exercises or techniques during sports lessons or coaching.
 - To give first aid.
- 13.4. In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in a given situation, the member of staff should use their judgement and have to regard to:
- The school's Safeguarding Policy.
 - The applicable circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present.
 - Any other material factors, including but not limited to whether:
 - The student has SEND or other vulnerabilities.
 - Any alternative strategies that do not include physical contact can be used.

14. The Prevent Duty

- 14.1. See KCSIE 2026, pages 166-167. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 section 26 places a duty on certain bodies, including schools, to have '*due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism*'. The DfE has produced non-statutory advice, [The Prevent Duty: an introduction for those with safeguarding responsibilities](#) - Updated 2023.
- 14.2. In addition there is the revised [Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales \(2023\)](#) - Home Office, paragraphs 141-210 of which are specifically concerned with education.
- 14.3. KCSIE 2026, page 166 states that '*Children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. 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*', as it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised. We use the above documents and advice in the following documents [The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation](#) - DfE Updated 2023, and [Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting](#) - GOV.UK 2023, to support us in our work to form risk assessments, working in partnership, staff training, IT policies and building children and young people's resilience to radicalisation.
- 14.4. In our school:
- Staff can identify children and young people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation. Information or concerns are shared with a Designated Safeguarding Lead, in the same way as other information that might be a safeguarding concern, who will then follow procedures in line with safeguarding DSCP guidance.
 - Policies and procedures are in line with those of Durham County Council, Durham Constabulary and the DSCP.
 - Throughout the life of the school as well as in specific lessons, students build resilience to radicalisation by the promotion of fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views.
 - We have robust IT policies and are mindful of guidance within KCSIE 2026 and the DfE's [Teaching Online Safety in Schools](#) - Updated 2023 and [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges](#) - Updated 2026.

- 14.5. [Prevent Duty Guidance: England and Wales \(2023\)](#), para. 175-177, notes ‘Settings should have measures in place to prevent their facilities being exploited by radicalisers. This includes seeking to ensure that any event spaces or IT equipment are not being used to facilitate the spread of extremist narratives which encourage people into participating in or supporting terrorism. Such measures will help to limit access to platforms that can be used to radicalise others. This does not mean that the Prevent duty should limit discussion of these issues. Instead, education settings should be spaces in which people can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including, where appropriate, terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas. When doing so, settings should encourage learners to respect other people, with particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.’
- 14.6. We will follow the County Durham Prevent Referral Flowchart (Appendix B) when any concerns are identified. Through discussion with the specialist colleagues at Durham Constabulary, it may be appropriate to make a referral to the Channel programme. This programme focuses on support at an early stage, tailor-made to the individual young person. Engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary. A school representative may be asked to be a member, if a student from the school is to be discussed at the Channel panel.
- 14.7. The following are the links required to make a referral:
- FIMUNorth@CTPNE.police.uk
 - <https://www.durham.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/t/prevent/prevent/beta/prevent-team-referral/>
- 14.8. Radicalisation additional advice and radicalisation:
- [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\)](#) – Home Office guidance.
 - [The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation - DfE 2023.](#)
 - [Educate Against Hate website – DfE guidance.](#)
 - [Prevent for Further Education and Training – Education and Training Foundation.](#)
 - [Extremism and Radicalisation Safeguarding Resources – Resources by London Grid for Learning](#)
 - [Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting](#) – DfE 2023.

15. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

- 15.1. We ensure all of our staff are trained to be aware of young people who could be at risk of sexual exploitation. See KCSIE 2026, para. 40-42.
- 15.2. Refer also to: [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people \(updated March 2024\) - GOV.UK.](#)
- 15.3. ‘CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or penetration with an object) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.’ KCSIE 2026, para. 40.
- 15.4. Sexual abuse may involve both physical and non-contact sexual activities. It can happen online. It can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child/young person’s immediate knowledge, for example, through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.
- 15.5. CSE can affect any child/young person who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex.

- 15.6. Our staff know that some children and young people may not realise they are being exploited, for example if they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship, and will handle these situations appropriately.
- 15.7. As outlined in KCSIE 2026, pages 150-151, some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where children/young people:
- [Appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions.](#)
 - [Associate with other children involved in exploitation.](#)
 - [Suffer from changes in emotional well-being.](#)
 - [Misuse alcohol and other drugs.](#)
 - [Go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late.](#)
 - [Regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.](#)
- 15.8. DSCP has a section of their website devoted to resources, guidance and a risk assessment matrix that assists schools: [Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Information Form \(durham-scp.org.uk\)](https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/child-exploitation-risk-assessment-information-form).

16. Honour Based Abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)

- 16.1. Honour or faith-based abuse (HBA) 'encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing' (KCSIE 2026, page 170).

FGM

- 16.2. **If there are concerns that an act of FGM has been undertaken on a girl under the age of 18, this MUST be reported to the police immediately.**
- 16.3. *'Whilst **all** staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific **legal duty on teachers**. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher **must** report this to the police'* (KCSIE 2026, para. 44).
- 16.4. Further guidance is available in: [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information - Home Office and DfE 2020](#).
- 16.5. FGM comprises all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.
- 16.6. FGM is considered a grave violation of the rights of girls and women.
- 16.7. Criminal and civil legislations on FGM are found in [The Female Mutilation Act 2003](#).
- 16.8. There is an FGM Helpline on 0800 028 3550 or they can be contacted via email: fgmhelp@NSPCC.org.uk and via their website: [Female Genital Mutilation | NSPCC](#).
- 16.9. Guidance leaflets and training materials have been produced by the Home Office & the National FGM Centre:
- [Female Genital Mutilation: Guidance for schools](#) - National FGM Centre 2019.
 - [Female genital mutilation: resource pack](#) - Home Office 2023.
 - [FGM Awareness & Prevention Training iHasco](#) - iHasco.

Forced Marriage

- 16.10. Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of

coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage.

