

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

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Key Contacts

Role	Name / Details	Contact
Designated Safeguarding Lead (s)	Mrs C Walton (AHT)	0151 631 4400
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (s)	Miss C Hall	0151 631 4400
Other contactable Safeguarding Officers	Mrs H Pierce (AHT) Mrs J Kaloumenos (AHT) Mrs E Jones (Director of SEND) Dominic Mackenzie (HT)	0151 631 4400
Nominated Governor for Safeguarding / Child Protection	Mrs Carol Rogers	Contact via the Clerk to Governors 0151 631 4400 clerk@weatherheadhigh.co.uk
Chair of Governors	Mrs Carol Rogers	Contact via the Clerk to Governors 0151 631 4400 clerk@weatherheadhigh.co.uk
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Pamela Cope Angela Reeve	pamelacope@wirral.gov.uk safeguardingunit@wirral.gov.uk
Head of Service Quality & Safeguarding Children	Lynn Campbell	0151 666 4442
Prevent Single Point of Contact	Claire Wright	Claire.Wright@liverpool.gov.uk
Prevent Team Merseyside Police	Prevent Team	0151 777 8125
Director of Children's Services	Elizabeth Hartley	0151 606 2000
Integrated Front Door	Mon-Fri, 9am – 5pm Outside of these hours	Tel: 0151 606 2008 ifd@wirral.gov.uk Tel: 0151 677 6557
Police	In an emergency For non-emergency but possible crime	999 101

School Record of Safeguarding Training

Type of Training	Date Completed
Whole School Staff Refresher / Updates (annual)	Sept 2024
Whole School Safeguarding Training (due every three years)	Sept 2023
Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (due every two years)	Sept 2023
Deputy Senior Designated Safeguarding Leads (due every two years)	Sept 2023
Safer Recruitment Training (due every five years)	December 2019
Governor Training (annual)	October 2023
Annual Designated Safeguarding Lead Prevent Training Update – to disseminate to ALL staff (annual)	October 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. It is essential that **everybody** working in a school or college understands their safeguarding responsibilities. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play in ensuring children and young people are safe from abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm. Our school is committed to safeguarding children and aims to create a culture of vigilance. All staff should make sure that any decisions made are **in the best interests of the child**.
- 1.2. Students' welfare is our paramount concern. The Governing Body will ensure that our school will safeguard and promote the welfare of students and work together with agencies to ensure that our school has adequate arrangements to identify, assess and support those children who are suffering or where significant harm is suggested. (<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/1-2-recognition-significant-harm/>)
- 1.3. Our school is a community and all those directly connected, staff members, governors, parents, families and students, have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure for all.
- 1.4. This policy and procedure document provides the basis for good practice within the school for Safeguarding work. It should be read in conjunction with the Wirral Safeguarding Partnership Child Protection - Safeguarding Policies and Procedures (<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/>), plus the Child Protection / Safeguarding appendix document. These are in keeping with relevant national procedures and reflect what the Wirral Safeguarding Partnership considers to be safe and professional practice in this context. <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/model-child-protection-safeguarding-policy/>

2. OUR ETHOS

- 2.1. We believe that this school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical, spiritual and moral development of the individual child; enabling all children to thrive.
- 2.2. We recognise the importance of providing an environment within our school that will help children feel safe and respected. We recognise the importance of enabling children to talk openly and to feel confident that they will be listened to. We recognise that both mental and physical health are relevant to safeguarding and the welfare of children
- 2.3. All adults within the school, including permanent staff, temporary staff, supply staff, volunteers, parents and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our students from harm.
- 2.4. We will work pro-actively with parents to build a solid understanding of the school's responsibilities to ensure the welfare of all children, including the need for referrals to other agencies in some situations.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1. In line with the law, this policy defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 years but in the case of those with SEND, it is up to 25 years of age.
- 3.2. This policy applies to all members of staff in our school, including all permanent, temporary and supply staff, governors, volunteers, contractors and external service or activity providers.

4. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 4.1. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on governing bodies of maintained schools and further education institutions (including sixth form colleges) to make the necessary arrangements for

ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are students at the school. Section 157 of the same Act places a similar duty on non-maintained and independent schools, including free schools and academies.

