

Safeguarding & Child Protection

'The process of protecting children from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect.'

Should you have **any** concerns about a child's welfare then it is imperative that you speak to a designated person responsible for child protection as soon as possible. At Bishop's School the designated person you will need to contact is Pete Gibbins, followed by either Jonathan Nicholas or Jane Browne.



Pete Gibbins
Deputy Headteacher (DSL/Prevent)
Level 5



Cate Collins
School Governor



Jonathan Nicholas
Assistant Headteacher (DDSL/LAC)
Level 5



Jane Browne
School Counsellor
Level 5

If you are unable to contact these individuals, then please speak to either Mr T Williams (Headteacher) or Ellie Bunston (Deputy Headteacher).



The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Approved- September 2024

SLT Lead – Pete Gibbins

Review Date September 2025

At The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School (BHBS) every child's welfare is our paramount concern.

STATEMENT

Staff at BHBS will do everything they can to ensure that all students enjoy a safe and secure environment, free from the threat of neglect or abuse.

BHBS believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of any child/young person is paramount.
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

The purpose of the policy is:

- to provide protection for the children and young people attending BHBS, including the children of members of staff, volunteers, and members of the public who hire BHBS facilities.
- to provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.
- to provide staff and volunteers with guidance on how to identify young people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, CSE and FGM (see appendix); knowing what to do when they are identified.

This policy applies to all staff, including senior leaders, and the board of governors, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of BHBS.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents/carers, staff and volunteers.
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents/carers and children appropriately.
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

Equality

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

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities (see section 9)
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually through the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the Governing body and consulting with staff.

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

BHBS is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all children. It adheres to the legal framework;

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE September 2018);
- The Education Act 2002 s175/s157;
- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse (DfE 2012); and
- Keeping Children Safe in Education; information for all schools and college staff (DfE September 2022).

It is acknowledged that abuse can happen within a family or within an agency whose role is to support and protect children/young people, but any child can be vulnerable to such abuse. It is the responsibility of us all, irrespective of our cultural or work background, to put the welfare of children and young people first and to recognise indicators in children and behaviours towards children that can mean that a child/young person is at risk.

In order to protect children from emotional, sexual, physical abuse and neglect, it is important that the procedures contained in this document are followed and that every effort is made to support the students. BHBS has a multi-agency approach with its partners in Herefordshire, to ensure that children are safeguarded with a shared objective to keep children and young people safe by contributing to:

- Providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn in and promote wellbeing in.
- Identifying children and young people who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe at home and at school.
- Linking directly to HSCB (Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board)

All staff and governors are expected to make themselves familiar with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2022) and 'Working together' (2015) and apply the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy as soon as possible after the date of release. Each member of staff and governors will be given a copy of the document and sign to acknowledge they have read and understood its implications. As part of our on-going training of staff, checks will be made throughout the year to ensure staff are applying the policy. This will be through INSET and during the school year during lessons and meetings.

DEFINITION

This policy adopts the definition used in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2020) which focuses on safeguarding and promoting children and young people's welfare and can be summarised as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

AIMS

This policy will contribute to the prevention of abuse by:

- Clarifying standards of behaviour for staff and students;
- Introducing appropriate work within the curriculum;
- Developing staff awareness of the causes of abuse;
- Encouraging students and parent/carer participation in practice; and
- Addressing concerns at the earliest possible stage.

This policy will contribute to the protection of our children by:

- Including appropriate work within the curriculum;
- Implementing child protection policies and procedures;
- Working in partnership with students; parents/carers and agencies; and
- Directing concerns about students in specific circumstances (e.g. students at risk from being drawn into extremism) to relevant government guidance.

This policy will contribute to supporting our children by:

- Identifying individual needs; and where possible
- Designing plans to meet needs.

CHILD PROTECTION AND STUDENTS

GENERAL

- We will ensure safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff, governors and volunteers working within the school;
- There will always be a 'designated' member of staff with responsibility for child protection within the school;
- Current policies of Herefordshire Council will be followed;
- School governors will be updated termly in the Behaviour & Safety Committee on the nature of safeguarding incidents in school. This will include data regarding attendance and possible children missing education (CME);
- INSET sessions will be held as necessary to keep staff aware of new guidelines and the referral process. All staff will be trained to Level 1 and House Leaders will be trained to Level 3. All staff will receive training each year and formal training for DSL and DDSL will occur when certification expires. Prevent and WRAP forms part of new staff induction and the regular annual updates;
- All staff are expected to be aware of the 'ten day' attendance rule and highlighting absence so that children do not miss education and be classified as a 'Child Missing Education' (CME);
- Where a student has to be physically restrained this must where possible be completed by trained members of staff. On the occasion this takes place the 'Physical Restraint' form must be completed immediately and given to the DSL;
- Safeguarding procedures will be an integral part of the Induction process for all new staff; • A copy of the policy and detailed guidelines for all staff will be included in the Staff Handbook. The Policy will be included in a summarised form in the School Information for Parent/Carers Book and on the School website;
- Official referral forms will be held in Student Services;
- All information on child protection matters should be considered to be confidential, on a 'need-to-know' basis;
- Students **cannot be promised** total confidentiality on any information they may divulge;
- An electronic Log Book of all reported incidents, or causes for concern, is kept password protected by the safeguarding team;
- We will ensure that all use of information and communications technology complies with current DfE guidelines for safeguarding children in a digital world (Byron Review, 2008);

- All aspects of safeguarding including online form part of the schools Skills For Life programme which covers all aspects of 'Personal, Social and Health Education';
- The Headteacher will support the designated safeguarding staff monitoring that all is compliant and will also advise where necessary as they are Level 5 trained;
- There will be an appointed safeguarding governor (see front sheet for current Governor) and they will chair the Behaviour & Safety Committee which monitors the effectiveness of the safeguarding at BHBS. They will feedback to the full governors;
- If at any time you feel that you need additional advice you can contact the NSPCC on <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/nspcc-helpline>.

GOOD PRACTICE FOR STAFF

They should endeavour to avoid any situation which could be misconstrued.

Careful and detailed logs of any incidents, disclosures or concerns should be entered on MyConcern but if urgent should be reported to a member of the safeguarding team IMMEDIATELY. All staff can raise a concern on MyConcern.

The senior members of staff designated for Child Protection at BHBS are:

Mr T Williams – Headteacher	01432 347501
Mrs Ellie Bunston – Deputy Headteacher	01432 347512
Mr Peter Gibbins – Deputy Headteacher (DSL)	01432 347548
Mr Jonathan Nicholas – Assistant Head (DDSL)	01432 347510
Mrs Jane Browne – School Counsellor	01432 347508

Initial safeguarding incidents are managed by the wider safeguarding team of Pastoral Mentors.