- 16.11. We recognise that all forms of Honour Based Abuse are abuse and if our staff have a concern regarding a child/young person who might be at risk or who has suffered this, it will be reported to a Designated Safeguarding Lead and local safeguarding procedures will be followed.
- 16.12. The Home Office has provided the following guidance: [Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage and multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of forced marriage](#) - 2023.

17. Online Safety and the Use of Mobile Technology

- 17.1. We have adopted a whole school approach to online safety which ensures all children and staff are educated in their use of technology and know how to identify, intervene and escalate any concerns.
- 17.2. See KCSIE 2026, para. 162-167.
- 17.3. We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. To address this, the school aims to:
- Have robust processes in place (including filtering and monitoring) to ensure the online safety of students, staff, volunteers, Governors and Trustees.
 - Protect and educate the whole school community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology.
 - Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole school community.
 - Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate.
- 17.4. Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following categories of risk:
- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, extreme sexual or physical violence, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
 - **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
 - **Conduct:** online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm such as making, sending and receiving explicit images including those generated using AI and online bullying; and
 - **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams.
- 17.5. To meet our aims and address the risks above we will:
- Educate students about online safety as part of our curriculum. For example:
 - The safe use of social media, the internet and technology.
 - Keeping personal information private.
 - How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online.
 - How to report any incidents of cyber-bullying, ensuring students are encouraged to do so including where they are a witness rather than a victim.
 - Train staff as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying, the risks of online radicalisation, and the expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring. All staff members will receive refresher training as required and at least once each academic year.

- Educate parents/carers about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and during parents' evenings. We will also share clear procedures with them so they know how to raise concerns about online safety.
- Make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their mobile phone and cameras, for example that:
 - Staff will not take pictures or recordings of students on their personal phones or cameras.
- Make all students, parents/carers and staff aware that they are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the internet in school, use of the school's ICT systems and use of their mobile and smart technology.
- Explain the sanctions we will use if a student is in breach of our policies on the acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones.
- Make sure all staff, students and parents/carers are aware that staff have the power to search students' phones, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#).
- Put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems that are reviewed at least once every academic year to limit students' exposure to the 4 key categories of risk (described above) from the school's IT systems.
- Carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks faced by our school community.
- Provide regular safeguarding and children protection updates including online safety to all staff, at least annually, in order to continue to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard effectively.
- Review this Policy, including online safety, at least annually ensuring that procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly.

- 17.6. Our school has a separate Online Safety Policy which reflects KSCIE 2026 requirements regarding appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and school networks and takes into account DfE [Teaching Online Safety in Schools](#) guidance - Updated 2023. The Online Safety Policy and our Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guidance reflects our safety considerations and legal responsibilities in our use of Generative AI, informed by [Generative artificial intelligence \(AI\) in education](#) - DfE Updated 2025.
- 17.7. The Professionals Online Safety Helpline (available Monday to Friday 10am-4pm) provides advice, guidance and mediation for professionals working with children and young people regarding online safety issues. They can be contacted via:
- Phone: 0844 381 4772.
 - Email: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk.
- 17.8. The school is aware that a criminal offence has been committed if a person aged 18 or over intentionally communicates with a child under 16, who the adult does not reasonably believe to be 16 or over, if the communication is sexual or if it is intended to encourage the child to make a communication which is sexual. The offence will be committed whether or not the child communicates with the adult. This is the offence of sexual communication with a child under section 67 of the Serious Crime Act 2015.

Artificial Intelligence

- 17.9. Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, students and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini.
- 17.10. Our school recognises that AI has many uses, including enhancing teaching and learning, and in helping to protect and safeguard students. However, AI may also have the potential to be used to facilitate abuse (e.g. bullying and grooming) and/or expose children/young people to harmful content. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

- 17.11. Our school will treat any use of AI to bully students in line with this Policy and our Climate for Learning and Attendance Policy, available on our website [here](#).
- 17.12. Staff are made aware of the risks of using AI tools and the school carries out an assessment where new AI tools are considered being used by the school. For more information, see our Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guidance. Our school's requirements for filtering and monitoring also apply to the use of AI, in line with KCSIE 2026, para. 143.

Mobile Phones

- 17.13. As outlined in our Climate for Learning and Attendance Policy, available on our website [here](#), our school recognises that mobile phones are an integral part of modern society and a valuable tool for independence. Our policy on mobile phones balances a focused academic environment with the freedom of social time, in order to encourage the responsible use of mobile phones:
- We permit the use of mobile devices during scheduled breaks and in social areas. This allows students to manage their personal lives, connect with peers and practice digital self-regulation in a relaxed setting.
 - To ensure an environment of focus, phones must be switched to off or put on silent during all lessons, unless specifically directed by a teacher/tutor for educational purposes.
 - We expect all students to use their devices ethically. This means being mindful of others' privacy, avoiding disruptive noise and adhering to our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and in line with our bullying and harassment expectations.
 - By allowing phone use outside of class, we aim to treat our students as young adults, trusting them to switch between social connectivity and their studies responsibly.
- 17.14. If a device is used inappropriately (e.g. during a lesson without permission), this will lead to actions and sanctions. Please see the Climate for Learning and Attendance Policy for more information.

18. Children/young people with SEND or health issues

- 18.1. We recognise that students with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. Children and young people with disabilities are more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, exploitation and neglect in this group, including:
- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child/young person's condition without further exploration.
 - Students being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other students.
 - The potential for students with SEND or certain health conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
 - Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges risks that they do not understand that what is happening to them is abuse.
 - That these children/young people are more likely to be dependent on adults for care.
 - Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in school or being unable to understand the consequences of doing so.
- 18.2. Any abuse involving students with SEND will require close liaison with a Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Director of Student Support.

19. Children/young people with medical conditions

- 19.1. An incident relating to the management of a child/young person's medical condition (including allergies) does not itself warrant a referral to local safeguarding partners.

