



# Safeguarding and Child protection Policy

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This document applies to all academies and operations of the Vale Academy Trust [www.vale-academy.org](http://www.vale-academy.org)

The following related document(s) can be found on the Trust's website:

- Anti-Bullying Policy

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## **PART 1**

### **1. Introduction**

This policy is based on a template provided by Oxfordshire County Council and has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Act 1989, and in line with the following:

- “Keeping Children Safe in Education” 2016
- “Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015”
- “Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families” 2000
- “What to do if you are worried a Child is being Abused” 2015
- Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board guidelines

The Vale Academy Trust (the ‘Trust’) takes seriously its responsibility under section 11 of the Children Act and duties under “working together” to:

- safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements exist within our settings;
- identify and support those children who are suffering harm or are likely to suffer harm.

We recognise that all staff and governors have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm, and that the child’s welfare is our paramount concern.

Our schools should provide a safe, caring, positive and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child free from discrimination or bullying where children can learn and develop happily.

This policy applies to all persons working in all schools within the Trust, and all persons working in the Trust’s central operations team. All persons in these categories must sign to confirm they have read and understood this policy. The following positions will have responsibility for ensuring this takes place:

- The Headteacher of each school for all school staff and volunteers
- The Chair of the Trust’s Board of Directors for all Board Directors
- The Chair of each Local Governing Body for Governors
- The Chief Executive of the Trust for all central operations staff

## 2. Terminology

- **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** refers to the process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing the impairment of their health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective and nurturing care and undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.
- **Child protection** refers to the processes undertaken to meet statutory obligations laid out in the [Children Act 1989](#) and associated guidance (see [Working Together to Safeguard Children, An Inter-agency Guide to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children](#)) in respect of those children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering harm.
- **Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the schools, in all school settings, full time or part time, paid or voluntary.
- **Child** refers to all young people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday.
- **Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents
- **DSL:** Designated Safeguarding Lead

## 3. Aims

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their statutory responsibilities to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children
- To ensure consistent good practice across schools
- To demonstrate schools' commitment with regard to safeguarding children

## 4. The role of school staff

School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating.

- School staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

- Every school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will provide support to staff members to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as children's social care.
- School staff will be equipped to identify children who may benefit from early help. Staff know in the first instance to discuss their concerns with the DSL, and understand they may be required to support other agencies and professionals in assessments for early help.
- The Teachers' standards 2012 state that teachers, including headteachers, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public interest in the teaching professions as part of their professional duties.

## **5. What school staff need to know**

- Within each school, staff are made aware of the systems that support safeguarding; these are explained to them as part of their induction, including:
  - This child protection and safeguarding policy
  - The staff code of conduct (sometimes called staff behaviour policy)
  - The role of the DSL
  - Keeping children safe in education part 1
  - Whistleblowing policy
  - Managing allegations about staff
  - What to do if they have a concern about a child
- All staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training which is updated at least every 3 years. In addition, all staff receive safeguarding and child protection updates, when required but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to be able to safeguard the children in our settings effectively.
- All staff are made aware of the early help process, and understand their role in this. This includes staff being able to identify emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment and, where appropriate, acting as the lead professional in undertaking any early help assessment.
- All staff are made aware of the process for making child protection referrals to social care and statutory assessments that may follow, under the Children Act 1989, they also understand the role that may have to play in such assessments.
- All staff know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused or neglected. Staff understand how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality, whilst at the same time understand the requirement around sharing information

appropriately with the designated safeguarding lead and other relevant professionals

- Staff will never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about the allegation/disclosure that the child has made, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child

## 6. What school staff should look out for

- All staff are made aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so they are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection (see part 2 of this policy for the definitions)
- Department for Education advice: What to do if you are worried a child is being abused. Advice for practitioners provides more information on understanding and identifying abuse and neglect:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2>

- Staff at all schools are advised to maintain an attitude at all times of **“it could happen here”** where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act **in the best interests of the child**.
- Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. If staff are unsure they should always speak to the DSL.

## 7. What school staff should do if they have concerns about a child

- If staff have any **concerns** about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger) they will need to decide what action to take. Where possible, there should be a conversation with the DSL to agree a course of action, although any staff member can make a referral to children’s social care. Other options could include referral to specialist services or early help services and should be made in accordance with the referral threshold set by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. <http://www.oscb.org.uk/>
- If anyone other than the DSL makes the referral they should inform the DSL as soon as possible.
- If after a referral the child’s situation does not appear to be improving the DSL (or the person that made the referral) should press for re-consideration to ensure their

concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves.