Year A – Kris Long	01432 347517
Year Z – Kirsty Jones	01432 347557
Year Y – Jo Foggo	01432 347594
Year X – Lucy Dumbrell	01432 347521
Year W – Marion Roberts	01432 347522
SEN – Cally Vaughan	01432 347532
PPG – Anna Thomason	01432 347525

In the absence of the Headteacher, a Deputy Headteacher will assume responsibility. The named Governor for safeguarding is the Ms Cate Collins.

Supervision is organised for the DSL with Aylestone School, who receive supervision on a reciprocal basis.

STAFF ROOM

Notice containing the following information:

- Name and photographs of designated staff; and
- If a teacher, a copy of the designated teacher's timetable is available via SIMS.

STUDENT SERVICES CONTAIN INFORMATION FOR THE FOLLOWING SERVICES:

This information is all housed on our online safeguarding system MyConcern.

- Herefordshire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team;
- Police Station;
- Child Protection Centre;
- Local Authority Nominated Person;
- EHA (CAF) Registry.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING STAFF

The designated members of the safeguarding team are responsible for:

- Liaising with (and supporting) parents/carers when appropriate;
- Liaison and links with Social Services;
- Convening and chairing Early Help Assessment (Formerly CAF) meetings;
- Receiving concerns from staff about potential or actual abuse and giving appropriate advice;
- Making referrals to outside agencies including Child Protection Unit and Social Services;
- Consulting about particular cases and referral to Herefordshire Local Authority;
- Assisting referral of children "in need" who may not necessarily be in immediate risk of significant harm;
- Managing of the representation of the school at case conferences;
- Supporting students 'at risk' and regular contact with their social workers;
- Ensuring dissemination of information about children at risk to those **who need to know**;
- Leading and facilitating Induction of all staff about child protection procedures within the school;
- Ensuring the Headteacher is well briefed about child protection cases within the school;
- Referring any child protection allegations or concerns about staff or volunteers to the Headteacher;
- Liaising with the Governors, Local Authority and external agencies when there are concerns raised about the Headteacher;
- Designated members of staff need to know;
- Signs and symptoms of abuse;
- Criteria for action;
- Role of investigating agencies and local contact points;
- Requirements of record-keeping;
- Procedures in case conferences;
- How to prepare for and contribute to case conferences;
- Escalation procedures if dissatisfied with decision at MASH levels.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF

All staff will read and understand part 1 and Annex A of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and review this guidance at least annually.

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding,
 - child protection policy (which should amongst other things also include the policy and procedures to deal with child-on-child abuse)
 - behaviour policy (which should include measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
 - staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct) should amongst other things, include low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing
 - safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods and
 - role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).
- The early help process (previously known as the common assessment framework) and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment
- The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals

- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child sexual exploitation (CSE), FGM and radicalisation
- All staff will share information with the safeguarding team no matter how small the concern. This is based on 'Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services' (DFE, 2015)
- 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 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 safeguarding team if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.
- All staff will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring at induction. The training should be regularly updated. In addition, all staff will receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF DSL

The DSL is a member of the senior leadership team. Our DSL is Peter Gibbins (Deputy Headteacher). The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding.

During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

The DSL can be contacted via email at pgibbins@bhbs.hereford.sch.uk and via the school safeguarding phone on 07779301985.

When the DSL is absent, the deputy – Jonathan Nicholas (Assistant Headteacher – will act as cover. If the DSL and deputy are not available, Mr T Williams (Headteacher) and Ellie Bunston (Deputy Headteacher) should be contacted.

The DSL will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so
- Contribute to the assessment of children
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority children's social care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly
-

The DSL will also keep the headteacher informed of any issues, and liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate.

The full responsibilities of the DSL and [deputy/deputies] are set out in their job description.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HEADTEACHER

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

- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction
- Communicating this policy to parents when their child joins the school and via the school website
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and update this regularly

- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate

-

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNING BODY

The governing board will approve this policy at each review, ensure it complies with the law and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The governing board will appoint a senior board level (or equivalent) lead to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full governing board. This is always a different person from the DSL.

The chair of governors will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, where appropriate.

All governors will read Keeping Children Safe in Education.

CHILD PROTECTION AND STAFF PROTECTION

This must be read in conjunction with safety policies.

GOOD PRACTICE

All staff need to be fully aware of their responsibility in protecting the dignity and welfare of children and also their responsibility to safeguard themselves against false allegations. If anyone takes advantage of children and abuses them, the school is legally and morally bound to protect the child. School IT systems are such that safeguarding is considered at all levels of use including parent/carer access and website and social media use (please see 'Acceptable Use Policy' for further detail).

Where any member of staff is subject to false allegation the school will offer every support within its power. Staff will be aware however that the evidence may be unclear and it is very difficult in some situations to disprove allegations which can have far-reaching consequences for the accused and his or her family. It is sometimes difficult to decide whether certain behaviour from one child to another constitutes normal 'experimentation', bullying or child abuse. The government guidance 'What to do if you think a child is being abused' is a useful guide.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf

We would advise that staff take particular care to act correctly in high-risk situations. Measures to reduce risk include:

- Involving more than one member of staff where appropriate;
- Ensuring same sex supervision or involvement where possible;
- Keeping colleagues informed particularly if a student is being interviewed alone;
- Leaving doors open when interviews take place unless there is good reason not to;
- Consulting colleagues if a student appears to be over-familiar or seeking repeated contact;
- Informing the Headteacher if any incident has occurred which may lead to complaint - malicious or otherwise;
- Avoiding bodily contact except where clearly appropriate;
- Being aware of one's own levels of stress and the possibilities of rising anger so that strategies can be adopted which reduce the likelihood of an outburst. We need to consult and use colleagues in such circumstances.

PROCEDURES IF ALLEGATIONS ARE MADE AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF (see Appendix)

If an allegation is made by a student to a member of staff concerning a colleague the child should be listened to without pre-judging the truth of the matter or their motivation. As in other cases **no assurance of confidentiality can be given**. The Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher in their absence) should be informed immediately.

Any member of staff accused should be aware that information may be passed to the Chair of Governors and the designated member of the Local Authority. Suspension may have to be considered but would not be automatic. Early contact with parents/carers would be likely but it would involve speaking and acting with the utmost discretion.

Risks are unavoidable and the implications of any incident or allegation are so serious that we urge all staff to consider carefully the above and do all that is possible to maintain trusting relationships.

False or malicious allegations made towards a member of staff will result in an appropriate sanction being issued (see Behaviour Policy).

