



**FAIRCHILDES
ACADEMY
COMMUNITY
TRUST**

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

REVISED September 2024

Revised September 2025

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following FACT policies: behaviour, equal opportunities, staff code of conduct, anti-bullying, Inclusion, admission, attendance, ICT and health and safety policies.

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FACT trust Contacts

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Croydon Local Authority Contacts

Early Help Team: Earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk Tel. 0208 7266400 Ext. 60617

MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub):

For child protection matters requiring discussion or immediate attention: Tel: 0208 255 2888 (9-5pm)

Out of Hours line: 0208 726 6000 (5pm-9am) / ssd-emergency-duty-team@croydon.gov.uk

MASH Service Manager: Phillip Larmond
Email: phillip.larmond@croydon.gov.uk

Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP)

Website: <https://www.croydonsafeguarding.org/>

Email: CSCP@croydon.gov.uk

Tel: 0208 604 7275

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):

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Safeguarding Policy Statement

Fairchildes Academy Community Trust (FACT) fully recognises its responsibilities for Safeguarding and Child Protection. The health, safety and well-being of all our children are of paramount importance to all the adults who work in our school. Our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe in our school. Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working within the trust.

There are **five** main elements to our policy:

- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Raising awareness of safeguarding, child protection issues and promoting the welfare of children, equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the PSHE and citizenship curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.
- Work in partnership with children, young people, their parents or carers and other agencies to promote our young people's welfare.
- Ensure **all** staff and visitors are wearing visible identity badges when on site
- Ensure **all** staff challenge any adult on site if an identity badge is not visible
- Expect **all** staff to be extra vigilant when working with children with disabilities or learning needs and families where there is mental health / substance misuse or a history of domestic violence. Also where there has been previous child abuse in the family.
- Expect **all** staff to record any safeguarding concerns on CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System)

Purpose of Policy

To provide protection for all children within the trust

To provide **all** staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child may be experiencing, or be at risk of harm

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers, governors, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone acting on behalf of the trust.

All staff should be aware that all relationships and associations that they may have in and outside of school (including online), may have an implication for the safeguarding of children in school. Where this is the case, the member of staff must speak to the school DSL.

This policy follows the statutory government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education: 2025; Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018; the London Child Protection Procedures: 2010 and What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: 2006.

Procedures

The designated and deputy designated safeguarding leads will complete child protection training every two years.

The role of the designated child protection person is to:

- Know about the signs and symptoms of abuse and know how abusers behave.
- Ensure the organisation's child protection policy and procedures are followed and updated.
- Ensure information is shared appropriately.
- Receive and record information via CPOMS from anyone who has concerns and take appropriate action.
- Assess the information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information when they need to.
- Consult with a statutory child protection agency; such as the Croydon Social Care Contact Centre, Early Intervention Team or NSPCC, to talk about any doubts or uncertainty and seek advice.
- Make a formal referral to a statutory child protection agency or police.

If you suspect child abuse

DO refer to the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead immediately. DO write up a full report for the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead, using CPOMS	DO NOT examine the child DO NOT ask leading questions DO NOT discuss with anyone other than the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead
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Allegations of abuse by another child or young person must be given the same importance as any other form of alleged abuse and referred to the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

If a child discloses information to you it is essential to safeguard and not contaminate the evidence in the event of the possible subsequent prosecution of the perpetrator. The following guidelines will help you to avoid this:-

<p>DO allow the child to do the talking DO listen to, rather than directly question, the child DO listen quietly and encouragingly DO remain calm and caring DO allow the child to finish DO explain that you may have to tell someone DO record the conversation as soon as possible afterwards. Use the child’s own words where possible. DO refer to Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead DO write up a full report for the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead</p>	<p>DO NOT postpone or delay the opportunity to listen DO NOT stop a child who is freely recalling significant events DO NOT ask leading questions DO NOT allow your feelings, such as anger, pity or shock to surface DO NOT make promises of secrecy DO NOT interpret what you have been told, just report it DO NOT discuss with anyone other than the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead</p>
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NB: 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 (DSL). It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.(KCSIE Sept 2022)

Recording

When staff become aware of possible abuse, DSL’s must be notified immediately; they must then make a full written record as soon as possible of the situation arising. This must be recorded directly onto CPOMS.

Recording should include as many of the following details as you know:

- As much information as possible about the incident of concern i.e. what lead up to it, what was heard or witnessed, staff member’s responses, location of the event, date, time and details of anyone present
- Any action taken by the member of staff as a result of the incident
- Other relevant background information
- Details of how the concern was followed up or decisions reached

When you record:

Distinguish between fact and opinion

Try to describe what happened fully but succinctly

Use the exact words and phrases that the child used

Use the body map if required with a full description

Only record what is visible or what the child volunteers to show you.

Do not ask the child to remove clothing or show you their injuries.

Information sharing (Child)

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect, and in promoting children's welfare, including their educational outcomes. Schools and colleges have clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purpose of keeping children safe. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent

KCSIE 2025 tells us that The Data Protection act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy). Fears about sharing information **must not** be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Referrals

Please note matters of child protection should always be considered as urgent.

The Croydon Safeguarding Partnership threshold document can be found here [Threshold](#) .

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy Safeguarding lead) will:

Assess any urgent medical needs of the child.

Consider whether the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer significant harm.

Check whether the child is currently subject to a Child Protection Plan or has previously been subject to a plan.