- If early help is appropriate the DSL should support the staff member in liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate.
- If early help and or other support is appropriate the case should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to children's social care if the child's situation doesn't appear to be improving.
- If a staff member, in the course of their professional work, discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 the staff member must report this to the police.

**See Appendix B for flowchart**

#### **8. What staff should do if a child is in danger or at risk of harm**

- **If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.** Anyone can make a referral. Where referrals are not made by the DSL, the DSL must be informed as soon as possible that a referral has been made.

#### **9. What staff should do if they have concerns about another staff member**

- If a staff member has concerns about another staff member then this must be referred to the Headteacher immediately. Where there are concerns about the Headteacher this should be referred to the Chair of the school's Local Governing Body.
- Staff may consider discussing any concerns with the school's DSL and make any referral via them. Details can be found in Part 2 of this policy.

#### **10. What staff should do if they have concerns about safeguarding practices within the school**

- All our staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the safeguarding regime and that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.
- Appropriate whistleblowing procedures, which are suitably reflected in staff training and staff behaviour policies, are in place for such concerns to be raised with each school's senior leadership team and with the Trust leadership. For further information refer to the [Whistleblowing Procedure](#)

- Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them:
  - [Government advice on whistleblowing](#)
  - [The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](#)



## **PART 2**

### **11. Key personnel at Trust schools**

Please refer to the relevant school website or school office for the names and contact details of the following safeguarding personnel, as necessary:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy DSL)
- Nominated Child Protection Governor

### **12. Roles and responsibilities**

Each school must nominate a senior member of staff to coordinate child protection arrangements and these are named as above. All schools must ensure that the DSL or a deputy will be on site at all times that the school is functioning.

#### **The Local Governing Body (LGB)**

The LGB of each school will undertake a regular review of safeguarding and the related policies and procedures that operate in their school.

The LGB has a crucial role in monitoring and challenging staff on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, and must ensure that their school:

- has a DSL for safeguarding and child protection who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has undertaken the approved LSCB training in inter-agency working, in addition to basic child protection training;
- follows child protection policy and procedures that are consistent with LSCB requirements are which reviewed annually and made available to parents on request;
- follows procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the head teacher;
- follows safer recruitment procedures that include the requirement for appropriate checks in line with national guidance. Training can be accessed at: <http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/safeguarding/safer-recruitment> ;

- has staff on all interview panels who are Safer Recruitment trained;
- has a training strategy that ensures all staff, including the headteacher, receive child protection training, with refresher training at three-yearly intervals. The DSL should receive refresher training at two-yearly intervals;
- holds regular update sessions for staff regarding safeguarding, keeping staff up to date with any changes and ensuring that safeguarding remains a priority within the setting;
- has arrangements to ensure that all temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection;
- nominates an LGB member (normally the chair) to be responsible for liaising with the local authority and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the headteacher. An annual report will be submitted to the local authority about how the governing body's duties have been carried out. Any weaknesses or areas of concern will be rectified without delay.

**The headteacher of each school must ensure that:**

- These safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff in their school;
- a named teacher in each school is designated for Looked After Children (LAC) and that an up to date list of Children and Young People (C&YP) who are subject to a care order or are accommodated by the Local Authority is regularly reviewed and updated. The Local Authority's Virtual School Head must be made aware of all LAC in the school;
- Children's Social Care is notified when a C&YP attending the school is privately fostered;
- sufficient time and resources are allocated to enable the DSL and deputy to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings;
- all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the Trust's [Whistleblowing Procedures](#);
- child's safety and welfare is addressed through the curriculum.

**All schools must ensure that every DSL:**

- is appropriately trained;
- acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community;
- has an understanding of OSCB procedures;
- keeps written records of all concerns when noted and reported by staff or when disclosed by a child, ensuring that such records are stored securely and reported onward in accordance with this policy guidance, but kept separately from the child's general file;
- refers cases of suspected neglect and/or abuse to children's social care or police in accordance with this guidance and local procedure;
- notifies children's social care if a child with a child protection plan is absent for more than two days without explanation;
- ensures that when a child with a child protection plan leaves the school, their information is passed to their new school and the child's social worker is informed;
- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences in accordance with local procedure and guidance;
- coordinates the school's contribution to child protection plans;
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies;
- ensures that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood this policy;
- ensures that the safeguarding and child protection policy is updated annually;
- liaises with the nominated governor and headteacher (where the DSL role is not carried out by the headteacher) as appropriate;
- keeps a record of staff attendance at child protection training;
- provides an annual safeguarding report to governors which is sent to the LADO/Safeguarding team at County Hall no later than the December of the academic year, following the academic year to which the report applies;
- Makes this policy available to parents via school websites and school offices.

