Kirk Merrington Primary School

Safeguarding Policy

September 2026

Key Details

Designated Safeguarding Lead (s): Kirsty Hall, Headteacher

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (s):

Mrs Lisa Paley, Deputy Headteacher, Miss Helen Rawlings, SLT

Ms Sarah Bell, SLT

Named Governor with lead responsibility: Dr Jennifer Gilling

Date written: September 2026

Date agreed and ratified by Governing Body: November 2026

Date of next review: September 2027

This policy will be reviewed at least annually. It will also be revised following any concerns and/or updates to national and local guidance or procedures.

This policy operates in conjunction with a range of other policies and documents, including the ones listed below:

Allergy Safety Policy

Attendance Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Behaviour Policy

CIC/PCIC Policy

Confidential Reporting Code (Durham County Council policy)

Domestic Abuse Policy

Equalities Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Intimate Care Policy

Job descriptions/role of the designated safeguarding leads

Low Level Concerns Policy

Medications in Schools/First Aid Policies

Mobile Phone Policy

Online Safety Policy

PHSCE policy

Policy relating to safeguarding response to children who go missing from education

Policy on de-escalation and physical restraint of children/pupils

PREVENT documentation (see Appendix 2)

Remote Education Policy

Recruitment and selection policy

RHSCE Policy

School Visits Policy

Staff Code of Conduct

Safeguarding and Child Protection Training Summary

Our school complies with the advice laid down in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2026 and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2026 to undertake regular training.

A record of those trained may be found in the safeguarding file and certificates are kept, where appropriate, to verify the attendance of individuals. Child protection and safeguarding training form a key part of our induction processes. All staff will receive regular updates regarding child protection and safeguarding, including online safety, as necessary and at least annually.

Training for the designated safeguarding lead and other designated teachers in school is also undertaken regularly and updated at least every two years.

We recognise that, as a minimum, schools should also ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead undertakes Prevent awareness training and is thus able to provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation (The Prevent duty DFE 2023).

	Name	Training	Date
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Kirsty Hall	DSL Refresher Training Prevent FGM Child Criminal Exploitation (Including County Lines) Online Safety: Risks to Children LADO Signs of Safety and Durham Harm matrix Supporting YP with mental health concerns CSE Safer recruitment Safeguarding Children with Disabilities	1.7.26 2.3.25 6.3.25 10.2.25 15.5.26 14.5.26 16.7.26 4.5.26 13.2.25 1.7.26 10.10.26
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Lisa Paley	DSL Training Prevent Safer recruitment LADO Child Criminal Exploitation (Including County Lines) Online Safety: Risks to Children	27.3.26 20.4.26 4.9.26 5.10.26 5.10.26 6.10.26

	Helen Rawlings Sarah Bell	DSL Training Prevent DSL Training Prevent	22.10.26 1.11.26 19.11.26 20.4.26
Nominated Governor for Child Protection and Safeguarding	Dr Jennifer Gilling	Prevent Refresher Safeguarding Children Level 2	11.5.26 25.11.25
Governor(s) and Staff with Safer Recruitment Training	Kirsty Hall Lisa Paley Dr Jennifer Gilling Catherine Sewell	Safer Recruitment and refresher training	1.7.26 4.9.26 19.11.24 2.11.22
Whole Staff & Governors	See separate signed list	KCSIE Update Safeguarding Induction Regular Safeguarding Training, including Online Safety	

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

First Contact Service: 03000 26 79 79

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A. PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY

Children maximise their potential in an environment which is safe, secure and supportive of all their needs, including any needs they have for protection from abuse.

Our school is committed to promoting the welfare of all children by working in partnership with parents and carers, the Local Authority (LA) and multi-agency partners in Family help and child protection, in accordance with locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, procedures and practices.

Our policy applies to members of the school community in its widest sense. Thus, this includes children and young people, their parents/carers, school staff, governors, visitors, specialist staff, and the local and wider community where they interface with the school. Within its framework, the policy outlines entitlements and responsibilities in securing the protection of children who attend the school.

Our policy is underpinned and shaped by legislation and guidance contained in a variety of documents including: -

- The Children Act 1989; Children Act 2004
  Children Act 1989 (legislation.gov.uk); Children Act 2004 (legislation.gov.uk)

- The Education Act 2002; Education and Inspections Act 2006
  Education Act 2002 (legislation.gov.uk); Education and Inspections Act 2006 (legislation.gov.uk)

- Working Together to Safeguard Children December 2026
  Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

- Local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements and Procedures
  www.durham-scp.org.uk

- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – DfE 2015
  Stat guidance template (publishing.service.gov.uk)

- Keeping Children Safe in Education. Statutory guidance for schools and colleges. September 2026
  Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

  Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools Guidance for schools in England April 2026
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools

- Information Sharing Agreement: County Durham Safeguarding Adults Inter-Agency Partnership
  Good practice guidance for professionals - Durham Safeguarding Adults (safeguardingdurhamadults.info)

- Procedures for locating missing pupils and the removal of pupils from roll.

  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education

- **Prevent** Duty Guidance for England and Wales: HM Government 2023
  Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales: HM Government 2023

- The Prevent Duty – An introduction for those with safeguarding responsibilities - Updated 2023
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-prevent-duty-safeguarding-learners-vulnerable-to-radicalisation/the-prevent-duty-an-introduction-for-those-with-safeguarding-responsibilities

  Relationships and Sex Education and Health Statutory Guidance
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance

To emphasise the caring ethos of our school, the staff and governors are committed to the following principles: -

- The welfare and well-being of each child is of paramount importance.
- We recognise our policy works on the premise that abuse takes place in all communities and that school staff are particularly well-placed to identify and refer concerns and to act to prevent children and young people from being abused.
- We respect and value each child as an individual.
- We are a listening school, and encourage an environment where children feel free to talk, knowing that they will be listened to.
- The protection of children from abuse is a whole-school issue, and the responsibility therefore of the entire school community.
- We recognise our policy should be accessible in terms of understanding and availability. Regular training will ensure all adults in school are aware of indicators of concern or abuse and colleagues that act as designated safeguarding leads to whom such information should be promptly passed.
- Our policy will be developed and kept up to date with information from our relevant partners in early help and child protection, as well as national documentation issued by HM Government and The Department for Education.
- We will use the school curriculum to resource our children to protect themselves from abuse, both as victims and as potential perpetrators.
- The school runs in an open, transparent way.
- We ensure that school leaders, including governors, exercise strategic oversight of all aspects of safeguarding through regular training, link governors, HT's report to governors, clerk's reports, sharing safeguarding audit outcomes.

A. THE FIVE MAIN ELEMENTS TO THE POLICY

(1) Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop

Good safeguarding requires continuing commitment from governing bodies, proprietors, and all staff to ensure the safety and welfare of children is embedded in all of the organisation's processes and procedures and consequentially enshrined in its ethos.

Establishing a safe environment links to the school's overall safeguarding arrangements and duty of care to all students.

The following policies are relevant:
Durham Schools Portal - HR and Employee Services - HR Advice and Support - All Documents (sharepoint.com)

Use of our school for non-school activities:
Where we hire or rent out our school facilities/premises to organisations or individuals we will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe in line with Keeping Children Safe In Education September 2026 (paras 208, 209):

- We will seek assurance that the provider has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed);
- We will ensure that arrangements are in place for the provider to liaise with us on these matters where appropriate, whether the children who attend are on our school roll or not;
- As a condition of use, these safeguarding requirements will be included in any transfer of control agreement and failure to comply will lead to termination of the agreement.
- We will expect providers to have the safeguarding arrangements set out in the following guidance in place:
  Keeping children safe in out-of-schools settings

Pupils Arriving and Leaving School on Local Authority Arranged Transport
We will inspect a sample of the badges of the drivers and PAs operating transport arranged by Integrated Passenger Transport Group periodically, to check the necessary badges are held and displayed. Any concerns or discrepancies will be reported as soon as possible to IPTG Monitoring team (IPTMonitoring@durham.gov.uk). We will retain a record of the inspection and outcome to demonstrate these actions.

(2) Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children

Staff and governors who have received Safer Recruitment training are listed on the front page of this document.

- Our school will comply with the requirements outlined in local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements 'Key Safeguarding Employment Standards' and in the DSCP Child Protection procedures as well as national documentation in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2026.

- Our school will refer to its responsibilities regarding safeguarding and child protection in all adverts, job descriptions, and/or to its profile in the school, in the general information distributed with application forms. Annex B in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2026 has specific details of the role of the designated safeguarding lead.

- Our school will adhere to The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (amended 2020) and the Exceptions Order 1975 taking account of any declarations at the point of interview and not during shortlisting from application.

- Our school will undertake appropriate pre-employment checks, including online searches, on all staff working in school, including criminal record checks (DBS checks), barred list checks and prohibition checks together with references and interview information, as detailed in Part Three: Safer Recruitment in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', September 2026. We will also ensure that relevant staff are made aware of their responsibilities to disclose anything relating to "Disqualification Under the Childcare Act 2006" Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- We will follow good practice advice and inform shortlisted candidates that online searches will be carried out.

As outlined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', September 2026 (paras 313) the level of DBS certificate required, and whether a check for any prohibition, direction, sanction, or restriction is required, will depend on the role that is being offered and duties involved (para 313 – 331). As most staff will be engaging in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS certificate which includes barred list information, will be required for most appointments. Risk assessments will be undertaken to determine the level of checks needed for any volunteers within our school (KCSIE 2026, paras 385-390).

In our school:

- Volunteers will not be left unsupervised with groups of children, nor will they be in areas where they cannot be fully seen by the supervising teacher.
- In accepting the offer of help from volunteers, especially those unknown, staff are aware that schools in general are attractive places for 'unsafe' volunteers.
- Schools may be places where those with unhealthy interests in children seek to find employment (paid or otherwise). We will be vigilant about all inappropriate behaviour with children that gives cause for concern. The Head Teacher and governors are aware of the Durham County Council Confidential Reporting Code arrangements.