- 19.2. A safeguarding referral will be made where an incident highlights concern that the child/young person might be at an increased risk of being neglected, abused or exploited by persons inside or outside of their family because of their medical condition. For example, information about the child/young person's medical condition might be withheld from the school, or the child/young person may be repeatedly sent to school without essential medication, putting them at risk.

20. Young carers

- 20.1. The school recognises that caring responsibilities can impact on a child/young person's attendance, attainment, behaviour and wellbeing, and early identification is essential to ensure young carers receive support at the right time and by the appropriate services including additional support from external partners, or local authority and health service.

21. Children/young people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual

- 21.1. We recognise that a child/young person being lesbian, gay or bisexual is not in itself a risk factor for harm. However, children/young people who are (or who are perceived by other children/young people to be) lesbian, gay, or bisexual can sometimes be vulnerable to discriminatory bullying. Please see our Climate for Learning and Attendance Policy (available on our website [here](#)) for more information on the measures and mechanisms at our school that are in place to prevent and educate against bullying.

22. Children/young people who are questioning their gender

Supporting children/young people who are questioning their gender

- 22.1. We are aware of the potential vulnerabilities of children/young people who are questioning their gender, including the possibility of complex mental health and psychosocial needs, such as relating to relationships with family, peers or their broader social environment, including discriminatory bullying.
- 22.2. We will take a strong, proactive stance on all forms of bullying based on gender. See our Climate for Learning and Attendance Policy for more detail. We will ensure that children/young people and their families are aware that the school will appropriately sanction any cases of bullying or harassment, and take a strong stand against bullying.
- 22.3. When supporting a child/young person questioning their gender, we will take into account the principle of taking a careful approach.
- 22.4. A Designated Safeguarding Lead will lead in these cases.

Involving parents/carers in cases of children/young people questioning their gender

- 22.5. Where a child/young person who is questioning their gender asks for support from the school, we will engage parents/carers as a matter of priority, KCSIE 2026, para. 268.
- 22.6. However, in the rare circumstances where involving parents/carers might put the child/young person at greater risk than not involving them, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will determine a course of action needed to safeguard the child/young person before contacting parents/carers or any decisions are taken.
- 22.7. Where a child/young person confides in a member of staff about their feelings but does not ask the school to make changes to how they are treated, the school will only break any confidence if there is a related safeguarding risk.

Considering requests for support with social transition

- 22.8. As per KCSIE 2026, para. 255, the school will not initiate any action regarding social transition. However, when a young/person or their parent/carer requests that the school makes changes or puts support in place to facilitate the child/young person presenting as the opposite biological sex ("social transition"), we will work together with parents/carers to determine what is in the best interests of the child/young person

and other children/young people.

- 22.9. Members of staff will not adopt any changes relating to social transition unless a decision has been made by the school and a child/young person's parents/carers have been involved, KCSIE 2026 - para. 260.
- 22.10. In making decisions about supporting social transition, the school will ensure compliance with its obligations in respect of safeguarding legislation and equality and human rights law, ensuring that any assessment of discrimination is informed by the school's evaluation of the welfare and best interests of the child/young person and other children/young people. The school will make decisions in line with the following principles:
- The trust has statutory duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children/young people: the first step when considering a child/young person's request for support with social transition will be to consider what is in the best interests of the child/young person and other children/young people, and a decision relating to social transition may not be the same as a child/young person's wishes, KCSIE - para 265.
 - Parents and carers should be actively involved and their views treated with importance: (except in the rare circumstances where involving parents or carers would constitute a greater risk to the child/young person than not involving them) where a child/young person who is questioning their gender asks for support from the school parents/carers will be engaged as a matter of priority and their views will carry great weight and be properly considered.
 - Accommodating social transition is an active intervention so the school will take a very careful approach: social transition is an active intervention that may have significant effects on the child/young person in terms of their psychological functioning and longer-term outcomes.
 - The school will comply with obligations under the Equality Act and Human Rights Act when considering requests for support with social transition.
- 22.11. The school will ensure that the decision-making process is documented and records are kept.
- 22.12. The circumstances or needs of a child/young person may change over time, and the school may need to review its original decision and will involve the Designated Safeguarding Lead in doing so.

Rules on single-sex spaces

- 22.13. As per KCSIE 2026, para. 276, students are not allowed into toilets, changing rooms or showers designated for the opposite biological sex, with no exceptions.

Rules on single-sex sports

- 22.14. The school may teach and play some sports or games, or activities of a competitive nature, in single-sex groups where the physical strength, stamina or physique of the average girl would put her at a disadvantage in competition with the average boy (or vice versa). The school can separate children/young people according to their biological sex in these circumstances.
- 22.15. Some sports may need to be played in single-sex groups from a certain age to ensure children/young people's safety. Where single-sex sports are implemented for safety reasons, there are no exceptions and students must not be allowed to participate in sports designed for the opposite sex.

23. Child-on-Child Abuse (Including Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment)

- 23.1. See KCSIE 2026, Part One para. 30-35 and Part Five para. 526-631.
- 23.2. Our school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse including harmful sexual behaviour (HSB), sexual violence and sexual harassment. Our staff are aware that children and young

people are capable of abusing other children and young people, and recognise that abuse can occur inside or outside school, online or offline and as a single incident or a wider pattern of behaviour.