A SAFER SCHOOL CULTURE

- All students will receive support concerning safeguarding issues through our Skills For Life (S4L) programme. This will cover all topics including, extremism (PREVENT), bullying, peer on peer abuse, online safety, CME, FGM and SEND differences. The curriculum plans for S4L and our SEND policy are available for reference.

Safer Recruitment (See Appendices)

- The school pays full regard to 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' (DfES 2007). Safer recruitment practice includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking interviews and undertaking appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as well as Disclosure by Association. All staff and volunteers will receive enhanced level DBS checks.
- All recruitment materials will include reference to the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of students.
- Members of the Senior Leadership Team and members of the Governing body, have taken the safer recruitment training. One of the above will be involved in all staff / volunteer recruitment processes and sit on the recruitment panel.

STAFF SUPPORT

- The school recognises the stressful and traumatic nature of child protection work and supports staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with a safeguarding officer and to seek further support as appropriate.

PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH STUDENTS/RESTRAINT

- BHBS recognises that staff only need to intervene physically as a last resort. Physical intervention will be used when an individual poses an immediate risk to themselves, others or school property. Physical intervention will be used in line with the government guidance contained in Behaviour and discipline in schools (February 2014). At all times physical

intervention must use the minimum amount of force for the minimum amount of time necessary to prevent injury or damage to property.

- We understand that physical intervention that causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under safeguarding or disciplinary procedures if staff have not acted in accordance with the point above.

PRIVATE FOSTERING

- Is when a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a 'close relative'. This is a **private** arrangement made between a parent and a carer, for 28 days or more.
- There is a mandatory duty to inform the LA if such arrangements have been made and the school is made aware.

CPD/TRAINING

- All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistle-blowing procedures, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect. This training will be regularly updated and will be in line with advice. This forms part of the schools induction process and includes detail on the Staff Code of Conduct, Behaviour Policy and Attendance Policy.
- All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. All events and outside visitors/speakers are made aware that extremist views will not be tolerated.
- All staff will have training on the following, children and the court system, children missing from education, children with family members in prison, CSE, county lines, domestic abuse, homelessness, honour based violence, preventing radicalisation, peer on peer abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- At BHBS we need to focus specifically on self harm, county lines and CSE as these are the most common aspects of safeguarding that we deal with.
- Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings) as required, but at least annually.
- All BHBS staff and Governors have access to TES Develop to keep up to date with current practices. Staff can also use this as a way of increasing their knowledge of safeguarding. Induction of new staff is completed using this package.
- Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.
- All Governors and Associate members at Bishops will have section 128 carried out.

GOVERNOR CHALLENGE

- Safeguarding forms part of the agenda for the Governor Behaviour & Safeguarding Committee which meets every half term. A report is generated which covers all areas of Safeguarding in school. This is used as a starting point to monitor effectiveness.
- All policies have to be Governor approved.

WHISTLEBLOWING

- If at any time you are not happy with the decision made regarding any safeguarding issue (high relevance to child protection) then please speak to the appropriate members of staff or the Headteacher. If you do not feel you can do this or still unhappy with any decision made there are other agencies you can speak to:

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy – Updated September 2024

- LADO (see LADO details) ○ Ofsted - Email us at whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk. ○ Call us on 0300 123 3155 (Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 6.00pm).
- NSPCC advice line 0808 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk ○ School staff may wish to contact their union representative

EXTERNAL PARTNERS

- All external agencies that work with BHBS we expect the sharing of information as set out in this policy so we can maintain the safety of our students. Promises of confidentiality cannot be kept. BHBS will however not share this information with any outside agencies unless the safety and welfare of a student or the school community is at risk.
- We always look to ensure that our policy is up to date and contains all relevant information. We use the West Midlands Safeguarding Procedures and the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board as references points. Please see the links below:

<http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/>

<https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/herefordshire-safeguarding-children-board>

FILTERING AND MONITORING

- there are appropriate online filtering and monitoring systems within the school which are inline with the DfE's published standards <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/filtering-and-monitoring-standards-for-schools-and-colleges>. Over blocking of material which could impair children's independent research and learning will be avoided

ALTERNATIVE PROVISION FOR STUDENTS

- the school and governing body understand that within alternative provisions, children may have complex needs and may have an additional risk of harm. Bishops will ensure that all checks are carried out to maintain the safeguarding of young people in any provision.

SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROTOCOL: SAFE WORKING PRACTICES FOR STAFF

It is essential that all staff are conscious of how they should conduct themselves to minimise the risk of finding themselves as the subject of any child protection processes. All staff should be aware of the following summary of things to do and not to do when working with children.

“DOs”

- Read, understand and sign 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and follow the safeguarding policy and child protection procedures. Your form must be returned Mrs Woodcock by the October half term. Any queries over understanding must be raised to one of the safeguarding team.
- Report to the designated / named person any concerns about child welfare/safety.
- Report to the designated / named person any concerns about the conduct of other school staff/volunteers/contractors.
- Record in writing all relevant incidents.
- Work in an open and transparent way.
- Discuss and report any incidents of concern or that might lead to concerns being raised about your conduct towards a student.
- Report to the designated/named person any incidents that suggest a student may be infatuated with you or taking an above normal interest in you.
- Dress appropriately for your role.
- Only use e-mail contact with students via any authorised system.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with students.

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy – Updated September 2024

- Ensure you understand the rules concerning physical restraint
- Where physical contact is essential for educational or safety reasons, gain student's permission for that contact wherever possible.
- Allow students to change clothes with levels of respect and privacy appropriate to their age, gender, culture and circumstances.
- Avoid working in one-to-one situations with students and volunteering to house students overnight.
- Be careful about recording images of students and do this only when it is approved.
- Contact your professional association or trade union if you are the subject of concerns or allegations of a child protection nature.
- Fully co-operate with any investigation into child protection issues in the school. Listen to students when they express concern (rumours) about staff which might appear to be just, and check facts v fiction.
- Ensure that when dealing with students who have SEN we do not assume that potential signs of abuse are assumed to be part of their SEN needs.
- **Any member of staff is able to make a referral to the safeguarding team.**

“DON'Ts”

- Fail to sign the Keeping Children Safe in Education document as this will mean that you are not meeting your statutory duty;
- Take any action that would lead a reasonable person to question your motivation and/or intentions;
- Misuse in any way your position of power and influence over students;
- Use any confidential information about a child to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass a student;
- Engage in activities out of the workplace/setting that might compromise your position with children or young people;
- Establish or seek to establish social contact with students outside of the workplace or setting
- Accept regular gifts from students;
- Give personal gifts to students;
- Communicate with students in inappropriate ways, including personal e-mails and mobile telephones.
- Pass your home address, phone number, e-mail address or other personal/social networking details to children or young people;
- Make physical contact secretive;
- Arrange to meet with students in closed rooms without other staff being made aware of this in advance;
- Use physical punishment of any kind;
- Confer special attention on one student unless this is part of an agreed plan or policy;
- Transport students in your own vehicle without prior management approval and correct insurances;
- Take, publish or share images of students or other children without their parents'/carers' permission;
- Access abuse images (sometimes referred to as child pornography) or other inappropriate material;
- Abuse your position of trust with children or young people;
- Allow boundaries to be unsafe in more informal settings such as trips out.