- We ensure that appropriate DBS checks are carried out before employing supply staff. We will obtain written notification that the appropriate checks have been completed. We will also check that the member of supply staff is the same person for whom these checks have been made.
- Our Governing Board will be aware of their responsibilities in connection with staff appointments and similarly aware of their liabilities especially if they fail to follow LA guidance.
- Members of our Governing Board will have an enhanced DBS check. They will also be subject to a Section 128 check.
- Volunteers and helpers will not be given tasks beyond their capabilities and therefore where they might feel under pressure.
- Volunteers and helpers should feel able to discuss difficulties with the teacher, who will respond with advice and additional guidance and supervision.
- Volunteers and helpers will not have the opportunity to feel that they are in charge and thus in a position of power, which may then be abused.
- Volunteers, helpers and staff new to the school are given documentation that covers behaviour guidelines for staff and volunteers.

Alternative Provision (KCSIE September 2026, paras 208-210):

Where we place a pupil with an alternative provision provider (AP Provider), we will understand that we continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil & will ensure that we are satisfied that the provider can meet the needs of the pupil by:

- Obtaining written confirmation from the AP Provider that appropriate checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment.
- Including written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform us of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e. staff changes), so that we can ensure ourselves that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff.

We will always know where a child is placed in Alternative provision during school hours to provide assurances that the child is regularly attending, and the placement continues to be safe and meet the child's needs:

- We will have records of the address of the alternative provider and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the child is attending.
- We will regularly review the alternative provision placements
- Our reviews will be frequent (at least half termly)

Where a safeguarding concern arises, the placement will be immediately reviewed, and terminated, if necessary, unless or until those concerns have been satisfactorily addressed.

The department has issued two pieces of statutory guidance to which commissioners of Alternative Provision should have regard:
• Arranging Alternative Provision - guide for LAs and schools and
• Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs- (www.gov.uk) - DFE statutory guidance.

The department has also published voluntary national standards for non-school alternative provision, Non-school alternative provision: voluntary national standards

(3) Training and supporting staff to equip them to appropriately recognise, respond to and support children who are vulnerable and may need safeguarding

To ensure that we train and support our staff to be equipped to recognise, respond to and support children who are vulnerable and may need safeguarding, we will include:

- Creating the right culture and environment so that staff feel comfortable to discuss matters both within and outside (including online) the workplace.
- The child protection policy which, amongst other things, also includes the policy and procedures to deal with child-on-child abuse and online safety.
- The behaviour policy (which includes measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying, including LGBT+). This policy takes the 'Behaviour in Schools Guidance February 2024' into account. Behaviour in schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- The staff code of conduct policy (sometimes called a staff behaviour policy).
- The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education.
- The role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

Copies of policies and a copy of Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026 will be provided to staff and volunteers at induction. All staff, volunteers and supply staff are ***required to read*** and understand this.
Governing bodies and proprietors, working with their senior leadership teams and especially their designated safeguarding lead, should also ensure that those staff who do not work directly with children read Part one of KCSIE Sept. 2026

All staff, volunteers and supply staff will be made aware of:

- Our local 'Family Help' process and their role in it.
- The process for making referrals to Children's Social Care and sections 17 and 47 that may follow a referral, along with the role they may be expected to play in such assessments.
- What to do if a child tells them he or she is being abused or neglected, along with maintaining an appropriate level of confidentiality, involving only those who need to be involved, and never promising a child that they will not tell anyone about their abuse.
- the systems in place (and they should be well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible) for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously,
- how allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with,

- clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any other children affected by child-on-child abuse will be supported,

- The practical government guidance document 'Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings', Safer Recruitment Consortium, Feb 2022. Professional and Personnel Relationships Home(saferrecruitmentconsortium.org)

All adults working in school will receive annual safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated. The DSL is responsible for ensuring that the training reflects new priorities and concerns within the County and other multi-agency local priorities. Adults will also receive updated training and guidance throughout the year as necessary.

The date and the names of delegates at these sessions are recorded and held securely to ensure all staff are appropriately trained.

Staff responsible for safeguarding

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies will be given sufficient time and training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their roles. This will be updated every two years and a record of this training will be kept. In addition to this formal training, their knowledge and skills will continually be updated through a range of means (for example via e-bulletins, attendance at safeguarding networks or through reading), at regular intervals, and at least annually, to keep up with any developments.

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

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

Children and Young People

We are mindful that children are kept safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in schools. All maintained schools in the County have filtering and monitoring systems in place for this and other potentially risky content. Our named member of SLT who a Designated/Deputy Safeguarding Lead will review these records regularly to see whether it links up with other safeguarding concerns about particular individuals. Online safety is continually emphasised in line with of Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026 para 158-170 and DfE 'Teaching Online Safety in Schools', January 2023. Teaching online safety in schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Other themes are addressed through our school curriculum, policies, PSHE, RSE and Health Education programmes, assemblies, outside visitors and trainers. These

may be part of our typical, planned curriculum or in response to issues arising in school, the community or nationally.

Names (and photographs) of staff and adults will be on display in school that children can speak to if they have concerns (school, family or community issues).

Parents/Carers

Our school brochure, web site and other means of communication with parents will reinforce the message that our school is committed to the welfare and protection of all children in its care. School staff and governors take this duty of care very seriously.

Newsletters, letters to parents about specific issues, our school web site and parents' evenings / consultations are used to disseminate and reinforce key safeguarding and child protection information.

In addition, we also offer events/briefings and workshops that they may attend on particular issues.

Parents are told that it is essential that school records are kept up to date. Parents are asked to keep school informed of any changes. School will accordingly update records held to reflect:

- current address and telephone contacts. We are aware that, as a school, it is good practice to hold more than one emergency contact number for each child, and this is particularly important for children who are a safeguarding or welfare concern
- which adults have parental responsibility
- court orders which may be in force
- children on the Child Protection list
- the child's name at birth and any subsequent names (taking care over unusual spellings)
- any other changes to home circumstances

Parents have also been consulted on our RSHE policy.

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

The culture of our school is that 'it could happen here'. Staff are trained to identify indicators of abuse and are aware of circumstances that could potentially make children and young people more vulnerable to abuse.

Listening to Children and Receiving Disclosures

We embrace our role as a listening school where children can discuss concerns with any member of staff or adult who works with them. Staff (teaching and support) will

make time and be available should children approach them with a situation they are worried about.

Concerns must be taken seriously and at face-value. It is easy to make speedy judgements based on previous knowledge of the child or young person.

Staff receiving a disclosure are unable to promise 'keeping a secret' or confidentiality. They will need to explain that depending on what the child says they might need to share the information with someone who deals with these concerns in school.

If the child does not wish to continue and say anything further the adult should pass on the concern to the designated safeguarding lead that might wish to keep an eye on that student and may well be aware of other issues of concern.

'Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child. All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting any form of abuse and/or neglect. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026, Part One (paras 14-15).

All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or are being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication with children and young people. Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026, Part One (para 16).

Staff should never speak to another sibling in the family to make enquiries; to investigate concerns is not the role of the school and parents/carers would be rightly aggrieved.

Recording concerns

ALL concerns and disclosures passed to the designated safeguarding lead must be recorded on the school's Child Protection electronic monitoring system – *CPOMS. All* concerns recorded should be factual; staff should avoid using emotive language and recording their opinions.

Staff should write the exact words used by the child. Any original notes/jottings/reminders made by the adult must be stapled to the form as first-hand information that could be important if a case went to court or scanned into the electronic monitoring system.

The more relevant details staff document, the better (eg: approximate size, colour of injury, which arm, if burn is scabbing over etc.) Staff can express concern about an injury (open ended questions) but should not ask direct questions. They should never do so in front of other children.

Please remember:

(I) The child should be allowed to make the disclosure at his/her own pace and in his/her own way.

(ii) The member of staff should avoid interrupting except to clarify what the child is saying but

(iii) Should not probe for any information that the child does not volunteer.

Concerns about staff members or other adults in school

If there is concern about another member of staff or adult working in school, the matter must be passed straight to the Head Teacher. The member of staff concerned must not be spoken to. If the concern regards the Head Teacher, this should be passed onto the Chair of Governors. Further information is included in Section G of this policy and KCSIE 2026, Part Four: Safeguarding concerns or allegations made about staff, including supply teachers, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors (paras 434-528).

Recording and Response of the designated lead professional

All information received is stored securely in electronic form. We provide appropriate levels of access to information. Our designated safeguarding leads can access these documents in an emergency or in the event of an enquiry for information by the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) Team, for example.

We keep a 'chronology of significant events' for all children causing concern in school, in the event that the MASH make contact about issues beyond school and inform any other concerns in school.

We ensure that records include:

- a clear and detailed summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- notes of any actions taken, decisions reached and the outcome

Discussing concerns with the First Contact Service - 03000 26 79 79

We use the local authority Referral Form for notifying First Contact of concerns. Early help referrals are completed online using the following link: https://doitonline.durham.gov.uk/service/Early_Help_Referral via DCC CRM system.

Procedures and guidance detailing local multi-agency arrangements, including detailed information about the management of individual cases, may be found at www.durham-scp.org.uk

If a concern is taken up as a **referral** under section 47: Child Protection, actual or likelihood of significant harm, parents or carers will be informed of this **unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm.**

If the child requires immediate medical attention, staff will accompany the child to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department. First Contact will be informed immediately if the injuries are linked to a child protection matter, so an appropriate paediatrician sees the child. The Director of Children and Young People's Services will be informed, and parents will be notified of the action taken.

If the situation is urgent and staff are unable to speak to First Contact, we will phone the Police on 101 and ask to speak to a colleague in the Vulnerability Unit concerning a child.

Police Switchboard: 0345 6060365 or 101

Ask for the nearest local Vulnerability Unit to school

Discussions with First Contact will be followed up in writing

Discussions of concern and requests for support will be followed up in writing, using the referral form. Family help referrals are completed online using the following link: https://ehm-portal.durham.gov.uk/ via DCC CRM system. A copy is kept on the child's concern file.

If a member of staff feels that the designated safeguarding lead and/or Head Teacher are not taking concerns seriously enough, then it is appropriate for them to tell that person that they are going to consult with First Contact themselves.

Any staff member who has a concern about a child's welfare should follow the referral processes set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Part One.

First Contact Service

firstcontact@durham.gov.uk

Telephone: 03000 26 79 79

Attendance at Strategy meetings if assessed to be child protection concern

Strategy meetings are one of four multi-agency meetings as part of Child Protection processes. Local multi-agency procedures have detailed guidance about these meetings www.durham-scp.org.uk

The threshold document is available on the DSCP website.
https://durham-scp.org.uk/practitioners/guidance-toolkits-and-forms-for-practitioners/

School staff may be invited to a strategy meeting. These multi-agency meetings are called to decide whether the threshold for an s47 enquiry should commence to investigate the concerns that have been raised.