## **Deputy DSLs**

Deputy DSLs must be appropriately trained and in the absence of the DSL carry out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of children. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

### **All staff:**

All staff will follow the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Procedures/Local Authority guidance in all cases of abuse, or suspected abuse (these can be found at [www.OSCB.org.uk](http://www.OSCB.org.uk)).

All staff will therefore:

- implement and follow part 1 of this policy;
- understand that the responsibility to safeguard children requires that all staff appropriately share any concerns they may have about children;
- support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and resilience;
- provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties;
- provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure they contribute to assessments of need and support plans for those children where appropriate;
- Ensure that detailed and accurate written records of concerns about a child are kept even if there is no need to make an immediate referral. See guidance on record keeping: [Child Protection Record Keeping](#) .

## **13. Supporting Children**

- Staff must recognise that a child who is abused, who witnesses violence or who lives in a violent environment may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame him/herself, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth.

- Staff must accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.
- Each school will support all children and young people by:
  - encouraging the development of self-esteem and resilience in every aspect of life;
  - promoting a caring, safe and positive environment;
  - liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children;
  - carrying out no name consultations with the LCSS (Locality Community Support Service) where appropriate;
  - carrying out EHA's (Early Help Assessments) where appropriate to identify what support can be put in place for the child and family;
  - notifying Social Care as soon as there is a significant concern;
  - notifying Social Care when a child/young person attending any school setting is privately fostered;
  - providing continuing support to a pupil (about whom there have been concerns) who leaves the school by ensuring that such concerns and school medical records are forwarded under confidential cover to the Designated Person/DSL at the pupil's new school immediately.

#### **14. Confidentiality**

- All staff recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.
- The Designated Person/DSL will disclose personal information about a child or young person to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.
- However, all staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being or that of another.
- Staff will always undertake to share an intention to refer a child to Social Care with their parents /carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, staff will consult with the Schools Safeguarding Team or Social Care on this point.
- Staff will take no-names consultations with our LCSS/local Assessment Teams/ MASH teams to discuss any concerns, but understand that if asked by any of these teams for a name the name will be disclosed and it will become a referral.

## **15. Supporting Staff**

- Staff who have encountered a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting.
- Schools will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSL and to seek further support. This could be provided by another trusted colleague, Occupational Health, and/or a representative of a professional body or trade union, as appropriate.
- Schools have adopted a code of conduct for staff, which forms part of staff induction, and understand that staff should have access to advice on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour.
- Schools recognise that our DSLs should have access to support and appropriate workshops, courses or meetings as organised by the local authority or other certified training provider.

## **16. Allegations against staff**

- All staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.
- A child or young person may make an allegation against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the most senior member of staff available and the Trust's [Allegations of Abuse against Staff Policy](#) will be followed.

## **17. Whistleblowing**

- We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.
- All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues.
- For further information see the Trust's [Whistleblowing Procedure](#)

## **18. Physical Intervention/Positive Handling**

- The policy on physical intervention/positive handling by staff is set out separately in the Trust's [Behaviour Management Policy](#).
- Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness.
- Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention should be appropriately trained.
- Any physical intervention of a nature which is both unreasonable and disproportionate to the circumstances and/or causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

## **19. Anti-Bullying**

- The policy on the prevention and management of bullying is set out in the Trust's [Anti-Bullying Policy](#). The policy acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. Bullying is a safeguarding matter that if left unresolved can become a child protection matter. Every school setting will take seriously any bullying concerns and both investigate and take action to protect pupils where appropriate.
- Schools will liaise with the anti-bullying co-ordinator from Oxfordshire County Council, where appropriate: [OCC Anti-Bullying](#)

## **20. Health & Safety**

The Trust's [Health & Safety Policy](#) reflects the consideration schools give to the physical wellbeing of pupils.

## **21. Children with Special Educational Needs**

All schools recognise that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. This policy reflects 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; and

- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

## 22. Types of abuse and neglect

**All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.**

- **Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.
- **Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.
- **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.