APPENDIX

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

Organisations that work or come into contact with children and young people need to be aware of the possibility that allegations of abuse will be made against members of their staff or volunteers. Allegations will usually be that some kind of abuse has taken place. They can be made by children and young people and they can be made by concerned adults.

Allegations can be made for a variety of reasons. Some of the most common are:

- Abuse has taken place
- Something happens to a child that reminds them of an event that happened in the past. (The child is unable to recognise that the situation and the people are different).
- Children can misinterpret your language or your actions because they are reminded of something else.

If a complaint is made please:

- Make sure that the child in question is safe and removed from the person alleged to have abused the child.
- Contact Herefordshire Council's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) by phone (01432 260680), or email lado@herefordshire.gcsx.gov.uk – website <http://hscb.herefordshire.gov.uk/7.htm#LADO> .
- The HSCB website has information on policies and procedures: Managing Allegations Against Professionals www.herefordshire.gov.uk/hscb .
- Contact the MASH Team/West Mercia Police.
- Contact the parents or carers of the child if advised to do so by the social worker/police officer in charge of allegations.

Irrespective of any investigation by the LADO or the Police, you should follow the appropriate disciplinary procedure; consideration needs to be given as to whether the alleged abuser should be suspended from attending the setting until the outcome of any investigation is clear.

LADOs are involved in the management and oversight of individual cases where it is alleged that a person working with children (including a volunteer) has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

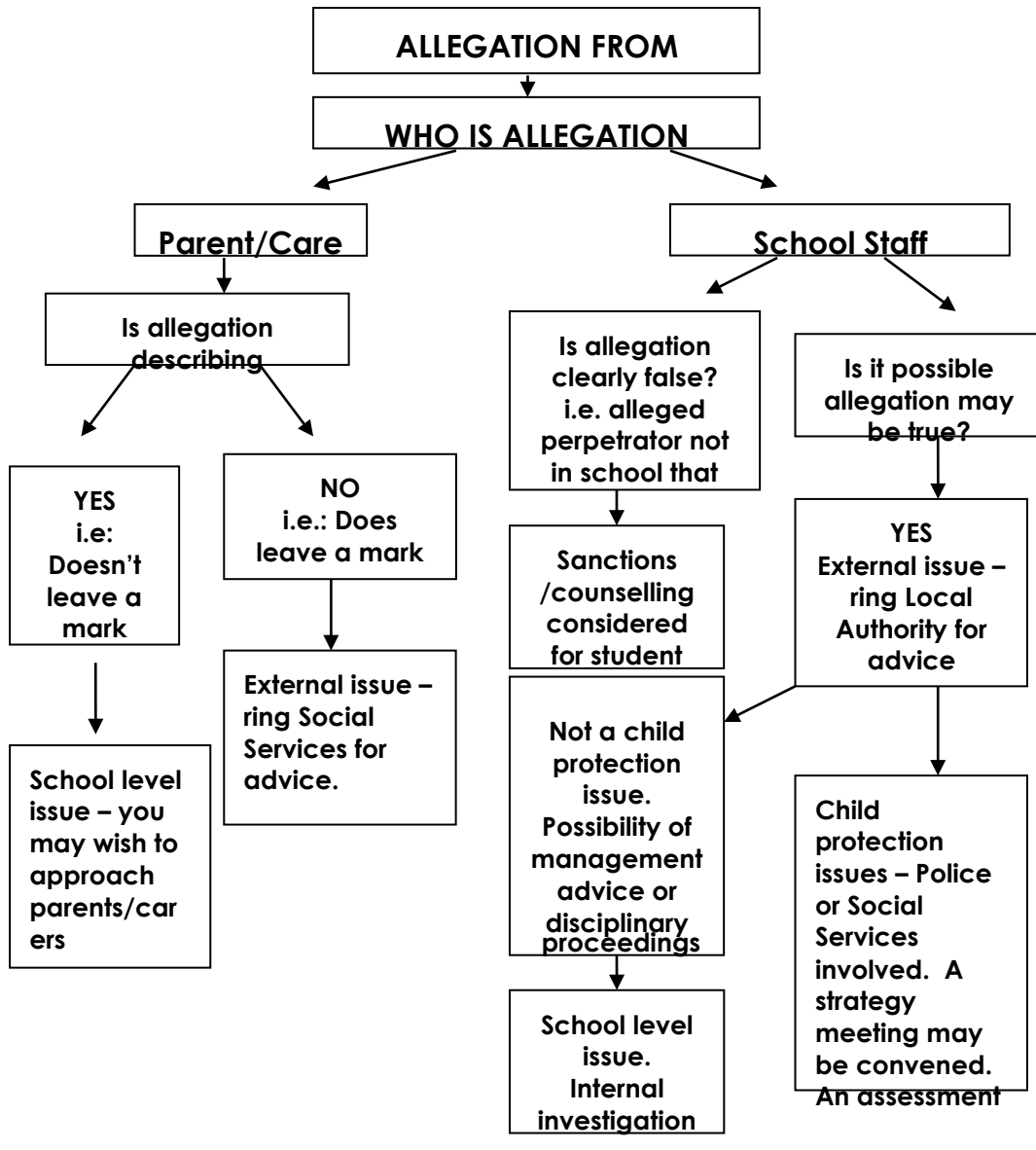
An allegation of abuse may involve a member of the school staff. In these circumstances the allegation MUST be reported to the Headteacher immediately.

On receipt of such an allegation the Headteacher will contact the Local Authority's Designated Officer (LADO). The school must not investigate allegations of abuse until the LADO has been informed. The Herefordshire LADO can be contacted by e-mail at lado@herefordshire.gcsx.gov.uk or by telephone to the LADO 01432 260680.

If the allegation concerns the Headteacher, the member of staff receiving the allegation MUST speak immediately to the Local Authority's Designated Officer (LADO), or, if unavailable, the Head of Service. Additionally, the Chair of Governors must be notified.