These meetings may be called at short notice and appropriate staff from school will attend wherever possible. If the school is the referring agency, they should be invited to attend these meetings.

Staff will make available any electronic forms or handwritten notes, dated and signed, as well as other records from the concern file including the single agency chronology of concerns. Any further written evidence from the child: stories, drawings etc. will be brought to the meeting.

In school, staff will monitor the child discreetly for any further concerns or signs that are worrying, maintain appropriate records and give support and reassurance to the child.

All information should be treated with discretion and confidentiality and shared in accordance with the National Guidance on information sharing and the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.
How we share information in Durham

https://durham-scp.org.uk/practitioners/information-sharing-how-we-share-in-durham-2/

If concerns are not substantiated following the section 47 enquiries, our school will work with other agencies to determine what further support the family and child require. The school will continue to monitor and support the child.

B. OVERVIEW: SAFEGUARDING

(1) What school and college staff should know and do: A child centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding.

'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026' states safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

• providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge,

• protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online,

• preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development,

• ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, and

• *taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.*

'*Children' includes everyone under the age of 18.'* (para 3)

(2) Safeguarding within this school

Everyone who encounters children, and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. School staff are particularly important as they can identify concerns early and provide help for children, to prevent concerns from escalating. Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children by working with our 3 safeguarding partners in Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership – Durham County Council, Durham Constabulary, and the Clinical Commissioning Groups to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding children permeates all aspects of our work as a school, with a preventative role to inform and boost the resilience of all students by enhancing protective factors in their lives.

Accordingly, this policy links with many other related policies in school listed on page one of this policy.

This policy is also linked to local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Current, up to date documentation can be found at Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (durham-scp.org.uk) and include:

- Managing Allegations against Staff (Durham online local partnership safeguarding arrangements and policies)
- County Durham Practice Framework: Early Help assessment and Child and Family Plan https://durham-scp.org.uk/practitioners/early-help/early-help-assessment-and-child-and-family-plan/

(3) Safeguarding throughout school life

Caring ethos

We aim to create and maintain **a caring ethos** where all children and adults feel safe, secure and valued. If children feel happy and enjoy school this will encourage good attendance and then create conditions in which they can do their best in every area of school life. Our school operates as a listening school where children can approach adults with concerns. These will be taken seriously and relevant local multi-agency safeguarding procedures followed without delay if there is a risk/likelihood of, or actual **significant harm.**

Curriculum

Children have access to an appropriate curriculum, including the teaching of RSE and Health Education, differentiated to meet their needs. This enables them to learn to develop the necessary skills to build self-esteem, respect others, defend those in need, and resolve conflict without resorting to violence. Children learn skills to question and challenge to enable them to make informed choices now and later in

life. A protective factor for children is personal resilience including strong social and emotional skills. All work with children which boosts confidence and self-esteem is valuable to protect them from peer pressure and outside influences detrimental to their physical and mental well-being.

Children are encouraged to express and discuss their ideas, thoughts, and feelings through a variety of activities and have access to a range of cultural opportunities which promote respect and empathy for others. As part of our Prevent duty under s.26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, we are aware of the importance of building pupils' resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views. Schools can build pupils' resilience to radicalisation by providing a safe environment for debating controversial issues and helping children and young people understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making.

Many areas of the curriculum include age-appropriate opportunities for children and young people to discuss and debate important issues including lifestyles, health, safety, and well-being (physical and emotional), family life, child-care, and parenting, forced marriage, domestic abuse, religious beliefs, and practices as well as human rights issues. Through these, we support children and young people to recognise and manage risk, make safer choices, and recognise when pressure from others threatens their personal safety and wellbeing. They can develop effective ways of resisting pressure, including knowing when, where and how to get help.

Attendance

Working together to improve school attendance

We recognise that improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work in partnership with pupils and parents collaboratively to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium.

We agree to fulfil our statutory reporting duties around attendance and ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place to respond to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods. (KCSIE 2026, paras 124 and 219).

Universal services and specialist support staff

The following professionals are also available to support individual children in school:

- Ferryhill One Point hub
- The school nurse
- Attendance Officers
- Educational Psychologist
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

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

Reverend Barbara, Community police - PCSOs, Jet and Ben stranger danger, Fire Brigade/safety carousels, NSPCC school workshops

Childcare Arrangements Before and After School (including extra-curricular activities)

- After-school activities on and off site
- Wrap around childcare for breakfast club and after school club (Caterpillars)

These all provide further opportunities for students to develop positive and caring relationships with adults, who themselves will be trained to be aware of signs and behaviours that could suggest concerns. Supportive relationships outside the home, such as those with adults in school and other children, are additional protective factors that boost children's resilience. Staff will always work with children in a professional way and are reminded to respond to disclosures sensitively and appropriately. All adults in school know the names of the designated safeguarding leads and are made aware of their responsibility to pass on any issues of concern without delay and make a written record.

Working with parents and carers

Our school believes in effective communication with parents and carers. We welcome parent/carer views and concerns about the welfare of their children and use this feedback to regularly review our practices. Parental views are obtained in the following ways:

Surveys, questionnaires, parent's evenings etc.

We keep parents informed about important and topical issues, including child protection elements of safeguarding, in the following ways:

Newsletters, letters home, website, training/information sessions e.g. e-safety, bullying etc.

We aim to have good working relationships with parents and carers and to work in partnership with them through transparency and honesty. However, we do not forget that their child's needs and welfare are our paramount concern, thus obtaining consent to take matters further is **not** always appropriate. This obligation is set out in our school prospectus/brochure.

C. CHILD PROTECTION WITHIN SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR ALL CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCHOOL

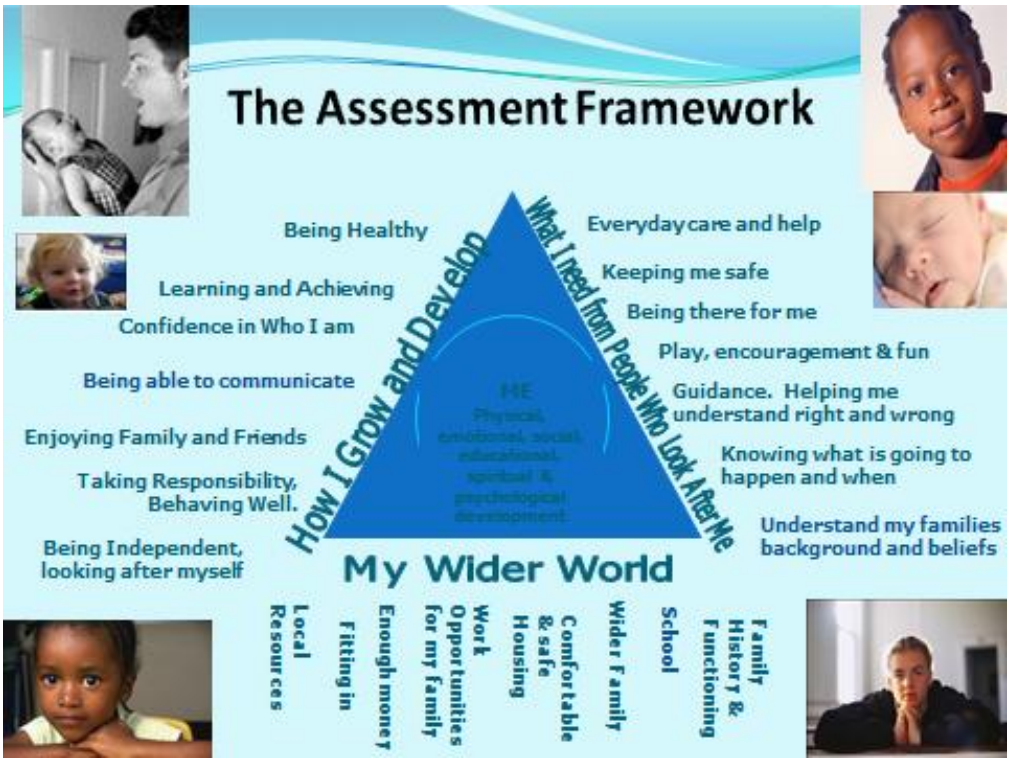
There are a series of layers of care and intervention ranging from safeguarding for all/universal services (single-agency activities) through to multi-agency work under the Children's Act 1989 and its amendments:

- Safeguarding arrangements in school
- Family Help within universal services
- More complex cases requiring Family Help
- Child in Need
- Child Protection
- Durham Safeguarding Children's Partnership guidance and procedures (see Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership)

(1) Life at Home

The Framework for Assessment triangle, reproduced below, summarises every aspect of a child's life under three headings and is mirrored in the Referral form for First Contact Service.

- Child's developmental needs (How I grow and develop)
- Parenting capacity (What I need from people that look after me)
- Family and environmental factors (My wider world)

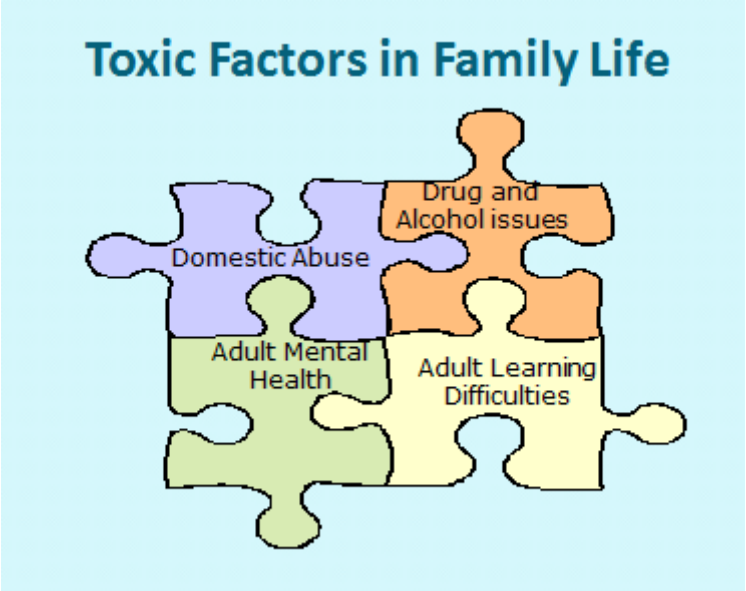


Aspects from all three domains combine in home life and staff and adults in school should be mindful of these connections as they work with children and their parents/carers in school.