- 4.2. Under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, all maintained schools, further education colleges and independent schools, including free schools and academies, are required to co-operate with the local authority to improve the well-being of children in the local authority area.
- 4.3. Under section 14B of the Children Act 2004, the Local Safeguarding Children Board can require a school or further education institution to supply information in order to perform its functions. This must be complied with.
- 4.4. This policy and the accompanying procedure have been developed in accordance with the following statutory guidance and local safeguarding procedures:

Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children, July 2018:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges (September 2024): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

All procedures can be found on the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership website:
<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/>

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1. Our Governing Body recognises the need to ensure that it complies with its duties under legislation, and this policy has regard to statutory guidance: [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2024\)](#), [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#), key statutory and non-statutory guidance and any locally agreed inter-agency procedures.
- 5.2. The school's **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** with overall designated responsibility for safeguarding is Mrs Walton (Assistant Headteacher). We have Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads Miss Hall (Safety & Welfare Officer), Mrs Pierce (Assistant Headteacher), Mrs Kaloumenos (Assistant Headteacher), Mrs Jones (Director of SEND) and Mr Mackenzie (Headteacher) who ensure there is always appropriate cover for this role. **The responsibilities of all DSLs are described in detail in Appendix A.**

The DSL will be on the Senior Leadership Team and their role as DSL will be explicit in their job description. This person will have the appropriate authority and be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and safeguarding matters, to take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings (and/or to support other staff to do so) and to contribute to the assessment of children. The DSL (and any deputies) are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the response to safeguarding concerns.

- 5.3. The school has a **nominated governor** for safeguarding (Carol Rogers) to champion good practice, liaise with the Headteacher and provide information and reports to the Governing Body.
- 5.4. The **case manager** for dealing with allegations of abuse made against school staff members is the Headteacher. The case manager for dealing with allegations against the Headteacher is the Chair of Governors. The procedure for managing allegations is detailed in the Appendix document.
- 5.5. The **Headteacher** will ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body are fully implemented and sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable staff members to

discharge their safeguarding responsibilities. All staff and other adults are clear about procedures where they are concerned about the safety of a child, including if children go [missing from education](#), including children who are 'absent' from education or those unexplainable and or/persistent absences, particularly on repeat occasions or for prolonged periods.

- 5.6. The **Governing Body** is collectively responsible for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are fully embedded within the school's ethos and reflected in the school's day-to-day practice.
- 5.7. **All staff members, governors, volunteers and external providers** know how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse, how to respond to students who disclose abuse and what to do if they are concerned about a child. They are aware of the behaviours and physical signs linked to behaviours that put children in danger. All staff should know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused or neglected. Staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the DSL (or a deputy) and children's social care. Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child. Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This may include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyber bullying), gender-based violence / sexual harassment, sexual violence and assaults, harmful sexual behaviour and sexting. Staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. (<https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/7-minute-briefing-Child-on-child-Abuse-July-2023.pdf>)
- 5.8. Staff must challenge any form of derogatory and sexualised language or behaviour. Staff should be vigilant to sexualised/aggressive touching/grabbing. DfE guidance situates sexual violence, sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour in the context of developing a whole-school safeguarding culture, where sexual misconduct is seen as unacceptable and not 'banter' or an inevitable part of growing up. Advice about tackling and reporting sexual harassment in schools, colleges and educational settings can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

It should be recognised that these issues are likely to occur, and so schools should have procedures in place to deal with them. Groups at particular risk include girls, students who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, questioning their gender+ (LGBT+), or are perceived by peers to be LGBT+, and students with SEND. We recognise that these children can be targeted by other children and seek to provide a safe space for these children to speak out and share their concerns with members of staff. As best as possible, students are protected from up skirting, bullying (including cyber-bullying), homophobic, biphobic and transphobic behaviour, racism, sexism, and all other forms of discrimination. More guidance can be found in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(September 2024\)](#).

In keeping with the school's values, we acknowledge the need to treat everyone equally, with fairness, dignity and respect. Any discriminatory behaviours are challenged, and children are supported to understand how to treat others with respect. We also have a statutory duty to report and record any of the above incidents.

The DSL is familiar with the full guidance from the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) entitled 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> which covers what sexual violence and harassment is, schools' and colleges' legal responsibilities, a whole school or college approach to safeguarding and child protection and how to respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment.

The school records incidents of sexual violence, sexual harassment and harmful sexualised behaviours so that the scale of the problem can be understood and appropriate plans can be made to reduce it.

Children may not feel ready to, or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited or neglected, but this shouldn't stop staff from having a '[professional curiosity](#)' and speaking to the DSL. See <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professional-curiosity/> for further guidance.