Confirm whether any previous concerns have been raised by staff.

Consider whether the matter should be discussed with the child's parents or carers or whether to do so may put the child at further risk of harm because of delay or the parent's possible actions or reactions.

Seek advice if unsure that a child protection referral should be made.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will either make a referral to Croydon Children's Services via the MASH Portal / **Local Authority child resides in** or, if a referral is not considered appropriate at that stage, make full written records of the information that they have received detailing the reasons for the judgement that the matter was not referred to the local authority and contact other agencies, such as the Early Intervention Team to signpost to the relevant agencies or provide support for the child, parents or family if deemed appropriate.

Disagreements About The Need For Referral

All members of staff have a duty of care to report child protection concerns. If staff and managers disagree about the need for a referral, they should seek advice. If the matter cannot be resolved, members of staff can make a referral in their capacity as a citizen.

Making a Referral

Members of the Children's Workforce have a duty to act on child welfare concerns and their anonymity cannot be preserved. Referrals must be completed online using the online MASH form, which can be accessed via [https://www.croydon.gov.uk/children-youngpeople-and-families/child-protection-and-safeguarding/report-concern-about-](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/children-youngpeople-and-families/child-protection-and-safeguarding/report-concern-about-child) child clicking on the link: Concerned about a Croydon child.

Urgent CP Advice: 0208 2552888

The Law – KCSIE 2025 sets out legal requirements around safeguarding. These include

[The Human Rights Act 1998](#)

[Equality Act 2010](#)

[Equality and Human Rights Commission](#)

[Working together to safeguard children 2023](#)

- [Working together to safeguard children](#)

[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015](#)

- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - Publications - GOV.UK](#)

[The London Safeguarding Children Board child protection procedures](#)

- [London Safeguarding Children Board: Child Protection Procedures](#)

[Keeping children safe in education 2025](#)

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Croydon Safeguarding Board local policies and procedures](#)

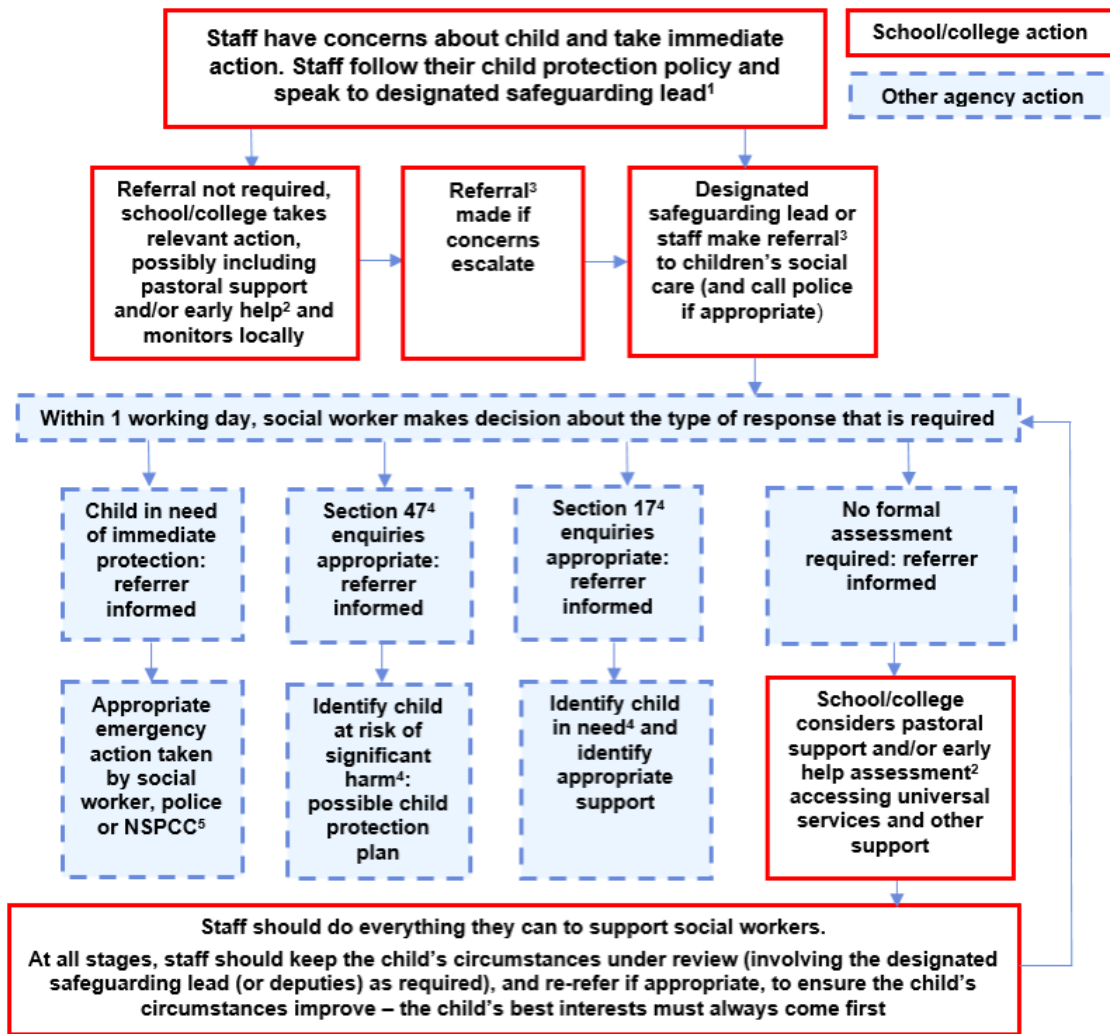
- www.croydonsafeguarding.org

Timescales

Referrals following specific incidents should be made within 24 hours. Where concern has built over a period of time, referral may be delayed. **Normally the DSL (or person reporting) will ask** the parents for their explanation of your concerns and tell them you are going to make a referral to Children's Social Care. **However, the DSL (or person reporting)** will not talk to the parents about concerns where it would jeopardise the child's safety, for example:

- There are concerns about sexual abuse
- The child appears very frightened of their parents and fears reprisals

DSL (or person reporting) will give as much information as possible Including: School details, Children's names, Date and time of referral, Family details and Summary of concerns



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Early Help

Sometimes a child may have additional needs, which require a coordinated approach from the agencies involved, without the need to involve Children's Social Care. In such instances, advice about Early Help:

Email: Earlyhelp@croydon.gov.uk or www.practitionerspacecroydon.co.uk Tel: 020 8726 6400

What You Think Should Happen Emergencies

If you believe there is an immediate need for a safeguarding response phone Croydon Council's contact centre on 0208 8726 6400 (This is the same number out of hours). If you believe a child is in immediate physical danger, you should call the Police on 999.

Dissatisfaction With The Response To Referral

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your referral and particularly if you are concerned that a child may be left at risk, you must ask to talk to one of the managers in the service. If you continue to be concerned, you may ultimately need to speak with the Service Manager or Service Lead.

Definitions of Abuse

All staff must therefore be alert to any possible indicators that a child is suffering harm and report any concerns to the Designated Person for Child Protection. All staff must recognise that it is a statutory duty to ensure that children are protected from harm.

The four categories of child abuse and exploitation are as follows:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may include: hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child including the deliberate fabrication or causation of illness in a child.

This may be recognised by:

- physical injury such as bruising, bite marks, burns and scalds, fractures but also by aggressive behaviour. It may also be an indicator of concern where a parent gives an explanation inconsistent with the injury or gives several different explanations for the injury. It is not appropriate for any member of staff to undress, photograph or body map any child in an attempt to see physical injury. This is the role of the child protection and investigating agencies.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse may include: the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development, mental health, behaviour and self-esteem. This may be caused by conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved or unvalued or by developmentally inappropriate expectations being made or by causing children to frequently feel frightened, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

This may be recognised by:

- developmental delay, attachment issues, aggressive behaviour, appealing behaviour, watchfulness or stillness, low self-esteem, withdrawn or a loner, or having difficulty in forming relationships. Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise as signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. Signs of emotional abuse may be associated or similar to other forms of abuse so presence of emotional abuse may indicate other abuse is prevalent as well.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse may include: involving or forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Such activities may involve sexual acts (penetrative or non-penetrative) or may include involving children in watching, or taking part in pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

This may be recognised by:

- inappropriate sexualised conduct, age inappropriate sexualised play or conversation, sexually harmful behaviour – contact or noncontact, self-harm, eating disorders, continual, inappropriate or excessive masturbation, anxiousness or unwillingness to remove clothes – sports/PE etc, pain or itching in the genital area, blood on underclothes, bruising in the genital region and/or inner thighs etc.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

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

CSE can occur over time or be a one off occurrence, and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media

Neglect

Neglect may include: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development (growth and intellect) such as failing to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter (including keeping children safe), or neglect of or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

This may be recognised by:

- being constantly hungry, constantly tired, have a poor state of clothing, be emaciated, have untreated medical problems, be frequently late or have poor or non-attendance at school, have low self-esteem, display neurotic behaviour and/or have poor social relationships, have poor personal hygiene. A neglected child may also be apathetic, fail to thrive, or be left with or in the care of adults under the influence of alcohol or drug misuse.

Consent

KCSIE tells us that Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or

penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

The following situations are statutorily clear and do not allow for contrary decisions:

- A child under the age of 13 can never consent to sexual activity.
- The age of consent is 16.
- Sexual intercourse without consent is rape.
- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are defined in law.
- Creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of children under 18 is illegal – including children making and sending images and videos of themselves.

Further information on consent can be found [HERE](#).

Attendance at Case Conferences, Core Groups and Child in Need Meetings

- The designated safeguarding lead will liaise with children’s social care to ensure that all relevant information held by the school/college is provided to children’s social care during any child protection investigation.
- The designated safeguarding lead will ensure that the school/college is represented at child protection case conferences and core group meetings:
 - Where possible, a member of staff who knows the child best, such as a class teacher or head of year will be nominated to attend if they are unable to the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy will attend.
 - if no one from the school/college can attend, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure that a report is made available for the conference or meeting.

Monitoring

Where a pupil is the subject of a child protection plan, and the school/college has been asked to monitor their attendance and welfare as part of this plan.

- Monitoring will be carried out by the relevant staff members in conjunction with the designated safeguarding lead.
- All information will be recorded on the child protection monitoring/incident form shown at appendix 2 or similar, prior to each conference and core group meeting.
- The completed monitoring form will be kept on the pupil’s separate child protection file (that should be separate from the school record) and copies made available for all conferences and core group meetings.

- The designated safeguarding lead will notify the allocated social worker if the child is removed from school roll, suspended, permanently excluded or goes missing.