This school believes that it is essential to work with parents and carers in the best interests of their children. However, good relationships with parents and carers should not detract from our primary concern which is the welfare of children in this school.

Staff are made aware in training of the 'toxic quad.' issues in home life that could have an impact on the way children are parented (Munroe, 2010). The Government research into Serious Case Reviews reveals that the presence of one or more of the following issues could have a detrimental impact on parenting of children in that household:

- Domestic abuse (violence)
- Substance misuse (alcohol and or drugs)
- Adult mental health
- Learning Disabilities



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

(2) Signs and behaviours of concern

All of our staff are familiar with KCSIE September 2026 and their responsibilities highlighted within this (paras 4 to 56).

All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse - including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and stalking), criminal exploitation (including financial exploitation), serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation – giving consideration toin most cases multiple issues will overlap. **Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026, Part One (para 20).**

All our staff are aware that any child may benefit from support before statutory intervention, including from universal services and community-based Early Help, or the targeted early help level of Family Help. All school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for additional support for a child who:

• is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs

• has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)

• has a mental health need

• is a young carer

• is pregnant and/or is a parent themselves

• has exhibited early signs of abusive, violent and/or harmful behaviours

• is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour,

including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or

county lines

• is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care

• has been repeatedly removed from the classroom, experienced multiple suspensions, is on a part-time timetable, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit

• is at risk of exploitation, modern slavery, trafficking, including criminal or sexual exploitation

• is at risk of being radicalised into terrorism

• has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending

• is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug

and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse

• is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves

• is at risk of honour or faith-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation

or Forced Marriage, and

• is a privately fostered child.

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

In our school we do these regular updates through:

Full staff meetings, case study discussion, staff briefings, online training.

Our school understands that it is best practice to discuss concerns with parents/carers before contacting First Contact Service (providing this does not

present a delay), unless by doing so the child would be put at further risk of harm. First Contact Service: 03000 267979.

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately.

Anyone can make a referral. When referrals are not made by the designated safeguarding lead, the designated safeguarding lead should be informed, as soon as possible, that a referral has been made.

3) Family Help Assessment Procedure & Practice Guidance

'All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from Family Help. Family Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. KCSIE 2026 (para 6). This relates to work with other universal agencies and following DSCP procedures and guidance.

A Family Help Assessment and Child and Family Plan has been developed by partners, children, young people, parents and carers which will help families get the support they need at the earliest opportunity.

It is much more streamlined, family friendly and signs of safety/wellbeing focussed. The documents can be accessed through the Children's Services Portal

Our school is aware that '*no single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances*'. Also, that '*if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, **everyone** who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action*'. KCSIE 2026 (para 3).

Our school recognises that Family Help is a collective responsibility and that effective early intervention can prevent concerns from escalating to statutory safeguarding intervention. Staff are expected to be professionally curious, identify emerging concerns at the earliest opportunity and take timely action in accordance with local Family Help procedures. Staff attend DSCP briefings, Refresher courses run by Education Durham, Engaging Families courses and other DSCP training etc.

This school believes that information sharing is a key element when delivering coordinated services for children and young people. It is essential to enable early help and support and for promoting child protection and welfare. Our staff understand when, why and how they should share information so that they can do so confidently and appropriately as part of their day-to-day practice.

Where appropriate, decisions to share or not share information will be recorded, together with the rationale for those decisions, particularly where safeguarding concerns are present.

This school works with the consent of parents and carers to jointly undertake assessments where an unmet need has been identified. However, we are aware that it may be necessary to meet with other services and agencies even if this consent for a 'Team around the Family' meeting is not forthcoming. These professionals' meetings are important to share concerns, suggest ways forward along with further work to encourage participation by parents/carers in early help processes One Point colleagues and Early Help Advisers are also a useful source of advice in these circumstances.

The school recognises that obtaining consent is an important principle of Family Help. However, where there are safeguarding concerns, staff will share information and seek advice in accordance with safeguarding legislation and guidance where this is necessary to protect a child from harm.

Guidance on Family Help in County Durham can be found here: https://durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/early-help/ This includes information on how to make a request for additional early help and provides details of Locality Early Help Conversations.

Professionals can make a request for (additional) early help by completing an on-line Early Help Request Form on the Childrens Service Portal or by telephoning the Early Help Triage Team on 03000 267 979, Option 1, Option 2, Option 4, (Mon – Thurs 08.30 – 17.00, Fri 08.30 – 16.30)

Team around the Family (TAF) is an early means of intervention to provide appropriate advice and support for the parents/carers and young person by working with appropriate local agencies through Team around the Family arrangements.

Our local Family Hub, Families First Team and Early Help Adviser contacts are:

Leanne Haste is our contact from Early Help
Rachael Clarke is the contact for the Family Hubs
Ferryhill Family Hub is our nearest Hub.

Durham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Where concerns are identified as amber or red on the MASH Process Pathway, our school will cooperate promptly and fully, with relevant information, to inform further assessments undertaken by the MASH team.

Where there is concern that a child may be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, staff will follow child protection procedures immediately and will not delay a referral whilst Family Help processes are being considered.

The Extended Role of the Virtual School Head

This is a strategic role. In Durham a team of professionals work together to provide schools with the Vulnerable Pupil lists through the Schools Portal. This includes all children with a social worker currently open to Social Care and those who have been closed in the last six years.

The Virtual Head updates the DSL through DSL Network Meetings. Where attendance is a concern, school will work within the framework of the Attendance Toolkit for CWSW, available on the Schools Portal. The school, by working together with partners aims to achieve the best outcomes for CWSW by identifying and addressing the child's needs at the earliest opportunity.

KCSIE 2026 describes the Virtual School Head's strategic role for children with a social worker and children in kinship care, including advice and information for relevant education and care workforces (paras 244–246, pp. 63–64). The Previous Children in Care Officer can be contacted via DurhamVirtualSchool@durham.gov.uk.

The school recognises the strategic role of the Virtual School Head in promoting the educational outcomes of children with a social worker and children in kinship care. Where appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will engage with Virtual School colleagues to support attendance, attainment, wellbeing and safeguarding outcomes.

(4) Child in Need

Section 17 of the 1989 Children Act

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

"A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989" KCSIE 2026 (para 68).

This school recognises the importance of early support and intervention work in more complex cases, undertaken with the consent of parents and carers, and follows the Threshold Guidance document which sets out local criteria for action and includes links to additional information which may assist professional judgement in understanding and subsequently meeting a child and family's needs. DSCP toolkits and guidance (including the Threshold Guidance) can be found here

The school recognises that children in need may require coordinated multi-agency support to achieve positive outcomes and reduce the likelihood of needs escalating.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will work with children, families and partner agencies to ensure that support is provided at the earliest appropriate stage and reviewed regularly.

Staff will remain alert to changes in presentation, attendance, behaviour, wellbeing or academic progress that may indicate a child requires additional support or intervention.

(5) Child Protection and Significant Harm

Section 47 of the 1989 Children Act

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Such enquiries enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment. This includes all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation. KCSIE 2026 (para 69).

Significant harm is where some children are in need because they are **suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm**. This is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children.

The school recognises that safeguarding concerns may arise from a single incident or a pattern of concerns over time. Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, an immediate referral will be made in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.

(6) Prepare for the unexpected

Our staff are aware from their training that some children might display worrying signs/symptoms or disclose information suggesting abuse, when they have never previously given rise to concern.

Staff must record and report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL and should not assume that another member of staff has already taken action. If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral should be made directly to Children's Social Care and/or the police. Any such action should be followed by informing the DSL as soon as possible.

In all cases, it should be borne in mind that other siblings might be at risk in the household as well as the one presenting concerns in school.

'Staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a

child, staff should always act in the best interests of the child'. KCSIE 2026 (para 57).

Staff should exercise professional curiosity, respectfully explore concerns and recognise that children may not always disclose abuse directly.

(7) Low Level Concerns

Please see KCSIE 2026, Part Four, section two (paras 506–528, pp. 120–124).

As part of our safeguarding culture, ALL concerns regarding adults are shared responsibly in line with our school's safeguarding reporting systems and will be recorded in writing and held securely in accordance with our Low Level Concerns Policy and Guidance. Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified, and appropriate actions taken.

We will ensure that:

- staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others;
- staff know how to share any low-level safeguarding concerns and are empowered to do so;
- unprofessional behaviour is addressed, and the individual is supported to correct it at an early stage;
- we will provide a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised;
- we will use concerns to help identify any weakness in the school safeguarding system.

We will instil a culture where staff feel safe to report any concerns using our safeguarding reporting system identified in this policy.

The school recognises that creating and embedding a culture of openness, transparency and professional accountability is essential to safeguarding children and maintaining safer working practices.

We would also encourage the staff member themselves to report any behaviour that could be classed as a low-level concern.

Where the report has been made by a third party, as much evidence as possible will be gathered by the head teacher/principal from the person reporting the concern, the individual named and any witnesses. All of this will be recorded to determine whether any further action needs to be taken alongside a recorded rationale as to the decisions taken.

In the case of reports about supply staff and contractors, we will report any concerns to their line managers so that any concerning, problematic or inappropriate patterns of behaviour can be identified.

We will retain information regarding low-level concerns in line with our school's Low Level Concerns Policy. KCSIE 2026 paragraph 523 recommends retaining records at least until a person leaves the school's employment.

The written record will include the concern, its context and the action taken. Records will be confidential and secure, and patterns will be reviewed; uncertainty about whether a concern meets the harm threshold will be discussed with the LADO (KCSIE 2026, paras 518 and 520–523).

"Schools and colleges should only provide substantiated safeguarding concerns/allegations (including a group of low-level concerns about the same individual) that meet the harm threshold in references..." KCSIE 2026 paragraph 524.

Please refer to our Low Level Concerns Policy and reporting form.

(8) Children with Family Members in Prison

We recognise that children with family members in prison may experience significant emotional, social and educational challenges.