- **Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### 23. Specific safeguarding issues

- All staff have an awareness of safeguarding issues, some of which are listed below. Staff are made aware that behaviours linked to the likes of drug taking, alcohol abuse, truanting and sexting put children in danger.
- All staff are made aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting. Staff are made clear of our policy and procedures with regards to peer on peer abuse.
  - Anti-modern slavery  
For clarity, Modern Slavery encompasses: sexual exploitation, forced labour, criminal exploitation, domestic servitude and organ harvesting.
  - bullying including cyberbullying  
[Oxfordshire County Council Anti-Bullying](#)
  - Child exploitation  
Staff must be aware that children can be exploited in many forms which include: committing burglary, selling drugs, sexually, gang violence and initiations
  - children missing education  
<http://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/pupil-tracking>
  - child missing from home or care  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/307867/Statutory\\_Guidance\\_-\\_Missing\\_from\\_care\\_3\\_.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307867/Statutory_Guidance_-_Missing_from_care_3_.pdf)
  - child sexual exploitation (CSE)  
<http://www.oscb.org.uk/themes-tools/cse/>
  - domestic violence  
<http://www.oscb.org.uk/themes-tools/domestic-abuse/>

- drugs  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/270169/drug\\_advice\\_for\\_schools.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/270169/drug_advice_for_schools.pdf)
- fabricated or induced illness  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/277314/Safeguarding\\_Children\\_in\\_whom\\_illness\\_is\\_fabricated\\_or\\_induced.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277314/Safeguarding_Children_in_whom_illness_is_fabricated_or_induced.pdf)
- faith abuse  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/175437/Action\\_Plan\\_-\\_Abuse\\_linked\\_to\\_Faith\\_or\\_Belief.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175437/Action_Plan_-_Abuse_linked_to_Faith_or_Belief.pdf)
- female genital mutilation (FGM)  
<http://www.oscb.org.uk/themes-tools/fgm/>
- forced marriage and honour based violence  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage>
- gangs and youth violence  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-to-schools-andcolleges-on-gangs-and-youth-violence>
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/violence-against-women-andgirls>
- hate  
<http://educateagainsthate.com/>
- mental health  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-andbehaviour-in-schools--2>
- missing children and adults strategy  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/missing-children-andadults-strategy>
- online safety  
<http://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/internet-safety-andcyberbullying>
- private fostering  
<https://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/team-content/private-fostering>
- preventing radicalisation  
<http://www.oscb.org.uk/themes-tools/prevent-extremism/>

- relationship abuse  
<https://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk/relationship-abuse/what-isrelationship-abuse/>
- sexting  
<https://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk/sexting/what-is-sexting/>
- trafficking  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-who-may-have-been-trafficked-practice-guidance>

**Appendix A contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues.**

#### **24. Online safety**

Pupils at all school settings increasingly work online, and all schools recognise that it is crucial to safeguard pupils from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. As such appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place.

#### **25. Opportunities to teach safeguarding**

In all school settings pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. This may include covering relevant issues through personal, social, health and economic education, and relationship and sex education.

#### **26. Allegations of abuse made against other children (peer on peer abuse)**

All staff recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. In a situation where child abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, our child protection procedures should be adhered to for both the victim and the alleged abuser; this means it should be considered as a child care and protection issue for both children.

Peer on peer abuse can take many forms, and gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with this type of abuse this could for example include girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence.

#### **27. Dealing with disclosures**

**If a student asks to speak to you about a problem do not promise confidentiality but explain that it may be necessary to consult a colleague.**

### **Receive**

Always stop and listen straight away to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse. Listen quietly and actively, giving your undivided attention. Allow silences when needed. Do not show shock or disbelieve but take what is said seriously.

### **Reassure**

Stay calm, no judgements, empathise. **Never make a promise that you can keep what a child has said a secret.** Give reassurance that only those who need to know will be told. Reassure the young person that they were right to tell you.

### **React**

React to the student only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but don't interrogate for full details.

Don't ask leading questions – keep the open questions e.g. 'is there anything else you want to say?'

If you need to try to get more details again keep to open questions, "tell me a bit more about that"

If you do ask questions remember to record the questions you ask as well as the responses the young person gives.

Do not criticise the perpetrator; the student may have affection for him/her.

Explain what you will do next – inform designated teacher, keep in contact.