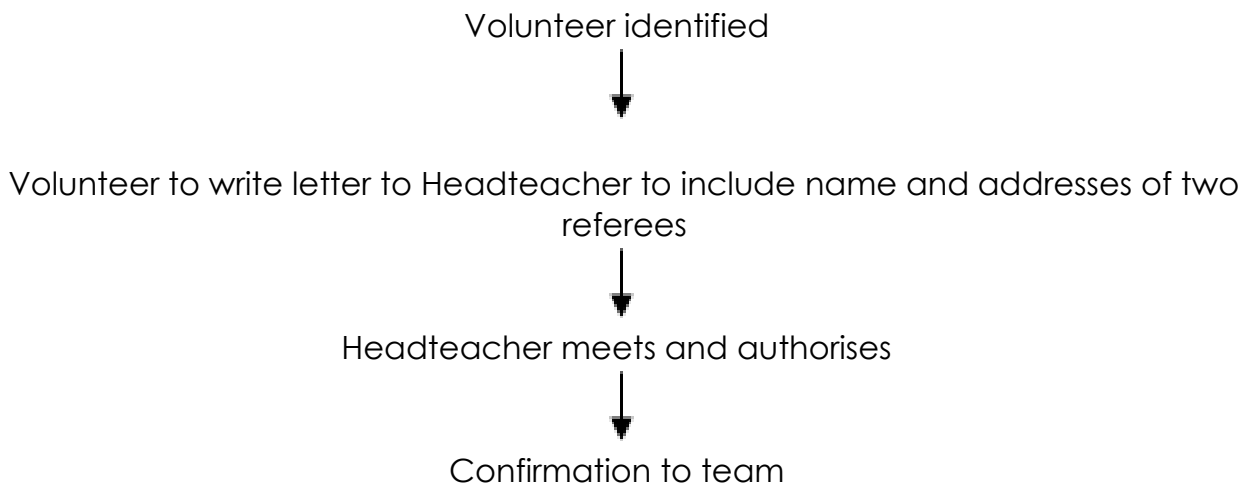
Further information and details of guidance and procedures can be found in the LA's joint safeguarding procedures at www.proceduresonline.com/west%20mercia%20consortium

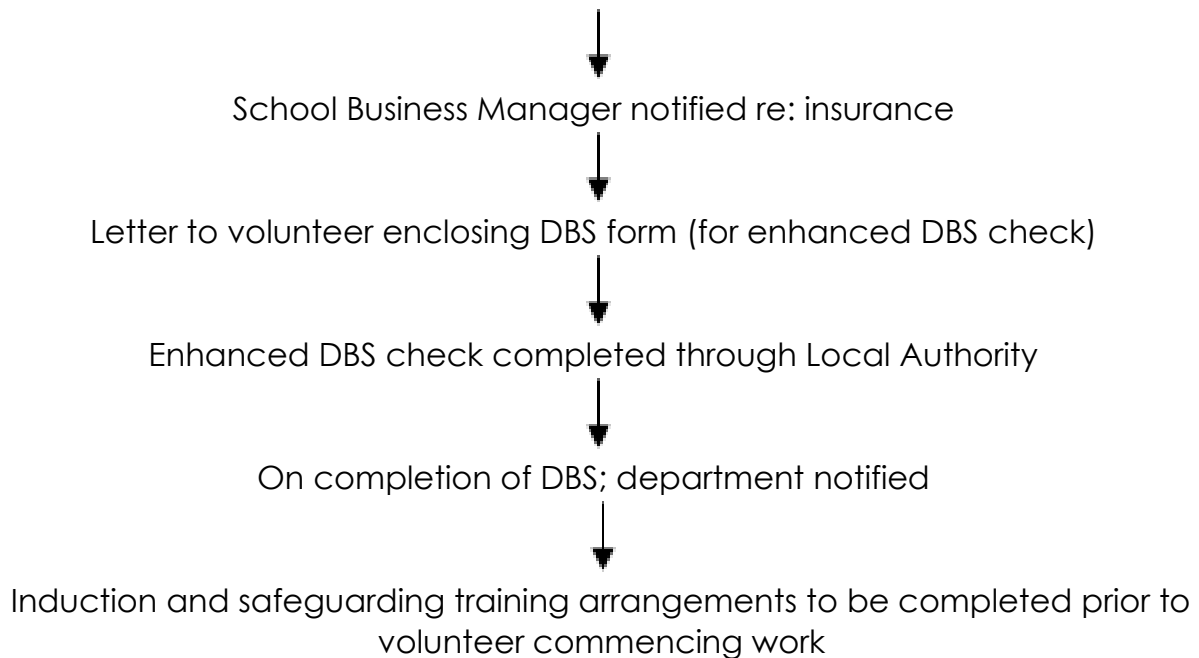
HOW TO HANDLE ALLEGATIONS OF ASSAULT FROM A STUDENT



VOLUNTEERS IN SCHOOL AND SAFEGUARDING

Flowchart





n.b. If the volunteer is not in school for a period of three months a further DBS check has to be undertaken.

Those people who are in unregulated activity no longer require a DBS but that a Risk Assessment has been conducted and kept.

FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)

Any information or concern that a girl / young woman is at risk of, or has undergone FGM should result in an immediate referral to West Mercia Police, or Children's Social Care Services.

FGM is a form of child abuse which has a devastating effect on girls and women: See details and information on NSPCC fact sheet – link:

http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/resourcesforprofessionals/minorityethnic/female-genitalmutilation_wda96841.html

FGM is commonly practised on girls between infancy to 15 years old with majority of cases between 5 and 8 years old.

Also refer to: http://westmerciaconsortium.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_fem_mut.html

FGM places a girl / young woman at risk of significant harm and will therefore be initially investigated under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

If a girl / young woman is thought to be at risk of FGM, workers should be aware of the need to act quickly - before she is abused by undergoing FGM in the UK, or taken abroad to undergo the procedure.

Indications that FGM may be about to take place include:

- The family comes from a community that is known to practice FGM, e.g. Somalia, Sudan and other African countries. It may be possible that they will practice FGM if a female family elder is around;

- Parents/carers state that they or a relative will take the child out of the country for a prolonged period;
- A child may talk about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, including African countries and the Middle East;
- A child may confide to a professional that she is to have a 'special procedure' or to attend a special occasion;
- A professional hears reference to FGM in conversation, for example a child may tell other children about it;
- A child may request help from a teacher or another adult;

Any female child born to a woman who has been subjected to FGM must be considered to be at risk, as must other female children in the extended family;

- Any female child who has a sister who has already have undergone FGM must be considered to be at risk;
- A girl / young woman who has undergone FGM should be seen as a Child in Need and offered services as appropriate.