Approximately 193,000 children in England and Wales have a parent in prison each year. These children may be at increased risk of poor attendance, mental health difficulties, social isolation, stigma and reduced educational outcomes.

School staff will seek to identify children affected by parental imprisonment and will ensure that appropriate pastoral support is offered. Where appropriate, the school will work with families and partner agencies to support the child's welfare, emotional wellbeing and educational achievement.

The school recognises that children of prisoners are identified within KCSIE 2026 as a group who may require early help, safeguarding support and additional pastoral intervention. Staff will consider the impact of parental imprisonment when assessing attendance, behaviour, wellbeing and academic progress.

9) Young Carers

We recognise that young carers may face additional barriers to attendance, participation, educational achievement and wellbeing because of their caring responsibilities.

A young carer is a child or young person under the age of 18 who provides practical or emotional care to a family member with a disability, long-term illness, mental health difficulty or substance misuse issue.

We will seek to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity and ensure that appropriate support is provided. This may include:

- pastoral support;
- attendance monitoring;
- wellbeing support;
- referrals to external support services where appropriate.

Young carers may be children in need and may require early help support. The DSL will consider whether caring responsibilities are impacting upon the child's welfare, safety, attendance, educational attainment or mental health and will coordinate support where appropriate.

The school will seek to ensure that young carers are not disadvantaged because of their caring role and will work in partnership with families and support agencies to reduce barriers to learning and participation.

(10) Children Living in Temporary Accommodation

We recognise that children living in temporary accommodation may face additional vulnerabilities and barriers to attendance, learning, wellbeing and achievement.

Where the school is informed that a child is living in temporary accommodation, we will consider the impact upon the child's welfare, educational progress and safeguarding needs.

Appropriate support will be put in place to meet identified needs, and information will be treated confidentially and shared on a need-to-know basis.

The school recognises that temporary accommodation may impact upon attendance, access to learning resources, emotional wellbeing, social relationships and safeguarding. Staff will consider these factors when assessing support needs and determining appropriate interventions.

Where appropriate, the school will work with families, housing services, children's social care and other agencies to promote stability, attendance, wellbeing and educational achievement.

(11) Safeguarding Children with Medical Conditions

We recognise that children with medical conditions and allergies may require additional safeguarding consideration.

The school recognises that children with medical conditions may have additional safeguarding vulnerabilities and barriers to recognising abuse, communicating concerns or accessing support. Staff will be mindful that medical needs, disabilities and safeguarding concerns may present together and should not be considered in isolation.

Whilst an incident relating to the management of a child's medical condition would not automatically constitute a safeguarding concern, safeguarding issues may arise where there is evidence that a child is being neglected, abused or exploited because of their medical condition or disability.

This may include situations where:

- essential medication is repeatedly not provided;
- significant medical information is withheld from school;
- actions or omissions place a child at avoidable risk of harm.

Staff will maintain professional curiosity where concerns arise regarding a child's medical needs, treatment, care arrangements, presentation or attendance and will consider whether these indicate neglect, abuse, exploitation or unmet needs.

Any such concerns will be managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and, where appropriate, referred to Children's Social Care or other relevant agencies.

(12) Prejudice-Based Harm, Racism and Discrimination

We recognise that children may experience prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-based prejudice and other forms of discrimination.

Such experiences may negatively affect a child's welfare, wellbeing, mental health, educational attainment and willingness to seek help.

Staff will remain alert to the signs and impact of prejudice-based harm and will ensure concerns are considered through safeguarding procedures where appropriate.

Where prejudice-based incidents indicate that a child may be at risk of harm, exploitation, radicalisation, emotional abuse or other safeguarding concerns, the matter will be assessed and managed through the school's safeguarding procedures.

We promote an inclusive and anti-discriminatory culture where racism, faith-targeted abuse and other forms of discriminatory behaviour are recognised, challenged and addressed promptly.

The school will record, monitor and respond to incidents of prejudice-based harm and discrimination appropriately, recognising that repeated incidents may indicate wider vulnerability or safeguarding concerns.

D. MULTI-AGENCY WORK IN CHILD PROTECTION

See Appendix 1: Summary of multi-agency meetings

For up-to-date school responsibilities and LA arrangements and procedures please see the local partnership website - https://durham-scp.org.uk/practitioners/

(1) Initial Child Protection Conference: school responsibilities

See local partnership procedures for more details, https://durham-scp.org.uk/about-us/multi-agency-safeguarding-arrangements/

Following the final strategy meeting (some complex cases like forced marriage, fabricated and induced illness and organisational abuse may require several strategy meetings) a decision might be made to hold an Initial Child Protection Conference. This work continues within Family First teams within the County.

A conference will be called if there is thought to be an on-going risk or likelihood of significant harm to the child(ren).

The Initial Child Protection Conference will normally take place within 15 working days of the strategy discussion or the child protection enquiry commencing, in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

Attendance at Conference

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

Where attendance is not possible, the school will ensure that a comprehensive written report is submitted and that any significant safeguarding information is shared in advance.

Preparation of a report

Schools would be expected to prepare a report and may wish to amplify and develop information provided on the referral form as the basis of their report. https://durham-scp.org.uk/practitioners/guidance-toolkits-and-forms-for-practitioners/child-protection-conference-report-template/

Reports should be factual, evidence-based, child-centred and distinguish clearly between fact, professional observation and professional opinion.

Chronology of significant events

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

Sharing of the report

The report should be shared with parents/carers of the child at least **two working days** before the conference. Part of the report may also be shared with the young person, where age appropriate. This will give the family a chance to question or clarify any issues raised within the report prior to the conference.

The report will be passed to the Conference Clerk via the e-mail system ready for dissemination to other professionals attending the conference.

(2) Membership of a Core Group

This school recognises that membership of a core group is a responsibility that necessitates time and commitment to attend regular meetings and complete the work detailed in the Child Protection Plan.

The merged multi-agency chronology will be regularly updated as part of this on-going work.

The school recognises the importance of active participation within Core Groups and will contribute information, undertake agreed actions and monitor progress against outcomes identified within the Child Protection Plan.

(3) Review Child Protection Conference

The school will complete the relevant report for the first Review Child Protection Conference, which will normally be held within three months of the Initial Child Protection Conference, and for any subsequent Review Child Protection Conferences held at intervals of no more than six months.

The report will detail work undertaken by the school with parents/carers and the child to complete the tasks assigned in the Child Protection Plan.

This report should be shared 7 days before the conference takes place.

This report will detail the progress made towards the tasks outlined on the Child Protection Plan.

The school will continue to contribute to multi-agency assessment, planning and review processes throughout the duration of the Child Protection Plan.

E. INFORMATION-SHARING

Staff at our school are aware of the need to share information appropriately. KCSIE 2026 (paras 140–152, pp. 40–42).

The data protection laws do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. If staff are unsure, they will speak promptly to the DSL or a deputy; concerns about consent or confidentiality will not delay necessary safeguarding action (KCSIE 2026, paras 63 and 140–149).

All information sharing decisions will be recorded where appropriate, including the rationale for sharing or not sharing information, particularly where there are safeguarding concerns.

Our school takes care to ensure that information about a child is only given to the appropriate external people or agencies. Staff will take names and ring back via a main switchboard if unsure. All staff within school will be aware of the confidential nature of personal information about a child and the need for maintaining confidentiality. They will seek advice about parental responsibility issues if unsure.

Parents/Carers

Where we have concerns about a child's safety and decide to share information to protect them from harm, we will explain to parent(s) or carer(s), and the child as appropriate, what information we intend to share, with whom and why, wherever it is safe and practical to do so.

This is unless there are concerns that seeking to discuss a concern could result in a risk of harm to any individual.

Parents/Carers must be aware that once matters have been referred to the First Contact Service the school can only explain the procedure and is not able to give 'progress reports' on the case.

School staff

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

There is a delicate balance struck between alerting members of staff to the concern about the child and the need to protect the child from too many people knowing. Information should only be divulged on a 'need to know' basis. Other members of staff are provided with sufficient detail to prepare them to act with sensitivity to a distressed pupil. They do not need to know details.

The school recognises that effective information sharing is a vital safeguarding tool and that fears about sharing information must not stand in the way of promoting the welfare and protecting the safety of children.

Children transferring to another school

When deciding what information to share, schools should consider the relevance of the information, what the receiving setting needs to know and whether the information is clearly presented and suitably contextualised. Staff should use professional judgement to make sure that any information shared is focused and proportionate.

When a child leaves the school, whether or not they are subject to a Child Protection Plan, the DSL (or a deputy) will ensure that their child protection file is transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. Where the child is subject to a Child Protection Plan, the DSL will also inform the new school immediately. The transfer will allow support to be in place when the child arrives (KCSIE 2026, para 150 and Annex B, pp. 185–187).

The DSL will confirm receipt of the child protection file and, where useful, speak with the receiving DSL so that risks, support needs and relevant context are understood. Both schools will retain evidence of secure transfer (KCSIE 2026, paras 150–152).

If a child for whom there are other existing serious concerns, including SEND needs, transfers to another school, the receiving school will be informed immediately via their Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and written records will follow.

Both schools should maintain evidence of the secure transfer and receipt of information.

Schools that use the same child protection electronic recording system should use this to transfer records securely (e.g. CPOMS).

Where a child is changing settings and information indicates a risk to others and/or the individual child, the receiving school is responsible for assessing risk and putting a safety and support plan in place; the DSLs from both settings should have a conversation where there are concerns.

Data that is not being transferred to another school should be kept in line with the school’s Data Retention Policy, e.g. electively home educated pupils or those moving to full-time employment.

The DSL will seek assurance that safeguarding records have been received by the new setting and will retain evidence of the transfer in accordance with safeguarding and data retention requirements.

Guidance and protocols:

- The Data Protection Act 2018
- Sharing information to safeguard children and young people in the education sector in the UK | ICO
- DfE Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers – May 2024
- Working together to safeguard children – Updated March 2026
- Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners – Updated May 2024
- Data protection in schools - Guidance – Updated July 2026

Further advice about legal issues is available from Legal Services – Commercial and Corporate Governance,
Legalservicescommercialteam@durham.gov.uk

G. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF INCLDING SUPPLY TEACHERS, TRAINEE TEACHERS, VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRACTORS

See Part Four of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, paras 434–528 (pp. 106–124).