Attendance

The Trust holds a robust attendance policy and works with EWO services to promote and monitor attendance patterns. Attendance concerns are shared with DSL /DDSL and acted on accordingly.

Where parents are opting to home educate their children, meetings will be held with parents and DFE guidance will be followed.

SEND Pupils/Vulnerable Pupils

The Trust is aware that children with special education needs may be more vulnerable to harm and abuse and may be more likely to experience bullying. They may also have difficulty in reporting harm and abuse due to communications difficulties and professionals may miss vital indicators. Trust policies reflect these issues and recognise that staff need to be able to help this group to overcome barriers to seeking help, including supporting pupils through the taught curriculum.

Trust Policies reflect the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children.

This can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs; communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Awareness of these additional barriers is reflected in the training for staff.

The Trust is aware that some pupils may be living in circumstances that may make them more vulnerable to abuse, neglect or poor outcomes and who may need help or intervention from Early Help Services, children's social care or other agencies in order to overcome problems or keep them safe.

Where the Trust places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, it continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the placement meets the pupils needs.

Mental Health

All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences (ACES), this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following the child protection policy and speaking the DSL or DDSL.

Intimate Care

The Trust recognises that intimate care involves risks for children and adults as it may involve staff touching intimate parts of a pupils body. Within the Trust best practice will be promoted and all adults (including those involved in intimate care and staff in the vicinity) will be encouraged to be vigilant at all times, to seek advice where relevant and take account of safer working practice.

The Intimate Care Policy & staff code of conduct, gives detailed advice and guidance on how to minimise the risks to children. This is provided to all members of staff.

Children are taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding throughout the year.

Staff are also made aware of children who have 'invisible' needs and may require a medical Health Care Plan or co-ordinated approach to support these.

If any member of staff has concerns about physical changes to a child's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. they will immediately report concerns to the appropriate designated person for safeguarding in line with safeguarding procedures.

Domestic Abuse Sexual Violence (DASV)

Domestic or Family Violence adversely affects children, whether or not it is significant enough to warrant action under Child Protection Procedures.

When a member of staff becomes aware that a child may be living in a household where there is emotional, physical or sexual violence, they should attempt to find out whether the family are receiving help and should consider contacting the DASV lead in school.

Children with family members in Prison

Children with a family member in prison are at risk of poor outcomes including, poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. Staff who are aware of families in these circumstances need to inform the DSL.

Age appropriate guidance is available on the government website to help children who may be required to attend court or give evidence.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/young-witness-booklet-for-5-to-11-year-olds>

Bullying

Bullying in school can take several forms. It can be direct (either physical, or verbal), or indirect (for example, being ignored, or not spoken to), or cyber bullying using phones or the internet. There are three key characteristics of bullying:

- Bullying is ongoing. It is not the same as a one off conflict between two individuals, or a random unprovoked aggressive act.
- Bullying is deliberate and often premeditated.
- Bullying is unequal – it involves a power imbalance (this can result from size, number, higher status, or as a result of having access to limited resources).
- **All** staff should always discuss instances of bullying with a member of the SLT. (See Anti-Bullying

policy)

Child on child Abuse

Child on child abuse occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and / or harmed by their peers who are the same or similar age; everyone directly involved in child on child abuse is under the age of 18. 'Child on Child' abuse can relate to various forms of abuse (not just sexual abuse and exploitation), and crucially it does not capture the fact that the behaviour in question is harmful to the child perpetrator as well as the victim.

All staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. **All** staff should be clear about their school policy and procedures with regard to peer on peer abuse. Concerns of Child on Child abuse should always be reported to the DSL.

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 abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed of making a report.

All staff will give consideration to the impact on the pupils and school environment when both the perpetrator and victim attend the same school.

Child on Child abuse can be addressed through PSHE, SPIL sessions (Fairchildes) and pastoral support using peer mediation techniques.

Children Missing from Education

A child missing from education (CME) is defined by the department of education as "a child of compulsory school age who is not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (eg privately or in alternative provision) and who has been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually 4 weeks or more)."

Members of staff are to follow the school's attendance policy, by reporting to the attendance officer and DSL.

Parents should ensure that the school has at least two emergency contact numbers for their children.

Children Who Go Missing From Care and Home

The London Child Protection Procedures define a child as 'missing' if their whereabouts are unknown, whatever the circumstances of their disappearance. School to liaise with local authority and other relevant professionals.

The link below gives further information and guidance.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307867/Statutory_Guidance_-_Missing_from_care3_.pdf

Sexual violence and Sexual harassment / Sexting

All staff should be aware that there is a 'zero tolerance' approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment is an increasingly common issue and all forms of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously and reported to the DSL/DDSL as a matter of urgency.

Children may not always disclose directly to a trusted adult, however an adult may overhear a conversation or notice a change in a child's behaviour which should be treated in the same way.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of **any age and sex**, from primary through to secondary stage and into colleges.

Sexually harmful behaviour from young people does not always occur with the intent to harm others.

Sexually harmful behaviour may range from inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, to sexually touching another or sexual assault / abuse. This also includes sexting when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video.

Any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously, and it is essential that all victims are reassured and not given the impression that they are creating a problem or ever made to feel ashamed that they are reporting an incident.

Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and /or videos can be signs that children are at risk.

Unsubstantiated, Unfounded, false or malicious reports

If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious the DSL should consider whether the child who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else.