All teaching staff have a personal mandatory duty to report FGM.

SELF-HARM POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This document describes the school's approach to self-harm. This policy is intended as guidance for **all** staff and Governors.

- To increase understanding and awareness of self-harm;
- To alert staff to warning signs and risk factors;
- To provide support to staff dealing with students who self-harm;
- To provide support to students who self-harm and their peers and parents/carers.

DEFINITION OF SELF-HARM

Self-harm is any behaviour where the intent is to deliberately cause harm to one's own body for example:

- Cutting, scratching, scraping or picking skin
- Swallowing inedible objects
- Taking an overdose of prescription or non-prescription drugs
- Swallowing hazardous materials or substances
- Burning or scalding
- Hair-pulling
- Banging or hitting the head or other parts of the body
- Scouring or scrubbing the body excessively

AIMS

Recent research indicates that up to one in ten young people in the UK engage in self-harming behaviours, and that this figure is higher amongst specific populations, including young people with special educational needs. School staff can play an important role in preventing self-harm and also in supporting students, peers and parent/carers of students currently engaging in self-harm.

RISK FACTORS

The following risk factors, particularly in combination, may make a young person particularly vulnerable to self-harm:

Individual Factors:

- Depression / anxiety
- Poor communication skills
- Low self-esteem
- Poor problem-solving skills
- Hopelessness
- Impulsivity
- Drug or alcohol abuse

Family Factors:

- Unreasonable expectations
- Neglect or physical, sexual or emotional abuse
- Poor parental relationships and arguments
- Depression, self-harm or suicide in the family
- Social Factors
- Difficulty in making relationships / loneliness
- Being bullied or rejected by peers

WARNING SIGNS

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing difficulties that may lead to thoughts of self-harm or suicide. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff having observed any of these warning signs should seek further advice from one of the safeguarding team.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating / sleeping habits (e.g. student may appear overly tired if not sleeping well)
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood e.g. more aggressive or introverted than usual
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing e.g. becoming a goth

ACTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff Roles in working with students who self-harm:

Students may choose to confide in a member of school staff if they are concerned about their own welfare, or that of a peer. School staff may experience a range of feelings in response to self-harm in a student such as anger, sadness, shock, disbelief, guilt, helplessness, disgust and rejection. However, in order to offer the best possible help to students it is important to try and maintain a supportive and open attitude – a student who has chosen to discuss their concerns with a member of school staff is showing a considerable amount of courage and trust.

Students need to be made aware that it may not be possible for staff to offer complete confidentiality. If you consider a student is at serious risk of harming themselves then confidentiality cannot be kept. It is important not to make promises of confidentiality that cannot be kept even if a student puts pressure on you to do so.

Any member of staff who is aware of a student engaging in or suspected to be at risk of engaging in self-harm should consult a member of the safeguarding team.

Following the report, the designated teacher will decide on the appropriate course of action. This may include:

- Contacting parents / carers
- Arranging professional assistance e.g. doctor, nurse, social services
- Arranging an appointment with a counsellor
- Immediately removing the student from lessons if their remaining in class is likely to cause further distress to themselves or their peers
- In the case of an acutely distressed student, the immediate safety of the student is paramount and an adult should remain with the student at all times
- If a student has self-harmed in school a first aider should be called for immediate help

RADICALISATION

- Radicalisation is defined as the act or process of making a person more radical or favouring of extreme or fundamental changes in political, economic or social conditions, institutions or habits of the mind.
- Extremism is defined as the holding of extreme political or religious views.
- There are a number of behaviours which may indicate a child is at risk of being radicalised or exposed to extreme views.

These include;

- Spending increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists.
- Changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group.
- Day-to-day behaviour becoming increasingly centred on an extremist ideology, group or cause.
- Loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause.
- Possession of materials or symbols associated with an extremist cause.
- Attempts to recruit others to the group/cause.
- Communications with others that suggests identification with a group, cause or ideology.
- Using insulting to derogatory names for another group.
- Increase in prejudice-related incidents committed by that person – these may include; physical or verbal assault ,provocative behaviour ,damage to property ,derogatory name calling ,possession of prejudice-related materials ,prejudice related ridicule or name calling, inappropriate forms of address ,refusal to co-operate ,attempts to recruit to prejudicerelated organisations ,condoning or supporting violence towards others.
- ICT filters are applied to prevent access to radical material and others that would fall in a safeguarding context. This is reviewed yearly by the ICT team and Business Manager.

THE PREVENT DUTY

As set out in the non-statutory advice for schools and childcare providers 'The Prevent Duty (June 2015), BHBS follows a policy (in-line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures) of reporting incidences that pertain to the potential of a child/ren being given over to extremist views or ideologies. The schools safeguarding principles apply to keeping children safe from the risk of radicalisation as set out in the schools Child Protection & Safeguarding policy.

The school aims and helps to build children's resilience to radicalisation through the promotion of fundamental British Values and through the development of its Christian Values education across the curriculum.

- The 2015 Prevent strategy within the council contact is: ct1@herefordshire.gov.uk – Carol Trachonitis .

- DS Phil Colley is the Forces lead.
- Chair of the panel on the Council is Neville Meredith.
- Any prevent concerns must be passed to Peter Gibbins (DSL).

SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

These are possible indicators of child sexual exploitation. All staff should be aware and vigilant of any students displaying these signs.

- disengagement with school, not in school, truancy, exclusion.
- repeat sexually transmitted infections; in girls repeat pregnancy, abortions, miscarriage hanging out with groups of older people, anti-social groups, other vulnerable peers unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual) -involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations -self-harming, suicide attempts, overdosing, eating disorders.
- injuries from physical assault, physical restraint, sexual assault.
- moving around the country, appearing in new towns or cities, not knowing where they are sexting (sending and receiving explicit photos of themselves on mobile phones) -unexplained gifts.
- unaffordable new things (clothes, mobile) or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs) -engagement in offending, criminal activity.
- going missing, running away, homelessness drug use, alcohol abuse.
- sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex gang fights, gang membership.
- getting into/out of different cars.
- accessing hardcore pornography on the internet contact with known perpetrators.
- association with older men -inappropriate sexual behaviour -seen at known places of concern police involvement, police records.

Advice and further information is available from the CPO and the link below:

http://hscb.herefordshire.gov.uk/docs/HSCB_Signs_and_indicators_of_Sexual_Exploitation_and_Trafficking.pdf

The concern over county lines and young people being pulled into criminal gangs must always be considered when any identified risk factors have been seen. All staff are responsible for raising concerns over potential students being put at risk of serious violence.