### **Record**

If possible make brief notes about what they are actually telling you at the time. Keep these notes, however rough they are. If you are unable to make notes at the time write down what was said as soon as you can.

Record what was actually said by the student rather than your interpretation of what they are telling you. Be factual at all times.

Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour.

### **Report**

Report the incident to the DSL or Deputy and do not tell any other adults or students what you have been told.

***Never attempt to carry out an investigation of suspected abuse by interviewing the young person or any others involved. This is a highly skilled role and any attempts by yourself could affect possible criminal proceedings.***

## **28. Record Keeping**

The DSLs are responsible for ensuring that the necessary paperwork is completed and sent to the relevant people and stored in a safe and confidential place. This means that the records will be a coherent factual record of the concerns that are stored on individual children in a clear chronological order.

[http://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/schools/files/folders/folders/documents/sa\\_feguarding/Keeping\\_Child\\_Protection\\_Records.doc](http://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/schools/files/folders/folders/documents/sa_feguarding/Keeping_Child_Protection_Records.doc)

Front page chronologies should be used and be part of all individual safeguarding files (see link above for details).

## **Appendix A: Definitions**

### **Child sexual exploitation (CSE)**

The sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people, (or a third person or persons) receive something, (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affections, gifts, money) as a result of them performing and/or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidations are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child's or young person's limited availability of choice, resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability. (DCSF 2009).

### **Key Facts about CSE**

- Sexual exploitation often starts around the age of 10 years old. Girls are usually targeted from age 10 and boys from age 8.
- It affects both girls and boys and can happen in all communities.
- Any person can be targeted but there are some particularly vulnerable groups: Looked after Children, Children Leaving Care and Children with Disabilities.
- Victims of CSE may also be trafficked (locally, nationally and internationally).
- Over 70% of adults involved in prostitution were sexually exploited as children or teenagers.

Sexual violence or abuse against children represents a major public health and social welfare problem within UK society, affecting 16% of children under 16. That is approximately 2 million children.

### **Good practice – Individuals**

- Recognise the symptoms and distinguish them from other forms of abuse
- Treat the child/young person as a victim of abuse
- Understand the perspective / behaviour of the child/young person and be patient with them
- Help the child/young person to recognise that they are being exploited
- Collate as much information as possible
- Share information with other agencies and seek advice / refer to Social Care

### **Good practice – Organisations**

- Ensure robust safeguarding policies and procedures are in place which cover CSE

- Promote and engage in effective multi-agency working to prevent abuse
- Work to help victims move out of exploitation
- Cooperate to enable successful investigations and prosecutions of perpetrators

## **Female Genital Mutilation FGM**

FGM is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls, and therefore should be dealt with as part of existing child safeguarding/protection structures, policies and procedures.

FGM is illegal in the UK. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.

Other than in the excepted circumstances, it is an offence for **any person (regardless of their nationality or residence status)** to:

- perform FGM in England, Wales or Northern Ireland (section 1 of the Act);
- assist a girl to carry out FGM on herself in England, Wales or Northern Ireland (section 2 of the Act); and
- Assist (from England, Wales or Northern Ireland) a non-UK person to carry out FGM outside the UK on a **UK national or permanent UK resident**
  - (section 3 of the Act).

## **Forced marriages (FM)**

FM is now a specific offence under s121 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 that came into force on 16 June 2014.

A FM is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties, and where duress is a factor. Forced marriage is when someone faces physical pressure to marry (e.g. threats, physical violence or sexual violence) or emotional and psychological pressure (e.g. if someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). This is very different to an arranged marriage where both parties give consent.

FM is illegal in England and Wales. This includes:

- taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place)
- marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they're pressured to or not)

## **Prevent**

The Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015

The Act places a Prevent duty on specified schools to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. The education and childcare specified authorities in Schedule 6 to the Act are as follows:

- The proprietors of maintained schools, non-maintained special schools, maintained nursery schools, independent schools (including academies and free schools) and alternative provision academies, PRUs, registered early years providers, registered late years providers and some holiday schemes.