If a report is shown to be invented or malicious The Trust will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it.

Further information is available on the link below:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges>

Upskirting

'Upskirting' typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is now a criminal offence.

Child Trafficking

Child trafficking is the recruitment and movement of children for the purpose of exploitation; it is a form of child abuse. Children may be trafficked within the Country, or from abroad. It overlaps with Sexual Exploitation and Private Fostering. Children may be trafficked for:

- Sexual exploitation
- Labour exploitation
- Domestic servitude
- Cannabis cultivation

- Criminal activity
- Benefit fraud
- Forced marriage
- Moving drugs

KCSIE 2025 states: All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and seminudes images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk.

Child Criminal Exploitation

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and move money from urban areas. Key indicators are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs or money. Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- Can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18
- Can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18
- Can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual
- Can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence
- Can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults; and is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation.

NB:- it is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, trans or gender questioning (LGBT)

Children being LGBT is not a safeguarding concern in itself, but it is important to be aware that they can be targeted by others. This can increase the vulnerability of these children. It is important to consider helping gender questioning children to identify a trusted adult who they can talk to as well as provide safe places within school to talk about their concerns. Gender questioning inclusion is part of [Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education curriculum](#).

The CASS review identified that caution is necessary for children questioning their gender as there remain many unknowns and may well have wider vulnerabilities, including having complex mental health and psychosocial needs. School should take a cautious approach and consider the broad range of their needs, in partnership with the child's parents.

There is a range of support available to help schools address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and abuse.

The trust has a working party on these issues that can be consulted if needed.

Private Fostering

Private Fostering arrangement is one that is made privately between two parties without the involvement of the Local Authority for a child under the age of 16 (18 if disabled). This arrangement would be with someone who is not a parent or close relative, and lasts 28 days or more.

Private Fostering is used as a form of childcare by parents who are not able to take care of their child on a day to day basis, for whatever reason. However, unreported Private Fostering Arrangements can be used in order to exploit children.

The Law requires that the Local Authority should be informed at least six weeks in advance of a Private Fostering arrangement or 48 hours after the arrangement has been made if in an emergency. Social Workers will:

- Check the suitability of the Private Foster Carers through checks and assessment;
- Make regular visits to the child and monitor the standard of care; and
- Ensure that Private Foster Carers and birth families have all the necessary information and advice they require.

Female Circumcision (FGM – Female Genital Mutilation)

This is against the law, yet we know that for some in our communities it is considered a religious act and a cultural requirement. It is also illegal for someone to arrange for a child to go abroad with the intention of having her circumcised.

ALL staff have a responsibility to report any suspected acts of FGM to the DSL.

All confirmed acts are to be reported by the staff member directly to the police under the Mandatory Duty to report (Oct 2015)

Honour-based violence (HBV)

So called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) 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.

All forms of HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

All staff need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk from HBV, or already having suffered HBV.

Internet safety

We recognise that children's use of the internet is an important part of their education but there are risks of harm associated with its use. All children are taught about e-safety as part of the Computing curriculum.

All mobile devices brought into school by pupils are to remain in the school office or classroom, in a locked unit until the end of the school day.

We recognise that many social networking sites are used by staff to share information, photographs and news. These present potential problems concerning privacy and appropriate language and so we insist that staff follow these rules concerning their use:

- Staff must have appropriate security on their profiles to stop anyone viewing them that they are not friends with
- There must be absolutely no private online contact between professionals and any young people with whom they have a work-related relationship
- Staff must not refer to children by name on their profiles
- Staff must not refer to private school matters
- Staff must not use derogatory or offensive language about fellow colleagues or children
- Staff must not post images of themselves in inappropriate dress or situations when their site can be accessed by children and young people
- Friend requests from children and young people, or their families, should be declined by explaining it is against the school's policy to do so.
- Staff should not create web pages, groups or contact lists concerning professional activities carried out on behalf of the organisation without expressed permission.

We do, however, recognise that we encourage internet communication with pupils through Google Classroom, which is a totally secure and protected site. Google classroom is the main platform used for all remote learning.

Filtering and Monitoring

KCSIE 2025 states that *whilst considering their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, governing bodies and proprietors should be doing all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the school's or college's IT system. As part of this process, governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their school or college has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place. Governing bodies and proprietors should consider the age range of their children, the number of children, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs vs safeguarding risks.*

The appropriateness of any filters and monitoring systems are a matter for individual schools and colleges and will be informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty.

Schools and colleges will adhere to the DfE [Filtering and Monitoring Standards](#) in order to fulfil their duties.

The school will:

- identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring. o review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
- block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
- have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs. Further guidance on filtering and monitoring can be found at: UK Safer Internet Centre: "appropriate" filtering and monitoring.

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/teachers-and-school-staff/appropriatefiltering-and-monitoring>. Southwest Grid for Learning (swgfl.org.uk) have created a tool to check whether a school or college's filtering provider is signed up to relevant lists (CSA content, Sexual Content, Terrorist content, Your Internet Connection Blocks Child Abuse & Terrorist Content).

Reviewing Online Safety

Due to ever evolving technology and associated risks, schools and colleges should be aware of the rapid changes and have regular reviews such as an annual review of their approach to online safety. This should be supported by an annual risk assessment which reflects current risks children face online.