Incidents should be immediately reported to the DSL or equivalent so they can be managed in line with the school's child protection and safeguarding policies. Where there is a safeguarding concern, school leaders will ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

The NSPCC have a bespoke helpline by children and young people who have experienced abuse at school or by worried adults and professionals that need support and guidance:

NSPCC helpline Report Abuse in Education on 0800 136 663 or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

- 5.9. The school has several digital / online safety policies which cover the use of the school network and the use of devices in school, mobile phones, cameras and other digital recording devices. The policies reinforce the importance of online safety, how students are educated and how online safety is monitored and maintained.

The Governing Body and school leaders to reasonable steps to limit children's exposure to the risks from the school's or college's IT system and ensure the school has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place which are regularly reviewed for their effectiveness. The Senior Leadership Team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified.

Where it is necessary for remote learning to take place, the school follows the DfE's guidance set out in the following publication:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providing-remote-education-guidance-for-schools>

6. SUPPORTING CHILDREN

- 6.1. We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence are likely to have low self-esteem and may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. We also recognise children who witness domestic abuse are victims, that witnessing domestic abuse can have a lasting impact on children, and that children can be victims in their own relationships too. They may feel helpless, humiliated and blame themselves. School may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in their lives. Members of staff in safeguarding / pastoral roles have awareness of the DfE's guidance on domestic abuse: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help> and guidance published by the Wirral Safeguarding Partnership: [What is domestic abuse information.](#)
- 6.2. We accept that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.
- 6.3. Our school will support all students by:
- utilising the Farrer & Co guidance on child on child abuse: [Addressing child-on-child abuse: a resource for schools and colleges.](#)
 - ensuring the content of the curriculum includes social and emotional aspects of learning through PSHE, RHSE and other curriculum contexts that allow students to talk about feelings and deal assertively with pressures, ensure they are listened to, and know to whom they can turn to for help and advice.
 - providing students with a range of appropriate adults to approach if they are in difficulties and ensuring that students are taught about safeguarding so that they 'recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it'.
 - supporting the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence and encouraging the development of self-esteem and self-assertiveness

- while not condoning aggression or bullying (the Anti-Bullying Policy is located on the school website).
- ensuring a comprehensive curriculum response to online safety, enabling children and parents to learn about the risks of new technologies and social media, and how to use them responsibly.
 - supporting students in developing positive relationships through the delivery of the Relationship and Sexual Health Education (RSHE) curriculum.
 - liaising and working together with other support services and those agencies involved in safeguarding children; including providing support where students and their families are victims of domestic abuse: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/domestic-abuse-act-statutory-guidance>.
 - ensuring that the curriculum will help children stay safe, recognise when they do not feel safe and identify who they might or can talk to if they do not feel safe. The curriculum will support young people to become more resilient to inappropriate behaviours towards them, risk taking behaviours and behaviours that children may be coerced into including, sexual harassment, child-on-child abuse, 'sexting' and the displaying of 'Harmful Sexualised Behaviour': <https://www.csacentre.org.uk/resources/key-messages/harmful-sexual-behaviour/>
 - where appropriate, making use of Wirral Safeguarding Partnership's harmful sexual behaviours identification toolkit which can be found here: <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/harmful-sexual-behaviour/>.
 - considering intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment.
 - having a Behaviour Policy that is aimed at supporting vulnerable students in the school. The school will ensure that each student knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but that they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred (the Behaviour Policy is located on the school website). The Behaviour Policy outlines measures to prevent bullying, including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.
 - having clear procedures for addressing and minimising the risk of child-on-child abuse, including harmful sexual behaviours, sexual violence and sexual harassment, and ensuring these procedures are easily understood and easily accessible. Children who have experienced sexual violence can display a wide range of responses, so the school will remain alert to the possible challenges of detecting those signs and show sensitivity to their needs.
 - playing a crucial role in preventative education and preparing students for life in modern Britain. There is a culture of zero tolerance to sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment at Weatherhead High School. This is underpinned by the school's Behaviour Policy, pastoral support system and a planned programme of RSHE delivered regularly, tackling issues such as: boundaries, consent, body confidence, stereotyping and sexual harassment.
 - acknowledging the importance of 'contextual safeguarding' (<https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/>) which considers wider environmental factors in a student's life that may be a threat to their safety and/or welfare, as outlined in both [Working together to safeguard children \(July 2018\)](#) and [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2024\)](#).
 - Promoting young people's emotional health and well-being through liaising with a range of [Early Help](#) agencies that support the student such as Health Services, Wirral Social Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Education Welfare Services, Special Educational Support Services, Youth Services and the Educational Psychology Service: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-health-and-wellbeing>.
 - ensuring that, when a student who is the subject of a Child Protection Plan (CP) leaves, their information is transferred to the new school/college within two weeks and that the child's Social Worker is informed that the child has moved.
 - alerting the Local Authority if it is aware of any child being looked after under a [Private Fostering](#) arrangement. On admission to school, and at other times, the school will be vigilant in identifying any private fostering arrangement.
 - acknowledging that a child that is looked after (CLA) or has been previously looked after by the Local Authority potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills,