Schools/settings subject to the Prevent Duty will be expected to demonstrate activity in the following areas –

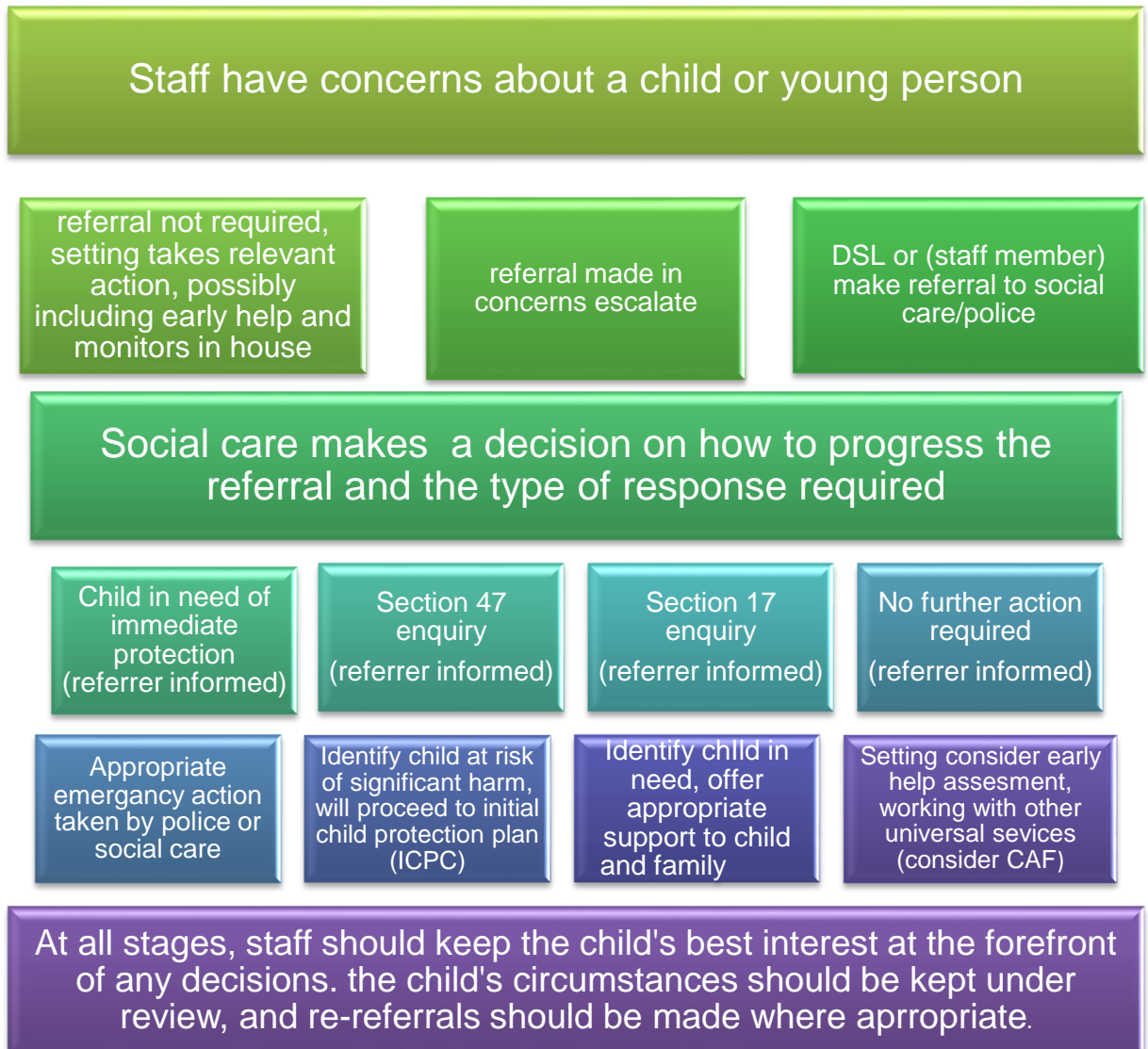
- Assessing the risk of children being drawn into terrorism
- Demonstrate that they are protecting children and young people from being drawn into terrorism by having robust safeguarding policies.
- Ensure that their safeguarding arrangements take into account the policies and procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- Make sure that staff have training that gives them the knowledge and confidence to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism, and to challenge extremist ideas which can be used to legitimise terrorism
- Expected to ensure children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in school

### **Sexting in schools**

For guidance on responding to incidents and safeguarding young people, please refer to: [Sexting in Schools and Colleges](#) a publication from the UK Council for Child Internet Safety.



**Appendix B: Actions where there are concerns about a child (flowchart)**



Please note the referrer should always receive feedback after a referral is made, or be involved in any ongoing meetings if the case progresses