Cybercrime

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). Cyber-dependent crimes include:

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded.
- denial of Service (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. Attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources. and,
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

Children with particular skill and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime. If there are concerns about a child in this area, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), should consider referring into the Cyber Choices programme. This is a nationwide police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing. It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

Note that Cyber Choices does not currently cover 'cyber-enabled' crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs on-line and child sexual abuse and exploitation, nor other areas of concern such as on-line bullying or general on-line safety. Additional advice can be found at: [Cyber Choices](#), 'NPCC- When to call the Police' and National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK

Use of Photo/Media/Images

This would apply to all forms of publications; print, film, video, DVD, on websites and in the professional media.

Consent forms signed by parents and guardians can be used as blanket permission for the taking and publication of images when you are working with the same group of children and young people continuously or over a long period of time. New permission forms may need to be signed for one off events, or when the conditions of which permission was granted have changed.

Extremism and Radicalisation (Prevent Duty)

Whilst the trust recognises it is very rare for primary aged children to become involved in extremist activity to the point of committing criminal acts, we know young people can be exposed to extremist influences or prejudiced views, including via the internet, from an early age. Working with other local partners, families and communities, we can help support pupils who may be vulnerable as part of wider safeguarding responsibilities. It is our most fundamental responsibility to keep our pupils safe and prepare them for life in modern Britain and globally.

We promote the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs. We encourage pupils to respect other people and recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.

Our goal is to build mutual respect and understanding and use of dialogue, not violence, as a form of conflict resolution using a curriculum that includes:

- Citizenship programmes
- PSHE programme (e.g. DOT COM) Open discussion and debate
- Work on anti-violence addressed throughout curriculum Focussed educational programmes

Extremists of all persuasions aim to develop destructive relationships between different communities by promoting division and fear and mistrust of others based on ignorance or prejudice. Education is a powerful weapon against this, equipping young people with the knowledge, skills and critical thinking to challenge and to debate, giving young people the opportunity to learn about different cultures and faiths.

As part of wider safeguarding responsibilities, school staff will be alert to:

- Graffiti symbols, writing or art work promoting extremist messages or images
- Pupils accessing extremist material online, including through social networking sites
- Parental reports of changes in behaviour, friendship or actions and requests for assistance
- Partner schools, local authority services and police reports of issues affecting pupils in other schools
- Pupils voicing opinions drawn from extremist ideologies and narratives
- Use of extremist or 'hate' terms to exclude others or incite violence

The school will closely follow the Croydon Safeguarding guidelines for safeguarding individuals vulnerable to extremism and radicalisation.

The school will work closely with other agencies to protect our pupils from the threat of extremism and radicalisation. All our staff will receive regular training, in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

Physical Contact

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children, however, it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the pupil's individual needs and any agreed care plan.

Not all children feel comfortable about certain types of physical contact; this should be recognised and, wherever possible, adults should seek the pupil's permission before initiating contact and be sensitive to any signs that they may be uncomfortable or embarrassed. Staff should acknowledge that some pupils are more comfortable with touch than others and/or may be more comfortable with touch from some adults than others. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and, so far as is possible, use a level of contact and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the pupil. This is particularly important for children with SEND or intimate care needs.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one pupil, in one set of circumstances, may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child.

Any physical contact should be in response to the child's needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Adults should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times. Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority.

If a member of staff believes that an action by them or a colleague could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed which is possibly abusive, the incident and circumstances should be immediately reported to the Headteacher and recorded. Where appropriate, the manager should consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (the LADO).

Extra caution may be required where it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. Staff need to be aware that the child may associate physical contact with such experiences. They also should recognise that these pupils may seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the child sensitively and help them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

A general culture of 'safe touch' should be adopted, where appropriate, to the individual requirements of each child. Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The arrangements should be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the pupil's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny.

In certain curriculum areas, such as PE, drama or music, staff may need to initiate some physical contact with children, for example, to demonstrate technique in the use of a piece of equipment, adjust posture, or support a child so they can perform an activity safely or prevent injury. Physical contact should take place only when it is necessary in relation to a particular activity. The extent of the contact should be made clear and undertaken with the permission of the pupil. Contact should be relevant to their age / understanding and adults should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or nonverbally by the pupil.

Any incidents of physical contact that cause concern should be reported to the Headteacher and parent or carer. It is good practice that all parties clearly understand at the outset, what physical contact is necessary and appropriate in undertaking specific activities. Keeping parents/carers and pupils informed of the extent and nature of any physical contact may also prevent allegations of misconduct or abuse arising.

Positive Handling

As a trust we follow the Team Teach principals

The law and guidance for schools states that adults may reasonably intervene to prevent a child from:

- committing a criminal offence
- injuring themselves or others
- causing damage to property
- engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline.

Great care must be exercised in order that adults do not physically intervene in a manner which could be considered unlawful. Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted or disproportionate physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

Where the school judges that a child's behaviour presents a serious risk to themselves or others, they must always put in place a robust risk assessment which is reviewed regularly and, where relevant, a physical intervention plan.

In all cases where physical intervention has taken place, it is good practice to record the incident and subsequent actions and report these to the Headteacher and the child's parents. Similarly, where it can be anticipated that physical intervention is likely to be required, a plan should be put in place which the pupil and parents/carers are aware of and have agreed to. Parental consent does not permit settings to use unlawful physical intervention or deprive a pupil of their liberty.