- 23.3. All staff understand that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the child who has experienced the harm and the child alleged to have caused it. Staff will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here', recognising that an absence of reports does not mean abuse is not occurring, and report any concern immediately to a Designated Safeguarding Lead - KCSIE 2026, para. 30-34 & 526-530).
- 23.4. The school will challenge inappropriate, abusive, misogynist or misandrist behaviour. Such conduct will not be dismissed as *"banter"*, *"just having a laugh"*, *"part of growing up"* or *"boys being boys"* (KCSIE 2026, para. 32). Early identification and evidence-informed support will be used to prevent inappropriate behaviour from escalating, KCSIE 2026, para. 32-35 & 527-535).
- 23.5. Child-on-child abuse may take different forms, such as:
- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
 - Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children and young people (also known as teenage relationship abuse).
 - Physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm.
 - Physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon.
 - Harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and sexual harassment - which may include misogyny/misandry.
 - Consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nude and semi-nude images, including those generated using AI.
 - Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
 - Upskirting (which is a criminal offence) 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.
 - Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. Please see KCSIE 2026, para. 193.
- 23.6. The school will also have regard to the following guidance: [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people \(updated March 2024\)](#) - GOV.UK and relevant local safeguarding partnership procedures. All incidents involving nudes or semi-nudes will receive a safeguarding response. For further information about nudes sexting and our protocols to safeguard students in regards to this, please see our Online Safety Policy.
- 23.7. Children and young people's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum from normal and developmentally expected behaviour to inappropriate, problematic, abusive or violent behaviour. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies will maintain an appropriate understanding of HSB and seek specialist advice where required. The age and developmental stage of the children/young people, any power imbalance, SEND or communication needs, and whether a child/young person displaying HSB may themselves have experienced abuse or trauma will be considered (KCSIE 2026, para. 531-535 & 629-631).
- 23.8. We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents. To achieve this, we will:
- Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting, making or sending sexual images.
 - Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female students, and initiation or hazing-type violence with respect to boys.
 - Ensure our curriculum helps to educate students about appropriate behaviour and consent.

- Ensure students are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems.
- Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously.
- Be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with safeguarding partners.
- Recognise the intersection of misogyny/misandry and harmful sexual behaviour. We will actively identify, challenge and address how misogynistic/misandrist attitudes contribute to the normalisation of inappropriate behaviour and increases the risk of leading to child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence, within our school environment.
- Be alert to the prevalence of harmful online material and extreme misogynistic/misandrist ideologies, including misogynistic influencers, and recognise the impact this content could have on shaping students' attitudes.
- Support children/young people who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. We will do all we can to make sure the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed.
- Consider intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment.
- Ensure staff are trained to understand:
 - How to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports
 - That even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here', as stated in para. 18.3.
 - That if they have any concerns about a child/young person's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
 - Children and young people can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to.
 - A friend may make a report.
 - A member of staff may overhear a conversation.
 - A child/young person's behaviour might indicate that something is wrong.
 - That certain children/young people may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.
 - That a student harming a peer could be a sign that the child/young person is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this Policy.
 - The important role they have to play in preventing child-on-child abuse and responding where they believe a child/young person may be at risk from it.
 - That they should speak to a Designated Safeguarding Lead if they have any concerns.
 - That social media is likely to play a role in the fall-out from any incident or alleged incident, including for potential contact between the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and friends from either side.
 - That exposure to misogynistic/misandrist content online can indicate a safeguarding concern and requires early discussion with a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

23.9. The school will provide developmentally appropriate, evidence-based Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education. Through the CORE programme, issues will be tackled such as:

- Supporting children to develop the skills that form the building blocks of all positive relationships.
- Healthy and respectful relationships.
- Boundaries, consent and kindness in relationships.
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality.
- Body confidence and self-esteem.

- How to recognise and report concerns about an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour.
- The concepts of, and laws relating to all forms of sexual harassment, and abuse, and how to access support.
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it.
- Understanding online harms such as sharing images, the prevalence of deepfakes, pornography and misogynistic influencers and when and where to seek help.

- 23.10. This will be reinforced through the school's Climate for Learning and Attendance Policy, pastoral support system and wider safeguarding culture (KCSIE 2026, para. 158-160 & Part Five).
- 23.11. Our school will respond to all signs, concerns, disclosures and reports of child-on-child abuse including those arising outside of the school premises and/or online, in accordance with KCSIE 2026, Part Five. Staff receiving a report will listen carefully, avoid leading questions, explain the limits of confidentiality, make an accurate record and report the matter immediately to a Designated Safeguarding Lead. The child/young person will be reassured that they are being taken seriously, will be supported and kept safe, and will not be made to feel ashamed or responsible for reporting.
- 23.12. We recognise that for some (but not all) forms of child-on-child abuse it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators (as per para. 193 in KCSIE 2026), but all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.
- 23.13. Following a report of sexual violence, a Designated Safeguarding Lead will complete an immediate written risk and needs assessment. Following sexual harassment, the need for an assessment will be considered case by case. Assessments will address the safety and support needs of the child who experienced the harm, any other potential victims, the child alleged to have caused the harm, the wider school community, and the time and location of the incident. They will be recorded, reviewed and used to inform ongoing safeguarding decisions, KCSIE 2026, para. 565-567.
- 23.14. Where a report concerns rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault or causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent is, the starting point is referral to the police. Where a child/young person is suffering or is likely to suffer harm, an immediate referral will be made to local authority children's social care and, where appropriate, the police. The school will not delay proportionate safeguarding action while awaiting the outcome of another agency's investigation, KCSIE 2026, Part Five.
- 23.15. Support will be planned for the child/young person who experienced the harm, the child/young person alleged to have caused it and any other affected children/young people. The wishes and feelings of the child/young person who experienced the harm will remain central. Disciplinary action and safeguarding support may occur at the same time, and support for the child/young person alleged to have caused harm will include consideration of unmet needs or underlying abuse and trauma, KCSIE 2026, para. 629-631.
- 23.16. All reports, decisions, referrals, risk assessments, support arrangements and reasons for action will be recorded securely and shared lawfully with those who need the information to safeguard children. Relevant policies, including the Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy and Procedures, Climate for Learning and Attendance Policy, Online Safety Policy and Relationships and Sex Education Policy, will be kept consistent and reviewed in response to emerging patterns or concerns.

24. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) including County Lines

- 24.1. See KCSIE 2026, para. 36-39.