knowledge and understanding to keep CLA and previously looked after children safe. It is important that all agencies work together, and prompt action is taken on concerns to safeguard these children who are a particularly vulnerable group.

- considering the risks carefully when applying disciplinary measures in response to incidents involving children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) given the additional vulnerability of this group.
- recognising that to safeguard a student, it may be necessary to use restraint and yet restraint is likely to impact on the well-being of the child. By planning positive and proactive behaviour support, the school will seek to reduce the occurrence of risky behaviour and the need to use restraint. Where used, DfE guidance will be followed: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>.

7. SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

- 7.1. We have developed a structured procedure in line with *Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership* which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse. **This is detailed in the appendix to this policy.**
- 7.2. In line with the procedures, the Integrated Front Door will be contacted as soon as there is a significant concern (0151 606 2008 / ifd@wirral.gov.uk).
- 7.3. The name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be clearly advertised in the school and on the website, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.
- 7.4. We will ensure all parents and carers are aware of the responsibilities of staff members to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by publishing the policy and procedures on our website and by referring to them in our introductory school materials.
- 7.5. We will use the NSPCC guidance [When to call the police](#) to help the DSL and Deputy DSLs understand when they should consider calling the police and what to expect when they do.

8. DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE MADE BY A CHILD – ADVICE FOR ALL MEMBERS OF STAFF

- 8.1. If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff or volunteer should consider ways to:

Receive - Listen actively, open body language, accept, non-judgmental. Use TED (tell, explain, describe)

Reassure - 'You've done the right thing by coming to me', re-assure child that you have listened and hear what they are saying; don't promise what can't be delivered

Respond - Tell what you are going to do and do it. Ensure child is ok before leaving

Report - As soon as possible, to the Designated Senior Lead (DSL) in the school / setting

Record - Vital to stick to the facts, no opinions – Think about When? Where? Who? What?

Review – Take responsibility to follow up any referral (via your DSL)

In addition:

- Inform the DSL without delay and follow safeguarding process.
- Complete the safeguarding incident/welfare concern form and pass it to the DSL.

Dealing with a disclosure from a child and managing safeguarding issues can be stressful. Affected members of staff should consider seeking support for themselves / discussing this with the DSL.

Further information about what to do if you are worried that a child is being abused is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2>.

The Role of an Appropriate Adult in Safeguarding:

The Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act advises that “the role of the appropriate adult (AA) is to safeguard the rights, entitlements and welfare of juveniles and vulnerable persons”, with there being further elaboration that the AA is expected to observe that the police are acting properly and fairly in relation to a vulnerable detained person’s rights and entitlements, as well as helping the detained person understand their rights. This role is relevant where the police have detained a child or vulnerable person under PACE.

The role of the AA is not restricted to specific individuals, in relation to children and young people under the age of 18. PACE guidance sets out that the AA can be: the parent, guardian or, if the juvenile is in the care of a local authority or voluntary organisation, a person representing that authority or organisation. Further information about the role of the AA can be found here: <https://safeguarding.network/content/safeguarding-and-the-role-of-the-appropriate-adult/>.

Record Keeping

- 8.2. All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions **must** be recorded in writing (signed and dated). The Systemic Practice model ([Introduction to Systemic Practice](#)) should be used to capture the child’s voice and their daily lived experience.
- 8.3. We will continue to support any student leaving the school about whom there have been concerns by ensuring that all appropriate information, including safeguarding and welfare concerns, is forwarded under confidential cover to the student’s new school as a matter of priority.
- 8.4. The school will retain at least two emergency contacts for every student on roll in case of emergencies, and in case there are welfare concerns at the home in order to reduce the risk of contacting family members where welfare and/or safeguarding concerns are identified.
- 8.5. The school uses CPOMS to maintain safeguarding records. Where necessary, records will be retained in hard copy in a secure safeguarding file.