Staff should:

- adhere to the school behaviour policy and individual behaviour plans
- always seek to defuse situations and avoid the use of physical intervention wherever possible
- where physical intervention is necessary, only use minimum force and for the shortest time needed
- NOT use physical intervention as a form of punishment

Allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff.

The framework for managing cases of allegations of abuse against people who work with children is set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2018) and Keeping Children Safe In Education: Sept 2025

Key points

If an allegation is made against a teacher the quick resolution of that allegation should be a clear priority to the benefit of all concerned. At any stage of consideration or investigation, all unnecessary delays should be eradicated.

In response to an allegation staff suspension should not be the default option. An individual should only be suspended if there is no reasonable alternative. If suspension is deemed appropriate, the reasons and justification should be recorded by the school and the individual notified of the reasons.

Allegations that are found to have been malicious should be removed from personnel records and any that are not substantiated, false or malicious should not be referred to in employer references.

Pupils that are found to have made malicious allegations are likely to have breached school behaviour policies. The school should therefore consider whether to apply an appropriate sanction, which could include temporary or permanent exclusion (as well as referral to the police if there are grounds for believing a criminal offence may have been committed).

All schools and FE colleges should have procedures for dealing with allegations. The procedures should make it clear that all allegations should be reported straight away, normally to the head teacher, principal or proprietor if it is an independent school. The procedures should also identify the person, often the chair of governors, to whom reports should be made in the absence of the Head Teacher or principal, or in cases where the Head Teacher or Principal themselves are the subject of the allegation or concern. Procedures should also include contact details for the local authority designated officer (LADO) responsible for providing advice and monitoring cases.

Employers have a duty of care to their employees. They should ensure they provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation and provide the employee with a named contact if they are suspended. Staff should be reported if they have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.

It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer is dealt with very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

Many cases will not meet the above criteria, these should be dealt with by the Head Teacher in consultation with the LADO. Where it is clear that an investigation by the police or local authority children's social care services is unnecessary, or the strategy discussion or initial evaluation decides

that is the case, the LADO should discuss the next steps with the Head Teacher. Some cases may be so serious as to warrant immediate intervention by social care/police.

Parents or carers of a child or children involved should be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it. However, where a strategy discussion is required, or police or local authority children's social care services need to be involved, the head should not do so until those agencies have been consulted and have agreed what information can be disclosed to the parents. They should also be kept informed about the progress of the case, and told the outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process.

The deliberations of a disciplinary hearing, and the information taken into account in reaching a decision, cannot normally be disclosed, but the parents or carers of the child should be told the outcome in confidence.

The fact that a person tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide their services, must not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with these procedures. Under no circumstances should an agreement be made where a school accepts a resignation in return for not pursuing an allegation.

Details of allegations that are found to have been malicious should be removed from personnel records. However, for all other allegations, it is important that a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached, is kept on a person's confidential personnel file, and a copy provided to the person concerned. It will provide clarification in cases where future DBS disclosures reveal information from the police about an allegation that did not result in a criminal conviction and it will help to prevent unnecessary reinvestigation if, as sometimes happens, an allegation resurfaces after a period of time. The record should be retained at least until the person has reached normal retirement age or for a period of ten years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

Timescale

Cases in which an allegation was proven to be unsubstantiated, malicious or false should not be included in employer references. A history of repeated concerns or allegations which have all been found to be unsubstantiated, malicious etc. should also not be included in any reference.

It is in everyone's interest to resolve cases as quickly as possible, consistent with a fair and thorough investigation. It is expected that eighty per cent of cases should be resolved within 1 month, ninety per cent within 3 months, and all but the most exceptional cases should be completed within twelve months. For those cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is false or malicious, then it is expected that they should be resolved within one week.

If the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the Head Teacher or principal should institute appropriate action within 3 working days. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, the hearing should be held within fifteen working days.

Oversight and monitoring

The LADO has overall responsibility for oversight of the procedures for dealing with allegations, for resolving any inter-agency issues, and for liaison with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) on the subject. The designated local authority officer(s) will provide advice and guidance to the school or FE college, in addition to liaising with the police and other agencies, and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible consistent with a thorough and fair process. Reviews should be conducted at fortnightly or monthly intervals depending on the complexity of the case.

The police should also identify officers who will be responsible for:

- liaising with the designated local authority officer(s)
- taking part in the strategy discussion or initial evaluation
- subsequently reviewing the progress of those cases in which there is a police investigation sharing information on completion of the investigation or any prosecution.

If the strategy discussion or initial assessment decides that a police investigation is required, the police should also set a target date for reviewing the progress of the investigation and consulting the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) about whether to:

- charge the individual
- continue to investigate
- close the investigation.

Wherever possible that review should take place no later than four weeks after the initial evaluation. Dates for subsequent reviews - ideally at fortnightly intervals - should be set at the meeting, if the investigation continues.

Suspension

Suspension must not be an automatic response when an allegation is reported. If the school is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the teacher's family, those concerns should be reported to the LADO or police, but suspension is highly unlikely to be justified on the basis of such concerns alone.

Suspension should only be considered in a case where:

- there is cause to suspect a child or other children at the school is or are at risk of significant harm.
- the allegation warrants investigation by the police.
- the allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.

Where it has been deemed appropriate to suspend the person, written confirmation should be dispatched within one working day, giving the reasons for the suspension. The person should be informed at that point who their named contact is within the organisation and provided with their contact details.