- 24.2. We will ensure that all staff are aware of the indicators that may signal that children and young people are at risk from or involved with CCE.
- 24.3. CCE is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child/young person into taking part in any criminal activity and can be experienced differently by both boys and girls. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents. It may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.
- 24.4. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact, it can also occur through the use of technology. It can be linked to serious violence. Specific forms of CCE can include children/young people being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines.
- 24.5. We will ensure that all staff are aware that children and young people can become trapped by this type of exploitation and that, as they become involved, they often commit crimes themselves. We will ensure that we recognise their vulnerability as victims even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.
- 24.6. Some of the following can be indicators of CCE, children/young people:
- Appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions.
 - Associate with other children involved in exploitation.
 - Suffer from changes in emotional wellbeing.
 - Misuse alcohol and other drugs.
 - Go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late.
 - Regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.
- 24.7. If a member of staff suspects CCE, they will discuss this with a Designated Safeguarding Lead who will trigger the local safeguarding procedures including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the policy, if appropriate.
- 24.8. The following guidance is available:
- [County lines and criminal exploitation toolkit](#), The Children's Society - 2018.
 - [Preventing youth violence and gang involvement - Practical advice for schools and colleges](#), Home Office.
 - [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines](#), Home Office - Updated 2023.

25. Serious Violence

- 25.1. See KCSIE 2026, Part One para. 49.
- 25.2. Our school will ensure that all staff are aware of the indicators that may signal that children and young people are at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime. Staff will respond in accordance with the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures and report concerns immediately to a Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff also recognise that the risks are higher for children/young people with disrupted education (e.g. suspensions, permanent exclusions, time in alternative provision) or a history of offending. Our school will also try to be alert to when children/young people might be at highest risk around the school day (for example, immediately after school).
- 25.3. KCSIE 2026 recognises that concerns about serious violence may be linked to child criminal exploitation, county lines, gangs, child on child abuse, contextual safeguarding and online activity. Staff will consider these wider safeguarding factors when assessing concerns rather than viewing incidents in isolation.

- 25.4. Indicators may include:
- Increased absence from school or college.
 - A change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups.
 - A significant decline in educational 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 children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.
- 25.5. Staff will also be made aware that the likelihood of involvement in serious violence may be increased by factors such as:
- Being male.
 - Having been suspended, spent time in Alternative Provision or permanently excluded from school.
 - Having experienced child maltreatment.
 - Having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.
 - Having used drugs or alcohol in early adolescence.
 - Having previously been a victim or previously perpetrated violence.
- 25.6. These indicators should not be used to stereotype children/young people but should inform professional curiosity and safeguarding assessment.
- 25.7. Where there are concerns that a child/young person may be carrying or intending to use a weapon, or where there is an immediate risk of serious harm, staff will act immediately, inform a Designated Safeguarding Lead and contact the police where appropriate. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will assess risks to the child/young person and others and determine any safeguarding referrals, safety planning and multi-agency action required, with reference to KCSIE 2026.
- 25.8. Staff will also have regard to the Home Office's [Serious Violence Strategy](#), the [Serious Violence Duty Statutory Guidance](#) and the [The Youth Endowment Fund Violence Prevention Toolkit](#) when developing preventative practice and early intervention.
- 25.9. Please see the Home Office guidance: [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines](#).

26. Mental Health

- 26.1. See KCSIE 2026, Part One para. 45 to 48 & Part Two para. 224 to 232 – Mental Health, including self-harm and suicide prevention.
- 26.2. We will ensure that all staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child/young person has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Mental health problems can also, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. Staff will be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child/young person may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. If a child/young person is struggling with their mental health, self-harming, has an eating disorder or is experiencing suicidal ideation and making plans to end their life, there are likely to be potential warning signs which education staff are well placed to recognise, including:
- Significant changes in behaviour.
 - Ongoing difficulty sleeping.
 - Withdrawing from social situations.
 - Not wanting to do things they usually like.
 - Physical signs of self-harm or neglecting themselves.

- 26.3. Where staff have a mental health concern about a child/young person that is also a safeguarding concern, they will follow this Policy immediately and report their concerns to a Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay, see KCSIE 2026 - Part One: Mental Health.
- 26.4. Staff will access training or information so that they understand:
- How abuse, neglect, exploitation and other traumatic childhood experiences may affect children/young people's mental health, behaviour, attendance and education.
 - That behaviour may be a communication of an unmet safeguarding need.
 - School staff are well placed to identify emerging concerns and secure appropriate support but must not attempt to diagnose mental health conditions, which should only be undertaken by appropriately trained professionals.
 - The importance of responding appropriately to concerns relating to self-harm, suicidal thoughts or suicide risk and following school safeguarding procedures. See KCSIE 2026 – Part One: Mental Health.
- 26.5. The school recognises that early identification and evidence-informed intervention can improve outcomes for children/young people experiencing mental health difficulties. Concerns will be considered alongside safeguarding, SEND, attendance, behaviour and wider contextual information to ensure that children/young people receive appropriate support at the earliest opportunity. Where appropriate, a Designated Safeguarding Lead will work with the Senior Mental Health Lead, the Director of Student Support, the Pastoral Team and external agencies to coordinate support, see KCSIE 2026 – Part One and Part Two.
- 26.6. Where there are concerns regarding self-harm, suicidal thoughts or an immediate risk of harm, staff will take immediate action in accordance with this Policy. If a child/young person is believed to be at immediate risk, emergency services will be contacted where necessary and the Designated Safeguarding Lead informed immediately. Staff will not delay safeguarding action whilst awaiting a mental health assessment or diagnosis.
- 26.7. We will ensure that we access professional advice to support us in identifying students students experiencing mental health difficulties and follow current Department for Education guidance on promoting and supporting children's mental health and wellbeing in schools, including:
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.](#)
 - [Promoting and Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing in Schools and Colleges \(DfE\) - Updated 2026.](#)
 - [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools \(DfE\) - Updated 2018.](#)
 - [School Zone – Mental Wellbeing Resources.](#)
 - Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) where available.
 - [Durham mental health support Poster.](#)

27. Domestic Abuse

- 27.1. See KCSIE 2026, Part One, para. 43 & Domestic Abuse and Operation Encompass Annex A, pages 161-164.
- 27.2. Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent of care giver abuse, KCSIE 2026, page 163.
- 27.3. All of our staff receive safeguarding training to ensure they understand the impact of domestic abuse on children/young people, recognising that children/young people who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse are victims in their own right and that domestic abuse can have a significant impact on a child/young person's physical health, emotional wellbeing, behaviour, attendance and educational outcomes. Staff understand that domestic abuse may also be an indicator that a child/young person is at risk of, or suffering, other forms of abuse or neglect, see KCSIE 2026 – Part One: Domestic Abuse.