The school will manage allegations, concerns and low-level concerns relating to adults working in or on behalf of the school in accordance with Part Four of KCSIE 2026 and local safeguarding partnership procedures.

The Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership website provides information about dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers (including supply staff) who have contact with children and young people in their work or activities.

Concerns or allegations about an adult working in or on behalf of the school will be managed under Part Four of KCSIE 2026 and local procedures. Concerns about children abusing other children will be managed under the separate child-on-child procedure in section N. In every case, the welfare of the child is the primary consideration, alongside a fair process and appropriate support for the person subject to an allegation.

The school recognises that allegations, concerns that meet the harm threshold and low-level concerns form part of a continuum of safeguarding practice and will be managed in accordance with KCSIE 2026 requirements.

In some circumstances schools and colleges will have to consider an allegation against an individual not directly employed by them; for example, supply teachers, trainee teachers or contracted staff provided by an employment agency or business. Where this applies, schools and colleges share safeguarding responsibilities with

the employment agency or business. Schools and colleges remain responsible for gathering the facts and managing the safeguarding process, while working closely with the employment agency or business, which will usually lead on any disciplinary action (KCSIE 2026 paras 455–460).

Receiving an allegation

On receiving a concern or allegation that may meet the harm threshold, the Head Teacher, as case manager, will follow local procedures and contact the LADO without delay and **The Head Teacher must not start to investigate.** Where a child has been harmed, may be at immediate risk of harm, or there is an emergency, Children's Social Care and, as appropriate, the police will be contacted immediately (KCSIE 2026, paras 440–447).

If an allegation is made for a person not directly employed by the school recognised procedures should be followed. This includes supply staff, sports coaches and any individual or organisation using the school premises for the purposes of running activities for children (for example community groups, sports associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities). Under no circumstances should a school cease the use of a supply teacher, sports coach etc. due to safeguarding concerns without liaising with the LADO (KCSIE 2026, paras 455–460, particularly para 456).

For an allegation about a trainee teacher, the school will involve the teacher training provider and follow the additional expectations in KCSIE 2026, para 459. Allegations about a governor will follow local procedures (para 461).

Allegations regarding the Head Teacher should be passed to the Chair of Governors. Should this lead to delay, the person receiving details of the allegation should follow the advice above and report the matter immediately to the LADO and First Contact Service. At this stage the Head Teacher should not be informed of the allegation (the same process as for any member of staff or adult in school). The Chair of Governors should be informed as soon as possible and asked to contact the LADO.

Where it is suspected that a crime has been committed, then the matter should be reported to the police with immediate effect.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Sharon Lewis / Louise Brookes 03000 268835

First Contact Service

03000 26 79 79

CYPSLADOSecure@durham.gov.uk

Carrying out an investigation

Investigations will be carried out by the appropriate agencies.

In dealing with any allegation the Head Teacher and governors need to balance:

- The seriousness of the allegation.
- The risk of harm to pupils.
- Possible contamination of evidence.
- The welfare of the person concerned.

Suspension of the member of staff / adult in school will be considered:

(a) if there are any grounds for doubt as to the suitability of the employee to continue to work

(b) where suspension may assist in the completion of an investigation.

Suspension will be carried out in line with LA / Trust guidelines. Head Teachers should contact Human Resources for guidance. (HRSchools@durham.gov.uk)

Suspension should not be an automatic response. It should only be considered where there is cause to suspect child(ren) is/are at risk of harm or the case is so serious there may be grounds for dismissal. If in doubt, advice should be sought from HR and the LADO.

Based on advice and a risk analysis, alternatives may be:

- redeployment of the individual;
- providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children;
- moving the child/children, but only if it is in the best interests of the child, their views have been sought and parents have been consulted.

See KCSIE 2026, Part Four, paras 434–528 (pp. 106–124), especially paras 462–469 on suspension.

The school recognises that suspension can have a significant impact on individuals and will only be considered where necessary and proportionate. Alternatives will be explored wherever these appropriately safeguard children.

During the investigation, support will be offered to both the pupil making the allegation and the adult/peer concerned. The welfare of a child is paramount, and this will be the prime concern. However, employers have a duty of care to their employees and should act accordingly (KCSIE 2026, para 470).

Once Police and Intervention and Assessment teams have decided if further action is necessary or not, a meeting will take place with a representative from the school, LADO and HR to decide next steps and if an internal disciplinary investigation is needed.

Recommendations following an investigation

Where recommendations are made to school regarding the outcome of a Child Protection investigation, the school will advise Children and Young People's

Services regarding their response to the recommendation. For example, if a person is suspended and returns to school, the date of that return should be communicated.

The following definitions are now used when determining the outcome of allegation investigations:

- **Substantiated**: there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.
- **Malicious**: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm to the person subject to the allegation.
- **False**: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
- **Unsubstantiated**: there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.
- **Unfounded**: to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

The school will maintain a clear record of the allegation, investigation, outcome and decisions. Records concerning allegations which meet the harm threshold will be handled and retained in accordance with KCSIE 2026, paras 498–502; the retention period for those records is at least until the accused reaches normal pension age or for 10 years from the allegation, whichever is longer (para 500).

Where the DBS referral criteria are met, the school will make the required DBS referral, including where the person would have been removed from regulated activity had they not left. The school will separately consider a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency where the teaching misconduct referral criteria are met (KCSIE 2026, paras 427–433).

The school recognises its statutory responsibility to make referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) where the relevant referral criteria are met and will not enter into settlement agreements or compromise arrangements that prevent such referrals being made.

H. SAFE TOUCH

Physical contact other than to control or restrain

Our school has a policy / guideline on the use of touch, including an Intimate Care policy and this includes such points as:

- assisting in the washing of young children who have wet/soiled themselves
- intimate care risk assessments for certain children with medical needs or disabilities.
- using physical contact to demonstrate exercises or techniques, for example, in PE, sports coaching or other practical subjects.
- administering First Aid

- supporting younger children and children with special needs who may need physical prompts or help
- giving appropriate comfort to a child who is distressed
- recognising that physical contact is a sensitive issue for some cultural groups
- acknowledging that physical contact becomes increasingly open to question as children reach and go through adolescence
- ensuring a consistent approach where staff and pupils are of different genders
- acknowledging that innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued
- having a prescribed handling policy for children requiring complex or repeated physical handling, with specific training for staff who deal with them.

All physical contact with children will be appropriate, proportionate, culturally sensitive, age appropriate and in the best interests of the child. Staff will consider the child's wishes, feelings and individual needs whenever physical contact is necessary.

Where physical contact forms part of a child's care, support, medical or educational arrangements, appropriate records, risk assessments and parental involvement will be maintained in accordance with school procedures.

I. PHYSICAL CONTROL AND RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION: USE OF REASONABLE FORCE

(KCSIE 2026, paras 205–207, pp. 54–55)

Our school has a separate policy on the use of reasonable force and restrictive interventions which is shared with all staff, pupils and parents/carers.

Our school policy relates to the following: DfE Guidance: Use of Reasonable Force in Schools

Our school Policy on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions gives guidance on:

- ensure our obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 are considered
- who is allowed to use reasonable force and restrictive interventions
- the circumstances in which staff may use reasonable force
- what forms of reasonable force and restrictive interventions may take place in particular circumstances
- what forms of reasonable force and restrictive interventions are not acceptable
- how prevention and de-escalation should be used to minimise the need to use restrictive interventions

- how the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND, mental health needs or medical conditions will be considered
- the procedures for recording and reporting incidents when reasonable force has been used

The use of force will always be reasonable, proportionate, necessary and in the best interests of the child. Any restrictive intervention will be used for the shortest possible time and only where no less restrictive alternative is available.

Following any incident involving the use of reasonable force or restrictive intervention, the school will record, review and monitor the incident to identify lessons learned, support needs and opportunities to reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

The school recognises that some children, particularly those with SEND, communication difficulties, autism, trauma histories or mental health needs, may require individualised approaches to behaviour support and de-escalation.

J. THE PREVENT DUTY

(KCSIE 2026, Annex A: Preventing radicalisation, pp. 168–170)

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 section 26 places a duty on certain bodies, including schools, to have 'due regard' to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'.

The DfE has produced non-statutory advice, *The Prevent Duty: an introduction for those with safeguarding responsibilities* (September 2023).

Designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) and other senior leaders in education settings should familiarise themselves with the revised Prevent Duty Guidance: England and Wales (2023), especially paragraphs 141-210, which are specifically concerned with education.

"Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk" is a part of our safeguarding approach as it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised.

We use the above document and advice in the following documents The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) (update September 2023) and Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) to support us in our work to form risk assessments, working in partnership, staff training, IT policies and building children's resilience to radicalisation.

In our school:

- Staff can identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation. Information or concerns are shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the same way as other information that might be a safeguarding concern, who will then follow procedures in line with safeguarding DSCP guidance.

- Policies and procedures are in line with those of DCC, Durham Constabulary and the DSCP.

- Throughout the life of the school as well as in specific lessons to build pupils' resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views.

- Robust online policies are mindful of guidance within Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026, DfE guidance (Updated June 2026) 'Teaching Online Safety in School' Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges

Staff understand that vulnerable children may be more susceptible to radicalisation through online influence, social isolation, personal circumstances, grievance narratives or exploitation by others. Concerns will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and managed through safeguarding processes.

We will follow the County Durham Prevent Referral Flowchart when concerns are identified.

Through discussion with specialist colleagues at Durham Constabulary, it may be appropriate to make a referral to the Channel Programme.

Where appropriate, the school will contribute to multi-agency Channel assessments and support plans designed to safeguard children vulnerable to radicalisation.

A school representative may be asked to be a member if a student from the school is to be discussed at the Channel panel

Making a referral:

FIMUNorth@CTPNE.police.uk

https://www.durham.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/t/prevent/prevent/beta/prevent-team-referral/

Radicalisation additional advice and radicalisation:
Radicalisation Prevent duty guidance – Home Office guidance The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation - DfE advice Educate Against Hate website – DfE and Home Office guidance Prevent for FE and Training – Education and Training Foundation (ETF) Extremism and Radicalisation Safeguarding Resources – Resources by London Grid for Learning Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting – DfE advice

K. CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

We ensure all of our staff are trained to be aware of young people who could be at risk of sexual exploitation.

See Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Part One, paras 42–44 (pp. 17–18), and Annex A, pp. 158–160.