9. DISCUSSING CONCERNS WITH THE FAMILY AND THE CHILD – ADVICE FOR THE DSL AND DEPUTY DSLs

- 9.1. In general, you should always discuss any concerns the school may have with the child’s parents. They need to know that you are worried about their child. However, you should not discuss your concerns if you believe that this would place the child at greater risk or lead to loss of evidence for a police investigation.
- 9.2. If you decide not to discuss your concerns with the child’s parents or carers, this must be recorded in the child’s safeguarding file with a full explanation for your decision and the reason for this decision.
- 9.3. It is important to record and consider the child’s wishes and feelings, as part of planning what action to take in relation to concerns about their welfare. Capturing the daily lived experience of the child is paramount to ensure that actions remain child centred. Systemic Practice is a way of working in partnership with children / young people and families to help them improve outcomes and address

issues which prevent them from thriving. Systemic Practice does this by seeking to understand the relationships between family members, and between the family and their wider networks to help professionals understand why the family works the way it does (Intro to Systemic Practice). It remains important to capture the child's lived experience in their own words when possible.

- 9.4. When talking to children, you should take account of their age, understanding and preferred language, which may not be English. It is also important to consider how a child with SEND may need support in communicating.
- 9.5. How you talk to a child will also depend on the substance and seriousness of the concerns. You may need to seek advice from the Integrated Front Door or the police to ensure that neither the safety of the child nor any subsequent investigation is jeopardised.
- 9.6. If concerns have arisen as a result of information given by a child, it is important to reassure the child but not to promise confidentiality.
- 9.7. It is expected that you discuss your concerns with the parents and seek their agreement to making a referral to the Integrated Front Door, unless you consider that this would place the child at increased risk of significant harm.
- 9.8. You do not need the parents' consent to make a referral if you consider the child is in need of protection, although parents will ultimately be made aware of which organisation made the referral. If parents refuse to give consent to a referral but you decide to continue, you need to make this clear to the Integrated Front Door (IFD@wirral.gov.uk / 0151 606 2008).
- 9.9. If you decide to refer the child without the parents' consent, make sure to record this with a full explanation of your decision.
- 9.10. When you make your referral, you should agree with the Integrated Front Door what the child and parents will be told, by whom and when. As a relevant agency, the school should be part of discussions with statutory safeguarding partners to agree the levels for the different types of assessment as part of local arrangements.

MAKING A REFERRAL – if a child or young person is at risk of harm, abuse or neglect please report it to the **Integrated Front Door**

Mon-Fri 9:00am – 5.00pm Tel: 0151 606 2008

Outside of these hours Tel: 0151 677 6557

Email: IFD@wirral.gov.uk

In an emergency always call the police on 999.
If you think there has been a crime but it is not an emergency call 101.

The new online Request for Services referral form can be accessed here:

https://wirral-self.achieveservice.com/service/Children_and_families_request_for_support_form

10. SAFER WORKFORCE AND MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS (this procedure is detailed in the appendix document)

- 10.1. We will prevent people who pose risks to children from working in our school by ensuring that all individuals working in any capacity at our school have been subjected to safeguarding checks in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, 2024. In

addition to obtaining an Enhanced DBS Disclosure certificate, anyone who is appointed to carry out teaching work will require an additional check to ensure they are not prohibited from teaching.

A check of any prohibition can be carried out using the Teacher Services system that may be found here: <https://teacherservices.education.gov.uk/>.

Prohibition orders are described in the National College for Teaching and Leadership's (NCTL) publication *Teacher Misconduct: the prohibition of teachers* which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-misconduct-the-prohibition-of-teachers--3>