- 27.4. The school participates fully in Operation Encompass. The Designated Safeguarding Leads act as the school's Operation Encompass Key Adult and receives and manages notifications from the police where a child/young person may have been affected by a domestic abuse incident. Following receipt of a notification, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider the child's immediate safeguarding and welfare needs, ensure appropriate support is made available within school and, where necessary, make timely referrals to children's social care or other relevant agencies, see KCSIE 2026 – Operation Encompass Annex A, page 161.
- 27.5. The school recognises that, since the introduction of the statutory Operation Encompass notification duty, police must notify the relevant education setting where they have reasonable grounds to believe that a child/young person may be a victim of domestic abuse. Operation Encompass notifications do not replace the school's own safeguarding responsibilities or referral procedures, and all concerns will continue to be managed in accordance with this Policy and local safeguarding partnership procedures.
- 27.6. Information received through Operation Encompass will be treated as confidential, stored securely within the school's safeguarding records and shared only with those staff who need the information in order to safeguard and support the child/young person. The school will ensure that appropriate pastoral and educational support is provided, taking account of the child/young person's wishes and feelings wherever appropriate.
- 27.7. Where staff have any concerns that a child/young person may be experiencing the effects of domestic abuse, whether or not an Operation Encompass notification has been received, they will report these concerns immediately to a Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with this Policy. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider the need for early help, referral to children's social care, specialist domestic abuse services or other agencies as appropriate, see KCSIE 2026 – Part One.
- 27.8. The school will also ensure that age-appropriate Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education help children develop an understanding of healthy, respectful relationships, recognise abusive and controlling behaviours and know how to seek help if they are worried about themselves or someone else.

28. Monitoring Arrangements

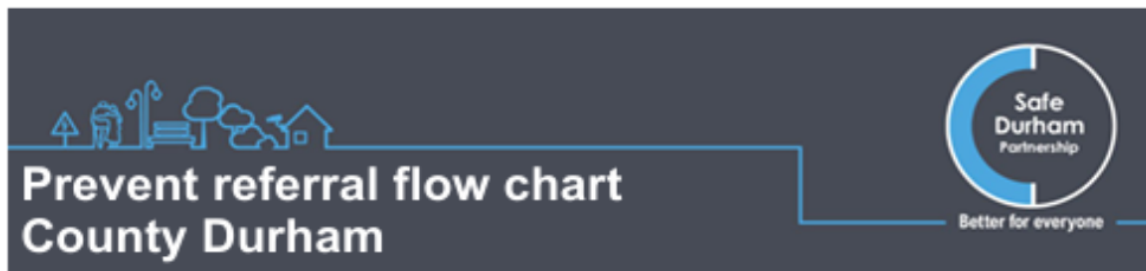
- 28.1. This Policy will be reviewed at least annually. It will also be revised following any concerns and/or updates to national and local guidance or procedure.
- 28.2. At every review, it will be approved by the Board of Trustees.