FORCED MARRIAGES

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is an appalling and indefensible practice and is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse (taking your wages or not giving you any money) can also be a factor.

Any member of our community that you suspect may be suffering from this must be treated as a safeguarding issue and it should be reported to the safeguarding team straight away.

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION IN THE CURRICULUM

Safeguarding and Child Protection forms part of our Skills For Life Programme that runs from year 7 to year 11. This covers all aspects of Personal Social & Health Education (PSHE). The safeguarding team will update the Curriculum Team Leader for Ethics and S4L of any trends and changes that need to

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy – Updated September 2024

be taken into account when planning the schemes of work. Outside speakers are used on a regular basis and include the police and social services where appropriate.

MOBILE PHONE USE

Bishops takes a zero tolerance on the use of mobile phones in school. All details can be found in the student planner. All phones will need to be hidden from sight between 8.30 and 3.20. Any mobile phone seen will be confiscated for one week.

Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use but will limit such use to non-contact time when pupils are not present. Staff members' personal phones will remain in their bags or cupboards during contact time with pupils.

Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras. We will follow the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 when taking and storing photos and recordings for use in the school. Further detail can be found in the staff code of conduct.

PEER ON PEER ABUSE

The majority of these instances will be dealt with using our school sanction system and anti bullying policy (see policies). However, they must always be treated as possible safeguarding issues and recorded on the log. Where appropriate outside agencies will be informed and guidance sought.

INTRODUCTION TO ABUSE AND HARMFUL BEHAVIOUR

Abusive behaviour can happen to students in schools and settings and it is necessary to consider what abuse is and looks like, how it can be managed and what appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual and what preventative strategies may be put in place to reduce further risk of harm.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Equally, abuse issues can sometimes be gender specific e.g. girls being sexually touched/assaulted and boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence. It is important to consider the forms abuse may take and the subsequent actions required.

TYPES OF ABUSE

There are many forms of abuse that may occur between peers and this list is not exhaustive. Each form of abuse or prejudiced behaviour is described in detail followed by advice and support on actions to be taken.

Domestic abuse

This encompasses a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

Physical abuse e.g. (biting, hitting, kicking, hair pulling etc.)

Physical abuse may include, hitting, kicking, nipping, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.

Sexually harmful behaviour/sexual abuse e.g. (inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault etc.)

Sexually harmful behaviour from young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. There may be many reasons why a young person engages in sexually harmful behaviour and it may be just as distressing to the young person who instigates it as well as the young person it is intended towards. Sexually harmful behaviour may range from inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, to sexually touching another or sexual assault/abuse. DFE guidance on sexual harassment is summarised below and can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/667862/Sexual_Harassment_and_Sexual_Violence_-_Advice.pdf

- Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any sex. They can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.
- Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Schools and colleges should consider the following:
 - It is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and more likely that sexual harassment will be perpetrated by boys. Schools and colleges should be aware of the importance of:
 - Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
 - Upskirting is clearly a form of peer on peer abuse and must be treated accordingly.
 - Not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and challenging behaviours (which are potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia . Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.
 - Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can be especially vulnerable. Disabled and deaf children are three times more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can sometimes exist when recognising abuse in SEND children. These can include:
 - Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
 - The potential for children with SEND being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying and harassment, without outwardly showing any signs; and communication barriers and difficulties overcoming these barriers.
 - Children who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi, or Trans (LGBT) can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, a child who is perceived by their peers to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.

Bullying (physical, name calling, homophobic etc.)

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both young people who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include: Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason e.g. size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Cyber bullying

Cyberbullying is the use of phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above.

It is important to state that cyber bullying can very easily fall into criminal behaviour under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 under section 1 which states that electronic communications which are indecent or grossly offensive, convey a threat or false information or demonstrate that there is an intention to cause distress or anxiety to the victim would be deemed to be criminal. This is also supported by the Communications Act 2003, Section 127 which states that electronic communications which are grossly offensive or indecent, obscene or menacing, or false, used again for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another could also be deemed to be criminal behaviour.

If the behaviour involves the use of taking or distributing indecent images of young people under the age of 18 then this is also a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Outside of the immediate support young people may require in these instances, the school will have no choice but to involve the police to investigate these situations.

Sexting

Sexting is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. This includes sending 'nude pics', 'rude pics' or 'nude selfies'. Pressuring someone into sending a nude picture can happen in any relationship and to anyone, whatever their age, gender or sexual preference.

However, once the image is taken and sent, the sender has lost control of the image and these images could end up anywhere. By having in their possession, or distributing, indecent images of a person under 18 on to someone else, young people are not even aware that they could be breaking the law as stated as these are offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Initiation/Hazing

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a private school, sports team etc. There are a number of different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies.

The idea behind this practice is that it welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older members of the organisation, because they all experienced it as part of a rite of passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, and harassment.

Prejudiced Behaviour

The term prejudice-related bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society – in particular, prejudices to do with disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity (homosexual, bisexual, transsexual).

Teenage relationship abuse

Teenage relationship abuse is defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse. The abusive teen uses this pattern of violent and coercive behaviour, in a heterosexual or same gender relationship, in order to gain power and maintain control over the partner.

Expected action taken from all staff

Although the type of abuse may have a varying effect on the victim and initiator of the harm, these simple steps can help clarify the situation and establish the facts before deciding the consequences for those involved in perpetrating harm.

It is important to deal with a situation of peer abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts around what has occurred as soon after the student(s) may have forgotten. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the student and the parents/carers when they become involved. For example; do not use the word perpetrator, this can quickly create a 'blame' culture and leave a student labelled.

In all cases of peer on peer abuse it is necessary that all staff are trained in dealing with such incidents, talking to young people and instigating immediate support in a calm and consistent manner. Staff should not be prejudiced, judgemental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

Gather the Facts

Speak to all the young people involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use consistent language and open questions for each account. The easiest way to do this is not to have a line of questioning but to ask the young people to tell you what happened. Only interrupt the young person from this to gain clarity with open questions, 'where, when, why, who'. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene?)

Consider the Intent (begin to Risk Assess)

Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a young person to be able to harm another?

Decide on your next course of action

If from the information that you gather you believe any young person to be at risk of significant harm you must make a safeguarding referral to social care immediately (where a crime has been committed the police should be involved also). If this is the case, once social care has been contacted and made a decision on what will happen next then you will be informed on your next steps.

If social care and the police intend to pursue this further they may ask to interview the young people in school or they may ask for parents/carers to come to school to be spoken to also. It is important to be prepared for every situation and the potential time it may take.