Refer also to:
Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration or non-penetrative acts. It may also include non-contact activities such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to view sexual activity, grooming or exploitation via the internet.

Sexual abuse may involve both physical and non-contact activities. It can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence.

Staff understand that exploitation can occur even where there appears to be consent and that children cannot consent to their own exploitation.

Our staff know that some children may not realise they are being exploited, for example if they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship, and will respond appropriately.

Child Sexual Exploitation can affect any child regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, culture, sexuality or background. Staff will remain professionally curious and alert to indicators of grooming, coercion, manipulation, power imbalance, gifts, unexplained possessions, missing episodes or changes in behaviour.

Durham DSCP has a section of their website devoted to resources, guidance, and a risk assessment matrix that assists schools: Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Information Form (durham-scp.org.uk).

Where concerns regarding child exploitation are identified, the school will work in partnership with Children's Social Care, Police and other agencies as appropriate to safeguard the child and disrupt exploitation.

L. FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

If there are concerns that an act of FGM has been undertaken on a girl under the age of 18, this MUST be reported to the police immediately.

Whilst all staff should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) regarding any concerns about Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), there is a specific legal duty on teachers.

If a teacher, in the course of their professional duties, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.

KCSIE 2026 (para 46, p. 18).

Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information - GOV.UK

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or any other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

FGM is considered a grave violation of the rights of girls and women.

Criminal and civil legislations on FGM is found in The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.

There is an FGM Helpline also on 0800 028 3550 or they can be contacted via email fgm.help@NSPCC.org.uk and their website Female Genital Mutilation | NSPCC

Where there is a concern that a child may be at risk of FGM, staff will follow safeguarding procedures immediately and seek advice from the DSL without alerting family members where doing so may increase risk to the child.

Staff understand that indicators of FGM risk may include family plans for extended overseas travel, discussion of special ceremonies, older siblings who have undergone FGM, or concerns raised by the child or others.

Guidance leaflets and training materials have been produced by the Home Office & the National FGM Centre:

Female genital mutilation: resource pack - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

National FGM Centre – Developing excellence in response to FGM and other Harmful Practices
PDF FGM Schools Guidance 18.06.2019

FGM Awareness & Prevention Training | iHASCO

Forced Marriage

(KCSIE 2026, Annex A: Honour-based abuse, including FGM and forced marriage, pp. 172–175)

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales.

A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or other forms of coercion are used.

This encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the perceived honour of a family and/or community.

We recognise that all forms of Honour Based Abuse are abuse and if staff have concerns regarding a child who may be at risk, or who has suffered such abuse, these concerns will be reported to the DSL and local safeguarding procedures will be followed.

Staff will not attempt to mediate with family members or community representatives where forced marriage or honour-based abuse is suspected. Safeguarding action will be taken immediately in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.

The school recognises that victims of forced marriage and honour-based abuse may be at immediate risk of significant harm and may require urgent multi-agency protection.

M. ONLINE SAFETY

We have adopted a whole school approach to online safety which ensures all children and staff are educated in their use of technology and know how to identify, intervene and escalate any concerns.

See KCSIE 2026, Part Two, paras 164–184 (pp. 46–50).

Our school has a separate **Online Safety Policy** which reflects KSCIE 2026 requirements regarding appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and school networks and take account DfE ‘Teaching Online Safety in Schools’ guidance.

The school will be a mobile phone-free environment by default. Its mobile phone policy will set out any limited exceptions, staff responsibilities and the response to misuse, in line with KCSIE 2026, para 170 and current DfE guidance.

The senior leader responsible for filtering and monitoring, supported by the DSL and IT support, will review the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring at least once each academic year. Reviews will check that filtering works on all relevant internet-connected devices and in all relevant locations, and will record the checks and any action taken (KCSIE 2026, paras 173–177).

This policy reflects our safety considerations and legal responsibilities in our use of Generative AI informed by Generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education - GOV.UK

The Professionals Online Safety Helpline provides support for professionals working with children and young people regarding online safety issues. You can contact them through:

- Email: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
- Phone: 0344 381 4772

The helpline is available Monday to Friday, from 10am to 4pm It offers advice, guidance, and mediation for online safety concerns

Our schools understands that it is a criminal offence if a person aged 18 or over intentionally communicates with a child under 16, who the adult does not reasonably believe to be 16 or over, if the communication is sexual or if it is intended to encourage the child to make a communication which is sexual. The offence will be committed whether or not the child communicates with the adult. This is the offence of sexual communication with a child under section 67 of the Serious Crime Act 2015.

Staff recognise that online risks may include content, contact, conduct and commercial risks, and that harmful online experiences can occur both inside and outside school.

The school recognises that generative artificial intelligence (AI), online platforms, gaming environments, messaging applications and social media may create both opportunities and safeguarding risks for children. Staff will remain alert to emerging technologies and associated safeguarding concerns.

(1) Cybercrime

We recognise that some children may become involved in cyber-dependent crime either intentionally or without a full understanding of the legal and safeguarding implications of their actions.

Cyber-dependent crime includes:

- unauthorised access to computer systems ("hacking")
- denial of service attacks;
- creating, obtaining or distributing malicious software;
- activities intended to compromise information systems, networks or online services.

Children with advanced computing and digital skills may be particularly vulnerable to involvement in such activity.

Staff will recognise that some children involved in cybercrime may themselves be vulnerable, exploited or subject to external influences and will respond through safeguarding processes as appropriate.

Concerns regarding cybercrime will be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will consider the need for intervention, external agency involvement and preventative support.

(2) Information Security and Cyber Security

We recognise that safeguarding responsibilities extend to protecting personal information and maintaining secure information systems.

The school will take reasonable and proportionate measures to:

- protect personal data;
- maintain secure information systems;
- minimise cyber-security risks;
- regularly review cyber-security arrangements as part of wider safeguarding processes.

Information security is treated as an integral aspect of safeguarding.

The school will promote cyber-security awareness amongst staff and pupils and ensure that cyber-security incidents are managed promptly and proportionately.

(3) Mobile Phones

We recognise that the use of mobile phones and personal devices can present safeguarding, wellbeing and educational risks.

The school will operate in accordance with its Mobile Phone Policy and will implement arrangements designed to:

minimise safeguarding risks;

promote positive learning behaviours;

reduce disruption during the school day;

support pupil wellbeing.

Where concerns arise regarding the misuse of mobile devices, online communication, image sharing, cyberbullying or online abuse, these will be managed through the school's safeguarding, behaviour and online safety procedures as appropriate.

N. Child-on-Child Abuse, Including Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse, including harmful sexual behaviour (HSB), sexual harassment and sexual violence. Such behaviour is never acceptable and will not be dismissed as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”. Abuse may occur inside or outside school, online or face to face, as a single incident or a pattern. Staff will act on concerns even when no child has made a report; an absence of reports does not mean abuse is not occurring. Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both a child who has experienced harm and a child alleged to have caused it (KCSIE 2026, paras 31–37, pp. 15–16; paras 192–193, pp. 51–53).

The school recognises bullying, including cyberbullying and discriminatory bullying; racism and faith-targeted abuse; abuse in children’s intimate relationships; physical assault or threats involving weapons; HSB; sexual harassment and sexual violence; causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent; upskirting; initiation or hazing; and the making or sharing of nude or semi-nude images as possible forms of child-on-child abuse. Misogynistic, misandrist, sexist and other discriminatory behaviour will be challenged promptly. Staff will recognise that a child displaying harmful behaviour may also have experienced abuse, trauma or unmet needs (KCSIE 2026, paras 34–37 and 193; paras 530–538, pp. 125–127).

The school will promote respectful relationships, consent, boundaries and safe online behaviour through age-appropriate Relationships Education and Health Education, and Relationships and Sex Education where applicable, alongside its behaviour policy, pastoral work and wider safeguarding culture. Staff will respond to early signs of harmful behaviour and use timely, evidence-informed support. Children will have well-promoted, accessible ways to report abuse and will know that their concerns will be taken seriously. The DSL will review patterns, locations and times of increased risk and use these findings to improve supervision, preventative education and policy (KCSIE 2026, paras 36, 158–160, 193, 538 and 649–650).

Any member of staff receiving a concern, disclosure or report, including one about an incident outside school or online, will listen without judgement, avoid leading questions, explain that information may need to be shared to keep children safe, make an accurate written record and pass it promptly to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or a deputy. Staff will reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking up, will be taken seriously, supported and kept safe, and will not be blamed or shamed. Staff will not promise confidentiality. The DSL or deputy will lead the response and seek specialist advice where needed (KCSIE 2026, paras 529, 545–546 and 553–564, pp. 125, 130–134).

All incidents involving the making or sharing of nude or semi-nude images, including content digitally altered or generated using artificial intelligence, will receive a safeguarding response. The DSL will decide a proportionate response using the current UK Council for Internet Safety guidance. Consensual sharing may require a different response from non-consensual sharing, but neither will be ignored. Staff will not view, copy, print, share or delete images unless the DSL determines that a specific action is necessary under that guidance; they will preserve other relevant evidence and avoid an informal investigation that could compromise a statutory enquiry (KCSIE 2026, p. 6; para 193 and footnote 45, p. 52; Part Five).

Following a report of sexual violence, the DSL or deputy will carry out an immediate, written risk and needs assessment. Following sexual harassment, the need for an assessment will be decided case by case. The assessment will consider the child who has experienced harm, other potential victims, the child alleged to have caused harm, other children, the wider school community and the location and timing of incidents. It will inform immediate protective measures, support and safe arrangements during lessons, breaks and travel; it will be reviewed as circumstances change. Specialist or social work assessments will inform, rather than be replaced by, the school assessment (KCSIE 2026, paras 568–570, pp. 135–136).

The DSL will consider each report individually and decide whether it can be managed in school with appropriate support, requires Family Help or specialist support, or must be referred to local authority children's social care and/or the police. Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger, a referral will be made to children's social care without delay. For a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, the starting point is a police report, including where the child alleged to have caused the harm is under ten. Police reports will generally be made alongside a referral to children's social care. The school will take protective action without waiting for the outcome of an external investigation and will coordinate its actions with the agencies so their enquiries are not compromised (KCSIE 2026, paras 574–598, pp. 138–142, particularly paras 588, 592 and 598).