Sharing information (Staff)

In a strategy discussion or the initial evaluation of the case, the agencies involved should share all relevant information they have about the person who is the subject of the allegation, and about the alleged victim.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purpose of keeping children safe. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent

Further Action

In those circumstances, the LADO should discuss with the Head Teacher, Principal and Chair of Governors or Proprietor whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and if so how to proceed. The information provided by the police and/or the local authority social care services should inform that decision.

There is a legal requirement for employers to make a referral to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) where they think that an individual has engaged in conduct (including inappropriate sexual conduct) that harmed (or is likely to harm) a child or if a person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child. In such circumstances, the duty to refer an individual to the ISA arises where an employer has removed the individual from relevant work with children or the person has chosen to cease relevant work in circumstances where they would have been removed had they not done so. When a case is concluded, the Head Teacher must discuss with the LADO procedures which need to be introduced in order to ensure that any similar cases are prevented.

Action as a result of malicious allegations

If an allegation is determined to be unfounded or malicious, the LADO should refer the matter to local authority children's social care services to determine whether the child concerned is in need of services, or may have been abused by someone else. In the event that an allegation is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the Head Teacher should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the pupil who made it, or the police should be asked to consider whether any action might be appropriate against the person responsible, including if he or she was not a pupil.

The Croydon LADO:

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):

lado@croydon.gov.uk

schoolwhistleblowing@croydon.gov.uk

LADO: Jane Rowe

Email: jane.rowe@croydon.gov.uk

Tel: 0208 726 6000 (Ext. 84343) Mob: 07716092630

Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold - low level concerns

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out in *paragraph 430 KCSIE 2025*

A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that isn't quite right. This may be that they are inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered by the LADO to be serious enough to consider a referral.

It is crucial that any such concerns, including those which do not meet the harm threshold (see Part Four - Section one KCSIE 2025), are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

Low level concerns should be shared as with any other concerns and recorded for future reference in order to identify any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour. All records should be kept securely and confidentially and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phones
- engaging with a child on a 1:1 basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door without being visible to others
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

It is crucial that any such concerns, including those that do not meet the harm threshold are shared responsibly with the right person and recorded in writing and dealt with appropriately and effectively. Actions and outcomes from the concerns should also be noted and filed securely (see staff code of conduct and Low Level Concern Policy and form Nov 2022)

Safer Recruitment

All staff and volunteers working with children in our school will be recruited safely.

All relevant staff must inform the Trust that they are not Disqualified under the Childcare Act 2006.

All staff must inform the Trust if their relationships and associations, both within and outside of the workplace (including online), may have implications for the safeguarding of children in the school. If staff circumstances change with regards to this they must inform the school.

Since the TRA Teacher Services system will no longer maintain a list of those teachers who have been sanctioned in EEA member states, the Trust will make further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. These checks could include, where available:

- criminal records checks for overseas applicants – Home Office guidance can be found on GOV.UK; and for teaching positions
- obtaining a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country in which the applicant has worked. Advice about which regulatory or professional body applicants should contact is available from the National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom, UK NARIC.

Preparation

We will always consider the vacancy that has arisen within the context of safeguarding children and ensure that we include the responsibility to safeguard children within the requirements of the role.

We always consider carefully the knowledge, skills and experience required to safeguard children and include these within a person specification.

Advertising

We will always advertise our vacancies in a manner that is likely to attract a wide range of applicants. The advertisement will always include a statement about our commitment to safeguarding children and our expectation that all applicants will share that commitment. The advertisement will state that the post is subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check (DBS).

Applications

We will ensure that our application form enables us to gather information about the candidates' suitability to work with children by asking specific and direct questions.

We will scrutinise all completed application forms. **We will not accept CV's**

References

We will not accept open references or testimonials. We will ask for the names of at least two referees. We will take up references prior to the interview and ask specific questions about the candidate's previous employment or experience of working with children. We will follow up any vague or ambiguous statements.

As part of our due diligence checks, shortlisted candidates will be asked to give permission for social media checks to be run on them.

Interviews

We will always conduct a face to face interview even when there is only one candidate. Our interview panel will always contain at least one member trained in safer recruitment practice.

Our interview questions will seek to ensure we understand the candidate's values and beliefs that relate to children.

All candidates will be asked to bring in original documents which confirm their identity, qualifications, and right to work.

Appointments

Our offer of appointment will be conditional on all requested checks having been returned as satisfactory.

We will refer to the Independent Safeguarding Authority any person whose checks reveal that they have sought work when barred from working with children

Induction

We will always provide newly appointed staff with appropriate guidance about safe working practice, boundaries and propriety and explain the consequences of not following the guidance.

Continued Professional Development

We will ensure that all staff receive training in Safeguarding and Child Protection.

Supervision

We will always supervise staff and act on any concerns that relate to the safeguarding of children.

Dismissal

We will always refer to the Independent Safeguarding Authority any member of staff who is dismissed because of misconduct relating to a child.

Operation Encompass

Croydon is part of the Operation Encompass service which operates in all police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the key adult (usually the designated safeguarding lead) in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This ensures that the school has up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable immediate support to be put in place, according to the child's needs. Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures. Where appropriate, the police and/or schools should make a referral to children's social care if they are concerned about a child's welfare. More information about the scheme and how schools can become involved is available on the Operation Encompass website. (KCSIE 2025)

Operation Encompass provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members from educational settings who may be concerned about children who have experienced domestic abuse. The helpline is available from 8:00 to 13:00, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990 (charged at local rate).