29. Appendix A: Summary of Multi-Agency Meetings

SAFEGUARDING POLICY: APPENDIX 1

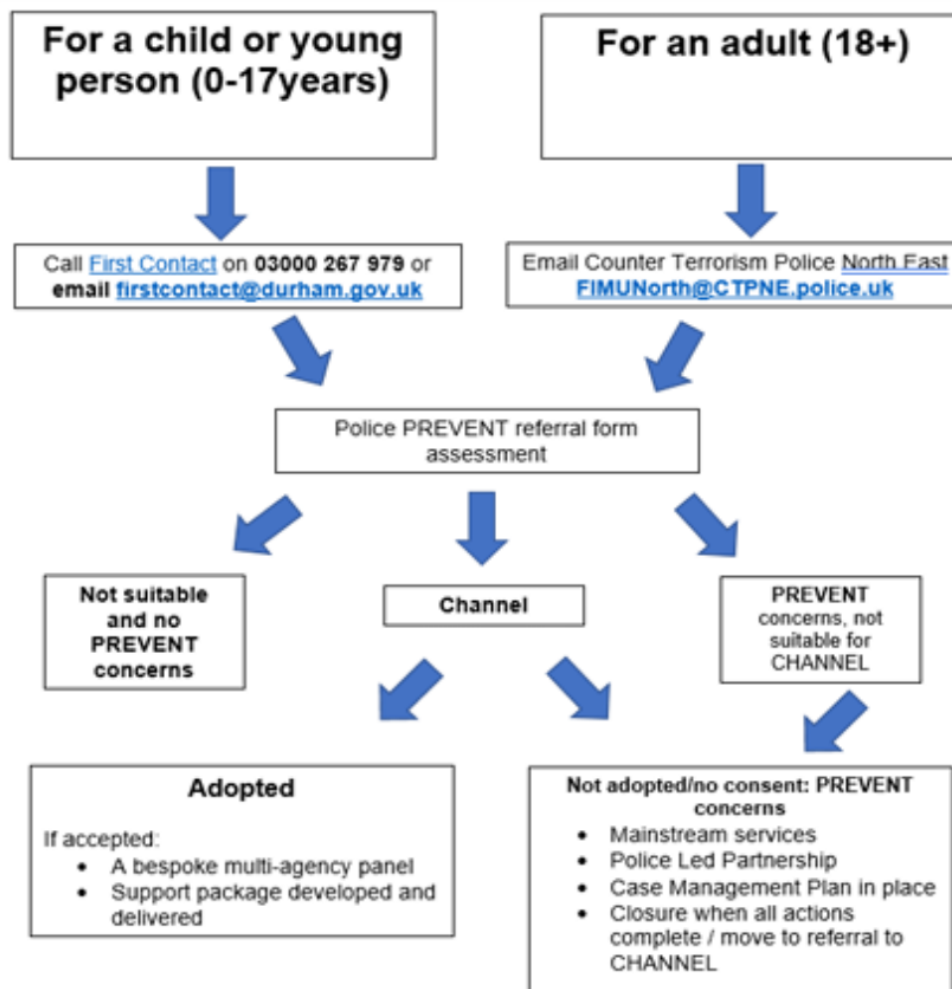
Multi-Agency Meetings		
 Strategy	•Referral taken up by First contact Service: 'reasonable cause to suspect child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm'. •To agree whether to start s47 enquiries and to begin/complete a core assessment under Child Act 1989. •Professionals meeting only •Held at short notice (some professionals may be available by phone). Police Sergeant and investigating officer (VU); Assessment and Intervention Team manager and SW, Health, referrer (if professional) and other relevant colleagues. •Usually held in A&I Team office, hospital. •To PLAN how to look into the concern: share information, consider criminal investigation, medicals, interviews etc.	
 Initial Child Protection Conference	•15 DAYS after last strategy meeting •Accessible public building: A&I offices •Parents/carers (supporter/legal adviser) and all relevant professionals who work with family members and children attend •Conference is to decide whether the child(ren) are at continuing risk of significant harm and whether CP Plan needs to be put in place. •Tasks: prepare a report for the conference on all children in family you work with •Share report with parents and carers at least two working days before the conference (open/transparent procedure so parents can know and question all information in advance). •Ensure that child's views are given •Produce single-agency chronology. •If children not put on list then consideration of services needed, now passes to relevant Child Protection Team.	
 Core Group	•10 DAYS later. Date for this meeting and first Review Conference is set at the Initial Conference •This 'core' of essential professionals will work with the family and the young person to try and achieve change and improvement so that the child is not still at continuing risk of harm (these safety issues are dealt with before other 'welfare' matters) •Key worker is the social worker •The group complete the Child Protection Plan and complete work on the core assessment as part of this •The chronologies are merged and continuously updated as working documents •Initially meetings quite frequent but generally held about every 4-6 weeks	
 Review CP Conference	•10 WEEKS (3 months) before first Review conference. •Evaluate effectiveness of Core Group in effecting change and better care of the children •'..to review the safety, health and development of the child against the planned outcomes set out in the child protection plan' •to see whether CP plan should continue to be in place or should be changed •Child's wishes and feelings must be sought and taken into account •if the child is not still at risk of significant harm then they should not require a CP plan •Tasks: report needed and shared with parents/carers 7 days prior to conference: evaluation what has changed, the impact on child's welfare against objectives set out in the plan	

30. Appendix B: County Durham Prevent Referral Flowchart



Prevent referral flow chart for County Durham

The Channel Programme is a key part of the Prevent strategy. Section 36 of the Act requires local authorities and others to provide support for people who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, before they commit an offence. This process, known as [Channel](#), operates in the pre-criminal space and aims to provide support to individuals at an early stage and help safeguard them from radicalisation.



31. Appendix C: Training Log

Role Name	Training (September 2025 onwards) *Our main training provider is the National College. The Training Log is correct at the time of Policy approval and is updated at least annually in line with the Policy.	Date
Principal/CEO Ellen Beveridge	KCSIE 2026	July 2026
	Certificate in Online Safety	16.07.26
	Certificate in the Prevent Duty	16.07.26
	Annual Certificate in Safeguarding Refresher	02.09.25
	What Parents & Educators Need to Know About Snapchat	17.09.25
COFO Claire Rye	KCSIE 2026	July 2026
	Certificate in Online Safety	02.07.26
	Certificate in the Prevent Duty	02.07.26
	Annual Certificate in Safeguarding Refresher	02.07.26
Vice Principal Lee Bone	KCSIE 2026	July 2026
	Annual Certificate in Safeguarding Refresher	20.07.26
	Certificate in Online Safety	20.07.26
	Certificate in the Prevent Duty	20.07.26
Vice Principal Lesley Thompson	KCSIE 2026	July 2026
	Certificate in Online Safety	25.06.26
	Annual Certificate in Safeguarding Refresher	26.06.26
	Certificate in the Prevent Duty	26.06.26
	Certificate in Safer Recruitment	08.07.26
Assistant Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead Steven Robinson	LGBTQ+ Inclusiveness: Practical Guidance for Schools	23.01.24
	Online Grooming: Prevention, Intervention & Response Secondary	19.03.24
	Certificate in Understanding Fundamental British Values	08.05.24
	Annual Certificate in Safeguarding for Staff (2023-24)	02.07.24
	Annual Advanced Certificate in Safeguarding for Designated Leads (2024-2025)	14.10.24
	Annual Certificate in Safeguarding for Staff (2024-25)	25.11.24
	Annual Certificate in the Prevent Duty (2024-25)	16.12.24
	Certificate in the Use of Reasonable Force (2024-25)	06.01.25
	Annual Certificate in Online Safety for Teaching Staff (2024-25)	20.05.25
	Annual Certificate in Health & Safety at Work (2024-25)	04.06.25
	Certificate in Data Protection & GDPR for Staff (2024-25)	04.06.25
	NEW KCSIE 2025: Priorities & Key Themes Secondary	September 2025
	Certificate in Safeguarding for Staff	20.11.25