- 10.2. We will ensure that agencies and third parties supplying staff provide the school with evidence that they have made the appropriate level of safeguarding checks on individuals working in our school.
- 10.3. The school holds information about safeguarding checks conducted on all employees and other adults who provide services to the school, including teacher trainees on salaried routes, agency and third-party and supply staff who work at the school. The Single Central Record is held centrally in school and further information about the Single Central Record can be found in the appendix to this policy.
- 10.4. Every job description / person specification and job advertisement will have a clear statement about the safeguarding responsibilities of the post holder. The school website will echo this within our 'work for us' section. The school will carry out an online search on shortlisted candidates to help identify any issues that are publicly available online.
- 10.5. The school will ensure that at least one member of every interview panel has completed safer recruitment training within the last five years.
- 10.6. The school has a procedure in place to manage allegations against members of staff, supply staff and volunteers (and to respond to low level concerns) in line with the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures: [allegations against staff procedure](#). We will communicate with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), through consultations and referrals when needed. Allegations related to any incidents when an individual or organisation is using the school premises for the purposes of running activities for children, will be managed using the school's safeguarding policy and procedures, including, if necessary, informing the LADO within 24 hours.
- 10.7. We will consider all allegations against an individual not directly employed by the school (for example, supply teachers provided by an employment agency) where disciplinary procedures do not fully apply, and ensure allegations are dealt with properly and communication with the supply agency and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) continues throughout the investigation.
- 10.8. There is an agreed staff Code of Conduct which is compliant with 'Safer Working Practices' and includes acceptable use of technologies, staff / student relationships, [low level concerns](#) and communications including the use of social media. The staff Code of Conduct is contained within the Staff Handbook and all staff are required to confirm they have read it at the start of each school year.
- 10.9. For agency and third-party supply staff, the school will ensure it has written confirmation that the employment business supplying the members of supply staff has carried out the relevant checks and obtained the appropriate certificates, and the date that confirmation was received and whether any enhanced DBS certificate check has been provided in respect of the member of staff.

11. STAFF INDUCTION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 11.1. All new members of staff, including Early Career Teachers, teaching assistants and support staff, will be given induction that includes basic safeguarding training on how to recognise signs of abuse, how to respond to any concerns, e-safety and familiarisation with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory

Guidance for Schools and Colleges and other related policies. All governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. There are mechanisms in place, such as regular safeguarding updates, to assist staff in understanding and discharging their role and responsibilities as set out in Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education. [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (Dec 2023) also provides clear guidance for staff to follow regarding safeguarding and adopting a multi-agency approach.

- 11.2. The induction will be proportionate to staff members' and governors' roles and responsibilities.
- 11.3. The DSL and Deputy DSLs will undertake updated DSL safeguarding training every two years. DSLs will also undertake Prevent awareness training and disseminate the training to all staff annually.
- 11.4. All staff members of the school undertake face to face training (whole-school training) annually. In addition, regular training is provided by the DSL on key safeguarding themes / topical issues over the course of a school year and updates are provided through the weekly staff Safeguarding Bulletin. Furthermore, all staff have access to Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership safeguarding training (<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/training/>) and e-learning as required. All governors must undertake governor specific training to equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge, so they're assured safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and deliver a robust whole-school approach to safeguarding. This training is regularly updated (annually).
- 11.5. Staff members who miss the whole school safeguarding training will be required to undertake other relevant training to compensate. It is possible to book 'mop up' sessions with the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership by visiting their website at: <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/safeguarding-training-for-schools/>.
- 11.6. The nominated governor for safeguarding will undergo training prior to or soon after appointment to the role; this training will be updated every three years. All governors will receive appropriate safeguarding training annually.
- 11.7. We will ensure that staff members provided by other agencies and third parties (for example, supply teachers and contractors) have received appropriate safeguarding training commensurate with their roles before starting work. They will be given the opportunity to take part in whole-school training if it takes place during their period of work for the school.
- 11.8. The DSL will provide briefings to the school staff on any changes to safeguarding legislation and procedures, and relevant learning from Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) in line with [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (2023) and information shared by the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership: <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/serious-case-reviews/>. These will occur annually or more frequently when necessary.
- 11.9. The school will maintain accurate and up to date records of staff safeguarding induction and training.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY, CONSENT AND INFORMATION SHARING

- 12.1. We recognise that all matters relating to safeguarding are confidential.
- 12.2. The Headteacher or the DSL will disclose any information about a student to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis only
- 12.3. All staff members must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep key information a secret or to themselves which might compromise the child's safety or well-being.
- 12.4. All staff members have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

- 12.5. All staff members who come into contact with children will be given appropriate training to understand the purpose of information sharing in order to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- 12.6. We will ensure that staff members are confident about what they can and should do under the law, including how to obtain consent to share information and when information can be shared without consent.
- 12.7. Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and in promoting children's welfare, including in relation to their educational outcomes. Schools and colleges have clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes.
- 12.8. Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. They should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision. [Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers](#) supports staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. This advice includes the seven golden rules for sharing information and considerations with regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the DSL or a Deputy. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

Staff should be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to Local Authority children's social care.