It may also be that social care feel that it does not meet their criteria in which case you may challenge that decision, with that individual or their line manager. If on discussion however, you agree with the decision, you may then be left to inform parents/carers.

Informing parents/carers

If, once appropriate advice has been sought from police/social care you have agreement to inform parents/carers or have been allocated that role from the other services involved then you need to inform the parents/carers as soon as possible. If services are not going to be involved then equally, this information may need to be shared with parents. If a young person is deemed to be 'Gillick Competent' following the 'Fraser' guidelines and does not wish you to share the information with parents, then the school must consider this especially for example if the young person is pregnant and this is why they are being bullied (unless this has occurred through significant harm in which case a criminal/social care case is likely or the young person is under the age of 13).

In all circumstances where the risk of harm to the child is evident then the school should encourage the young person to share the information with their parent or even with them (they may be scared to tell parents/carers that they are being harmed in any way). Where school can evidence they are acting in the best interests of the young person they would not be criticised, however this would be the case if they actively breached the rights and choices of the young person.

The best way to inform parents/carers is face to face. Although this may be time consuming, the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse a young person may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents/carers whether their child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another.

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

What is the age of the children involved?

How old are the young people involved in the incident and is there any age difference between those involved? (In relation to sexual exploration, children under the age of 5, in particular 1-4 year olds who are learning toileting skills may show a particular interest in exploration at around this stage. This, however should not be overlooked if other issues arise (see following).

Where did the incident or incidents take place?

Was the incident in an open, visible place to others? If so was it observed? If not, is more supervision required within this particular area?

What was the explanation by all children involved of what occurred?

Can each of the young people give the same explanation of the incident and also what is the effect on the young people involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying for example, in which case regular and repetitive? Is the version of one young person different from another and why?

What is each of the children's own understanding of what occurred?

Do the young people know/understand what they are doing? E.g. do they have knowledge of body parts, of privacy and that it is inappropriate to touch? Is the young person's explanation in relation to something they may have heard or been learning about that has prompted the behaviour? Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived? Does the young person have understanding of the impact of their behaviour on the other person?

In dealing with an incident of this nature the answers are not always clear cut. If you are concerned or unsure as to whether or not there is any risk involved, please seek advice from Children's Services Social Care.

Repetition

Has the behaviour been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion? In the same way it must be considered has the behaviour persisted to an individual after the issue has already been discussed or dealt with and appropriately resolved?

Next Steps

Once the outcome of the incident(s) has been established it is necessary to ensure future incidents of abuse do not occur again and consider the support and intervention required for those involved.

For the young person who has been harmed

What support they require depends on the individual young person. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one to one support via a mentor. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends. In which case it is necessary that this young person continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future. If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the young person may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other young people or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.

Other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class or year group for example a speaker on cyber bullying, relationship abuse etc. It may be that through the continued curriculum of PHSE and SMSC that certain issues can be discussed and debated more frequently.

If the young person feels particularly vulnerable it may be that a risk assessment can be put in place for them whilst in school so that they have someone named that they can talk to, support strategies for managing future issues and identified services to offer additional support.

For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour

In this circumstance it is important to find out why the young person has behaved in such a way. It may be that the young person is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way. In such cases support such as one to one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary.

Particular support from identified services may be necessary through a CAF/strengthening families/early help referral and the young person may require additional support from family members.

Once the support required to meet the individual needs of the young person has been met, it is important that young person receives a consequence for their behaviour. This may be in the form of restorative justice e.g. making amends with the young person they have targeted if this has been some form of bullying. In the cases of sexually harmful behaviour it may be a requirement for the young person to engage in one to one work with a particular service or agency (if a crime has been committed this may be through the police or youth offending service). If there is any form of criminal investigation ongoing it may be that this young person cannot be educated on site until the investigation has concluded. In which case, the young person will need to be provided with appropriate support and education whilst off site.

Even following the conclusion of any investigation the behaviour that the young person has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others in which case an individual risk assessment may be required. This should be completed via a multi- agency response to ensure that the needs of the young person and the risks towards others are measured by all of those agencies involved including the young person and their parents. This may mean additional supervision of the young person or protective strategies if the young person feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

The school may also choose a punishment as a consequence such as exclusion or internal exclusion/inclusion/seclusion for a period of time to allow the young person to reflect on their behaviour.

After care

It is important that following the incident the young people involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they have stated that they are managing the incident. Sometimes the feelings of remorse, regret or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage than the incident. It is important to ensure that the young people do not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g. self-harm). In which case, regular reviews with the young people following the incident(s) are imperative.

Preventative Strategies for Schools and Settings

For all schools and settings, it is important to develop appropriate strategies in order to prevent the issue of peer on peer abuse rather than manage the issues in a reactive way.

Firstly, and most importantly for schools and settings is recognition that peer on peer abuse can and will occur on any site even with the most stringent of policies and support mechanisms. In which case it is important to continue to recognise and manage such risks and learn how to improve and move forward with strategies in supporting young people to talk about any issues and through sharing information with all staff.

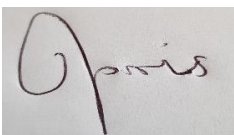
This can be supported by ensuring that each school/setting has an open environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them. This can be strengthened through a strong and positive PHSE/SMSC curriculum that tackles such issues as prejudiced behaviour and gives children an open forum to talk things through rather than seek one on one opportunities to be harmful to one another.

To enable such an open and honest environment it is necessary to ensure the whole workforce feels confident and enabled to talk about issues and challenge perceptions of young people including use of inappropriate language and behaviour towards one another. In order to create such an environment, it is necessary for whole staff training and CPD around abusive behaviours and talking to young people in a way that continues to create an open and honest environment without prejudice. It is incredibly important that staff do not dismiss issues as 'banter' or 'growing up' or compare them to their own experiences of childhood. It is necessary that staff consider each issue and each individual in their own right before taking action. If staff minimise the concerns raised it may result in a young person seeking no further help or advice.

It is important that signposting is available to young people in the event that they don't feel confident raising an issue to staff or a peer. It is useful to have a resource board with support services on a wide range of issues so young people can seek their own solutions should they wish to. In the same way external services or support programmes could be brought in to talk to young people about specific issues in support of the prevention of peer on peer abuse.

Finally, it is useful to ensure young people are part of changing their circumstances and that of the procedures within schools. Having a school council and student voice and encouraging young people to support changes and develop 'rules of acceptable behaviour' will go far in helping to create a positive ethos in school and one where all young people understand the boundaries of behaviour before it becomes abusive.

Approved by the Full Governing Body at their meeting of the 19th September 2024



.....
Chair of Governors
19/09/2024