The school will provide continuing, child-centred support to the child who has experienced harm, the child alleged to have caused it and any other affected children. The wishes and feelings of the child who has experienced harm will inform decisions, alongside the safety of all children. Support for the child alleged to have caused harm will consider their own safeguarding needs and appropriate intervention. Disciplinary action and safeguarding support may proceed together. Parents and carers will normally be involved where appropriate and safe; the DSL will consult children's social care or the police where informing them could increase risk or affect an investigation. The school will protect children's privacy, address rumour and retaliation, and review any safety plan as needs change (KCSIE 2026, paras 559–567, 625–650, pp. 134–135 and 149–156).

The DSL will record concerns, the child's account, discussions, risk and needs assessments, referrals, decisions and their reasons, actions and review dates securely. Information will be shared lawfully with those who need it to safeguard children. The school will keep its child protection, behaviour, anti-bullying, online safety and curriculum policies consistent and review them in light of incidents and emerging patterns. Staff will follow local safeguarding partnership procedures and the full response framework in KCSIE 2026, Part Five, paras 529–650 (pp. 125–156).

Additional guidance: UK Council for Internet Safety, Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people

- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people
- London Grid for Learning: Undressed

O. CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE) INCLUDING COUNTY LINES

See KCSIE 2026, Part One, paras 38–41 (pp. 16–17), and Annex A: Child criminal exploitation and county lines (pp. 158–160).

We will ensure that all staff are aware of the indicators that may signal that children are at risk from or involved with CCE.

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in criminal activity.

Staff understand that children involved in criminal exploitation are victims of abuse and exploitation even where they appear to be offending or participating willingly in criminal activity.

We will ensure that all staff are aware that children can become trapped by this type of exploitation and that, as they become involved, often commit crimes themselves.

We will ensure that we recognise their vulnerability as victims even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

Indicators may include:

- unexplained gifts or possessions;
- association with exploited peers;
- emotional wellbeing changes;
- substance misuse;
- missing episodes;

- poor attendance or missing education.

Additional indicators may include carrying multiple mobile phones, unexplained travel, increased secrecy, evidence of controlling relationships, unexplained accommodation arrangements or possession of significant amounts of cash.

Where concerns regarding criminal exploitation are identified, the school will work proactively with Children's Social Care, Police and other partner agencies to safeguard the child and disrupt exploitation.

Where exploitation may amount to modern slavery, the DSL will consider child protection and National Referral Mechanism routes with the relevant agencies. Apparent participation in offending will not remove a child's status as a potential victim of coercion or exploitation (KCSIE 2026, Part One, paras 38–44 and Annex A, pp. 158–160).

Please see the home office guidance:

County lines and criminal exploitation toolkit

Preventing youth violence and gang involvement - Practical advice for schools and colleges (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

P. SERIOUS VIOLENCE

See KCSIE 2026, Part One, paras 51–54 (p. 20), and Annex A: Serious violence (pp. 171–172).

Staff will consider the updated KCSIE 2026 indicators and respond to risk through timely safeguarding referrals, coordinated support and local multi-agency arrangements.

Our school will ensure that all staff are aware of the indicators that may signal that children are at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime. Staff will respond in accordance with the school's child protection procedures and report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Staff also recognise that the risks are higher for children with disrupted education (e.g. suspensions, permanent exclusions, time in alternative provision) or a history of offending. Our school will also try to be alert to when children might be at highest risk around the school day (for example, immediately after school).

KCSIE 2026 recognises that concerns about serious violence may be linked to child criminal exploitation, county lines, gangs, child on child abuse, contextual

safeguarding and online activity. Staff will consider these wider safeguarding factors when assessing concerns rather than viewing incidents in isolation.

Indicators may include:

• unexplained gifts or new possessions associated with criminal networks or gangs;

• increased absence from school or missing education;

• changes in friendships or peer groups;

• significant decline in educational performance;

• signs of self-harm or changes in emotional wellbeing;

• unexplained injuries or assault;

• carrying, threatening to use or expressing an intention to carry a weapon;

• online threats, intimidation or coercion;

• involvement in criminal exploitation or county lines.

Staff will also be aware that factors such as previous abuse or neglect, suspension, exclusion, alternative provision, offending behaviour and disrupted education may increase vulnerability. These indicators should not be used to stereotype children but should inform professional curiosity and safeguarding assessment.

Where there are concerns that a child may be carrying or intending to use a weapon, or where there is an immediate risk of serious harm, staff will act immediately, inform the DSL and contact the police where appropriate. The DSL will assess risks to the child and others and determine any safeguarding referrals, safety planning and multi-agency action required, with reference to KCSIE 2026.

Staff will also have regard to the Home Office Serious Violence Strategy, the Serious Violence Duty statutory guidance and the Youth Endowment Fund Toolkit when developing preventative practice and early intervention.

Additional Guidance

Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Q. MENTAL HEALTH

See KCSIE 2026, Part One, paras 47–50 (p. 19), and Part Two, paras 227–234 (pp. 59–61): children requiring mental health support.

We will ensure that all staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, abuse,

neglect or exploitation. Mental health concerns may also develop into safeguarding concerns, particularly where there are concerns regarding self-harm, suicidal ideation, suicide risk, serious eating difficulties or other behaviours that place a child at risk of significant harm. Where staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, they will follow this Child Protection Policy immediately and report their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL without delay.

Staff will access appropriate safeguarding training and information so that they understand:

how abuse, neglect, exploitation and other traumatic childhood experiences may affect children's mental health, behaviour, attendance and education;

that behaviour may be a communication of an unmet safeguarding need;

that school staff are well placed to identify emerging concerns and secure appropriate support but must not attempt to diagnose mental health conditions, which should only be undertaken by appropriately trained professionals;

the importance of responding appropriately to concerns relating to self-harm, suicidal thoughts or suicide risk and following school safeguarding procedures. (See KCSIE 2026 – Part One: Mental Health.)

The school recognises that early identification and evidence-informed intervention can improve outcomes for children experiencing mental health difficulties. Concerns will be considered alongside safeguarding, SEND, attendance, behaviour and wider contextual information to ensure that children receive appropriate support at the earliest opportunity. Where appropriate, the DSL will work with the Senior Mental Health Lead, SENDCO, pastoral staff and external agencies to coordinate support. (See KCSIE 2026 – Part One and Part Two.)

Where there are concerns regarding self-harm, suicidal thoughts or an immediate risk of harm, staff will take immediate action in accordance with this safeguarding policy. If a child is believed to be at immediate risk, emergency services will be contacted where necessary and the DSL informed immediately. Staff will not delay safeguarding action whilst awaiting a mental health assessment or diagnosis.

We will ensure that we access professional advice to support us in identifying pupils experiencing mental health difficulties and follow current Department for Education guidance on promoting and supporting children's mental health and wellbeing in schools, including:

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

Promoting and Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing in Schools and Colleges (DfE)

Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (DfE)

School Zone – Mental Wellbeing Resources

Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) where available

Durham mental health support Poster

The school recognises the importance of prevention, resilience-building and early intervention in promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all children.

R. Domestic Abuse

See KCSIE 2026, Part One, para 45 (p. 18), and Annex A: Domestic abuse and Operation Encompass (pp. 163–166).

All of our staff receive safeguarding training to ensure they understand the **impact of domestic abuse on children**, recognising that children who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse are victims in their own right and that domestic abuse can have a significant impact on a child's physical health, emotional wellbeing, behaviour, attendance and educational outcomes.

Staff understand that domestic abuse may also be an indicator that a child is at risk of, or suffering, other forms of abuse or neglect. (See KCSIE 2026 – Part One: Domestic Abuse.)

The school participates fully in Operation Encompass. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or an appropriately trained Deputy DSL, acts as the school's Operation Encompass Key Adult and receives and manages notifications from the police where a child may have been affected by a domestic abuse incident. Following receipt of a notification, the DSL will consider the child's immediate safeguarding and welfare needs, ensure appropriate support is made available within school and, where necessary, make timely referrals to children's social care or other relevant agencies.

(See KCSIE 2026, Annex A: Operation Encompass, pp. 164–166.)

The school recognises that, since the introduction of the statutory Operation Encompass notification duty, police must notify the relevant education setting where they have reasonable grounds to believe that a child may be a victim of domestic abuse. Operation Encompass notifications do not replace the school's own safeguarding responsibilities or referral procedures, and all concerns will continue to be managed in accordance with this Child Protection Policy and local safeguarding partnership procedures.

Information received through Operation Encompass will be treated as confidential, stored securely within the school's safeguarding records and shared only with those staff who need the information in order to safeguard and support the child. The

school will ensure that appropriate pastoral and educational support is provided, taking account of the child's wishes and feelings wherever appropriate.

Where staff have any concerns that a child may be experiencing the effects of domestic abuse, whether or not an Operation Encompass notification has been received, they will report these concerns immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL in accordance with this policy. The DSL will consider the need for early help, referral to children's social care, specialist domestic abuse services or other agencies as appropriate. (See KCSIE 2026 – Part One)

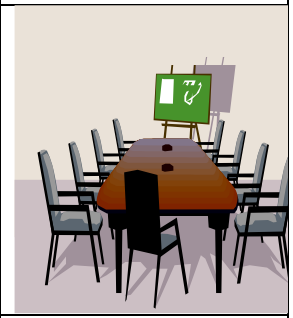
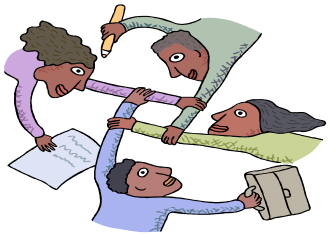
Operation Encompass notifications contain personal and sensitive information and will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. Notifications will be received by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or appropriately trained Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and stored securely as part of the school's safeguarding records.

Information received through Operation Encompass will only be shared on a need-to-know basis to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.

The school will also ensure that age-appropriate Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (where applicable) and Health Education help children develop an understanding of healthy, respectful relationships, recognise abusive and controlling behaviours and know how to seek help if they are worried about themselves or someone else.

Through the curriculum and wider safeguarding culture, the school will promote healthy relationships, respect, consent, equality and awareness of how and where children can access support if they are concerned about domestic abuse affecting themselves, their family or their peers.

SAFEGUARDING POLICY: APPENDIX 1

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

[Refer someone to the PREVENT team - Durham Constabulary]



Prevent referral flow chart for County Durham

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