13. INTER-AGENCY WORKING

- 13.1. We will develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, including agencies providing Early Help services to children, the police and Children's Social Care. Early 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. For more information on Early Help go to: <https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/professionals/what-is-early-help/>.
- 13.2. We will ensure that relevant staff members participate in multi-agency meetings and forums, including child protection conferences and core groups, to consider individual children
- 13.3. We will participate in Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs), other reviews and file audits as and when required to do so by the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership. We will ensure that we have a clear process for gathering the evidence required for reviews and audits, and embed recommendations into practice and compile required actions within agreed timescales.

14. CONTRACTORS, SERVICE AND ACTIVITY PROVIDERS AND WORK PLACEMENT PROVIDERS

- 14.1. We will ensure that contractors and providers are aware of this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure. We will require that employees and volunteers provided by these organisations use our procedure to report concerns.
- 14.2. We will seek assurance that employees and volunteers provided by these organisations and working with our children have been subjected to the appropriate level of safeguarding checks in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024). If assurance is not obtained, permission to work with our children or use our school premises may be refused.
- 14.3. When we commission services from other organisations, we will ensure that compliance with our policy and procedures is a contractual requirement.

15. WHISTLE-BLOWING AND COMPLAINTS

15.1. We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff members fail to do so. The school Whistle Blowing Policy is located on our school website: <https://weatherheadhigh.co.uk/school-information/policies-procedures/>.

Whistleblowing: guidance and code of practice for employers is located at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/415175/bis-15-200-whistleblowing-guidance-for-employers-and-code-of-practice.pdf

The Whistleblowing Advice Line is available for all workers to use if they feel it is appropriate to do so: 0800 028 0285 / help@nspcc.org.uk.

15.2. We will ensure that all staff members are aware of their duty to raise concerns where they exist about the management of safeguarding, which does include the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary, they should speak with the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors or with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

15.3. We have a clear reporting procedure for children, parents and other people to report concerns or complaints, including abusive or poor practice. We also acknowledge that low-level concerns can arise in several ways from various sources, e.g. suspicion, complaint or a disclosure. Procedures in place for confidentially sharing and handling of low-level concerns.

15.4. We will actively seek the views of children, parents and carers and staff members on our safeguarding arrangements through surveys, questionnaires and other means.

16. SITE SECURITY & OUT OF SCHOOL PROVIDERS

16.1. All staff members have a responsibility to ensure our buildings and grounds are secure and for reporting concerns that may come to light.

16.2. We check the identity of all visitors and volunteers coming into school. Visitors are expected to sign in and out at reception using the visitors' log and to display a visitor's badge while on the school site. Any individual who is not known or identifiable will be challenged for clarification and reassurance.

16.3. The school will not accept the behaviour of any parent, carer or other individual who threatens school security or leads others to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse the person access to the school site. Visitors of this nature will be managed using the school's Parent & Visitor Expectations and Code of Conduct.

16.4. Where non-school activities take place, providers using the school's facilities are expected to adhere to the guidance in [Keeping Children Safe in Out of School Settings](#). More details regarding safeguarding in sport can be found here: [safeguarding in sport](#).

17. QUALITY ASSURANCE

17.1. We will ensure that systems are in place to monitor the implementation of and compliance with this policy and accompanying procedures.

17.2. We will complete an audit of the school's safeguarding arrangements at frequencies specified by the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership and using the Section 175 online audit tool provided by them for this purpose.

17.3. The school's senior leadership and Governing Body will ensure that action is taken to remedy any deficiencies and weaknesses identified in child protection arrangements at Weatherhead High School without delay.

18. POLICY REVIEW

This policy and procedures will be reviewed every academic year. All other linked policies will be reviewed in line with the policy review cycle. The DSL will ensure that staff members, including volunteers and sessional workers, are made aware of any amendments to policies and procedures. Additional updates to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the appendix will take place as and when needed.

Updated Policy Date:	Scheduled Review by WSCP
22/08/2024	Summer 2025

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APPENDIX A

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

1 MANAGING REFERRALS:

- 1.1 Refer all safeguarding cases, including Early Help, to the **Integrated Front Door (IFD)** and to the Police if a crime may have been committed. (IFD@wirral.gov.uk)
- 1.2 Identify any safeguarding issues relating to individual children, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- 1.3 Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff members on matters of child protection and safeguarding, including Contextual Safeguarding.
- 1.4 Escalate inter-agency concerns and disagreements about a child's well-being. Further information can be found here: <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/10-2-multi-agency-escalation-procedure/>
- 1.5 Have responsibility to ensure there is at least one key adult for 'Operation Encompass' (guiding principles of the scheme can be found here: <https://www.operationencompass.org/school-participation>) and who is the point of contact for child exploitation.
- 1.6 Ensure that the Local Authority is notified if children are persistently absent or [missing from education](#), including children who are 'absent' from education, particularly on repeat occasions or for prolonged periods or those 'unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education'.