	Certificate in the Prevent Duty	20.11.25
	Certificate in Online Safety	20.11.25
	Certificate in the Use of Restrictive Interventions	04.03.26
	Certificate in Search & Seizure Awareness	04.03.26
	Certificate in Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (2025-26)	05.05.26
	Certificate in Safer Recruitment	29.06.26
	KCSIE 2026	July 2026
	Annual Refresher in the Prevent Duty	01.09.26
	Certificate in Safeguarding for Staff	01.09.26
	Advanced Certificate in Online Safety for DSLs & Deputy DSLs	02.09.26
	Certificate of Achievement: Designated Safeguarding Lead (Level 3)	02.09.26
Assistant Principal Matthew Anglesea	Certificate in the Prevent Duty	17.06.26
	Certificate in Online Safety	17.06.26
	Annual Certificate in Safeguarding Refresher	17.06.26
	KCSIE 2026	July 2026
Assistant Principal Laura Neasham	KCSIE 2026	July 2026
	Certificate in Online Safety	06.07.26
	Annual Certificate in Safeguarding Refresher	08.07.26
	Certificate in the Prevent Duty	13.07.26
	Certificate in Safer Recruitment	16.07.26
Assistant Principal Ruth Watson	KCSIE 2026	July 2026
	Annual Certificate in Safeguarding Refresher	17.07.26
	Certificate in Online Safety	17.07.26
	Certificate in the Prevent Duty	17.07.26
Nominated Governor for Safeguarding Bianca McElrue	Safeguarding for Governance (Refresher) 2025/26	12.10.25
	Cyber Security Training for School Staff	26.10.25
	Certificate in the Role of the Chair of Governors for Academies and Trusts	16.02.26
	KCSIE 2026	July 2026
Governors/Trustees	All Governors and Trustees complete certificated annual safeguarding training (trainers include National College, NGA Learning Link and GovernorHub Knowledge).	Annually
Governors/Trustees and staff with Safer Recruitment training	Steven Gardiner	27.06.22
	Jo Lain	14.07.23
	Ellen Beveridge	24.07.23
	James Miller	10.12.23
	James Miller	10.12.23

	Gillian Askew	21.12.23
	Emily Church	13.11.24
	Catherine Reading	25.01.24
	Carole Henderson	20.02.24
	Alan Houston	09.05.24
	Sophie Daniels	21.05.24
	Claire Oates	02.09.24
	Katie O'Reilly	17.10.24
	Barry Piercy	07.12.24
	Lee Bone	27.01.25
	David Nelson	16.09.25
	Steven Robinson	29.06.26
	Lesley Thompson	08.07.26
	Laura Neasham	16.07.26
Director of Year and Designated Safeguarding Lead Jessica Clayton	Designated Safeguarding Lead (Level 3)	18.03.26
	KCSIE 2026	July 2026
	Certificate in the Prevent Duty	15.07.26
	Certificate in Online Safety	16.07.26
	Annual Certificate in Safeguarding Refresher	16.07.26
	Certificate in Search & Seizure Awareness	16.07.26
	Certificate in the Use of Restrictive Interventions	16.07.26
Director of Year and Designated Safeguarding Lead Rachel Thexton	Designated Safeguarding Lead (Level 3)	26.03.26
	Embedding EDI in Safeguarding Practices	19.05.26
	KCSIE 2026	July 2026
	Annual Certificate in Safeguarding Refresher	14.07.26
	Certificate in the Prevent Duty	14.07.26
	Certificate in Online Safety	14.07.26
	Certificate in Search & Seizure Awareness	16.07.26
	Certificate in the Use of Restrictive Interventions	16.07.26
Pastoral Support Manager Sue Diston	Certificate in Cyber Security for Staff	03.06.26
	Certificate in Search & Seizure Awareness	04.06.26
	Certificate in Health & Safety for Staff	04.06.26
	Certificate in Online Safety for Teaching Staff	08.06.26
	Certificate in Fundamental British Values	08.06.26
	Certificate in the Use of Restrictive Interventions	08.06.26

	The Prevent Duty: Statutory Priorities	09.06.26
	Certificate in Data Protection & GDPR for Staff	09.06.26
	Certificate in Safeguarding for Staff	10.06.26
	KCSIE 2026	July 2026
	Designated Safeguarding Lead (Level 3)	12.06.26
	Advanced Certificate in Safeguarding for Designated Leads	12.06.26
Pastoral Support Manager Ashleigh Dwyer	Certificate in Cyber Security for Staff	03.06.26
	Certificate in Search & Seizure Awareness	04.06.26
	Certificate in Health & Safety for Staff	04.06.26
	Certificate in the Use of Restrictive Interventions	08.06.26
	Certificate in Data Protection & GDPR for Staff	10.06.26
	Designated Safeguarding Lead (Level 3)	10.06.26
	Certificate in Safeguarding	10.06.26
	Advanced Certificate in Safeguarding for Designated Leads	12.06.26
	Certificate in Online Safety	12.06.26
	Certificate in the Prevent Duty	12.06.26
	Certificate in Fundamental British Values	12.06.26
	KCSIE 2026	July 2026
Pastoral Support Manager Lucy Shearer	Designated Safeguarding Lead (Level 3)	12.02.24
	Middle Leaders: Creating, Developing and Leading a Cohesive Team	06.05.26
	KCSIE 2026	July 2026
	Certificate in Online Safety	28.07.26
	Certificate in the Prevent Duty	28.07.26
	Annual Refresher in Safeguarding	28.07.26
Pastoral Support Manager Joanne Smith	Designated Safeguarding Lead (Level 3)	09.09.24
	Certificate in Online Safety	22.06.26
	Certificate in Prevent Duty	26.06.26
	Annual Certificate in Safeguarding Refresher	29.06.26
	KCSIE 2026	July 2026
	Certificate in the Use of Restrictive Intervention	17.07.26
Director of Student Support (SEND) Stephen Joel	Designated Safeguarding Lead (Level 3)	25.03.26
	KCSIE 2026	July 2026
	Certificate in the Prevent Duty	13.07.26
	Certificate in Online Safety	13.07.26
	Annual Certificate in Safeguarding Refresher	13.07.26

All teaching, administration staff, support staff and premises staff	DSL in person safeguarding training Prevent Safeguarding Training Online Safety KCSIE 2026 *These courses are completed during the induction period by staff that commence work at the school from September 2026.	July 2026 July 2026 July 2026 July 2026 July 2026*
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