2 OPERATION ENCOMPASS:

- 2.1 An annual information letter about Operation Encompass should be sent to parents (all downloadable documents are here: [OE - resources for school](#)).
- 2.2 The school will provide a generic safeguarding email address to Operation Encompass to ensure continuity.
- 2.3 A key worker completes the online [key adult training](#) annually.
- 2.4 Further information on Wirral Operation Encompass can be found here: [OE Information](#).

3 RECORD KEEPING:

- 3.1 Keep written (or online) records of safeguarding and welfare concerns (using CPOMS) and ensure a stand-alone file is created as necessary for children with safeguarding concerns.
- 3.2 Schools should have at least two emergency contacts for every child in the school in case of emergencies, and in case there are welfare concerns at home.
- 3.3 Maintain a chronology of significant incidents for each child with safeguarding concerns, including a record of decisions made and the reasons for those decisions.
- 3.4 Ensure such records are kept confidentially and securely and separate from the child's educational record.
- 3.5 Where children leave the school or college, the DSL should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within five days for an in-year transfer or within the first five days of the start of a new term to allow the new school or college to have support in place for when the child arrives. The DSL should ensure secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. For schools, this should be transferred separately from the main student file. Receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as DSLs and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) or the named persons with oversight for special educational needs and disability (SEND) in a school / college are aware as required.

4 INTER-AGENCY WORKING AND INFORMATION SHARING:

- 4.1 Co-operate and comply with Children's Social Care for enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- 4.2 Advocate that the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe; this includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent as per [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2024\)](#).
- 4.3 Complete reports and attend, or ensure other relevant staff members attend, child protection conferences, core group meetings and other multi-agency meetings, as required.
- 4.4 Liaise with other agencies working with the child, share information as appropriate and contribute to assessments.
- 4.5 Share information confidentially and in line with 'Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services' (DfE, 2018).
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf

5 TRAINING:

- 5.1 Undertake appropriate annual training (**updated every two years for DSLs**) in order to:
 - be able to recognise signs of abuse and how to respond to them, including special circumstances such as child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, fabricated or induced illness.
 - understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention; for example, Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership thresholds of need, preventative education and the local offer.
 - have a working knowledge of how the Local Authority conducts initial and reviews child protection (CP) case conferences and contribute effectively to these.
 - be alert to the specific needs of children in need (as specified in section 17 of the Children Act 1989), those with Special Educational Needs, pregnant teenagers, young carers, those who are privately fostered, vulnerable to exploitation, racialisation and subject to listening or hearing to [domestic abuse](#).
- 5.2 Ensure each member of staff has read and understands the school's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and procedures, including providing induction on these matters to new staff members. Induction and training must include the school's Behaviour Policy and the school's procedures for managing children who are [missing education](#) or those unexplainable and/or persistent absentees from education, as well as the Staff Code of Conduct, dealing with disclosures and the managing allegations processes.
- 5.3 Organise face-to-face whole-school safeguarding training for all staff members at least **every three years**. Ensure staff members who miss the training receive it by other means; for example, by joining another school's training. The DSL must provide all staff members with safeguarding updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings) as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. The link to access safeguarding training via Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership is: <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/safeguarding-training-for-schools/>.
- 5.4 All staff should be aware of systems within school which support safeguarding, and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This should include the:
 - Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
 - Behaviour Policy
 - Staff Code of Conduct
 - Safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
 - Role of the DSL (including the identity of the DSL and any deputies)

Best practice would also see staff and leaders reading '[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#)' as it contains examples of the different types of safeguarding issues.

- 5.5 Ensure the school allocates time and resources every year for relevant staff members to attend training and receive continuous professional development opportunities.
- 5.6 Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any action the school takes to protect them.
- 5.7 Maintain accurate records of staff recruitment, induction, ongoing training and continual professional development (CPD) relating to safeguarding.

Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership training courses can be found here:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/schools/>

6 AWARENESS RAISING:

- 6.1 Ensure the school's child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately.
- 6.2 Ensure the school's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly.
- 6.3 Ensure the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this.
- 6.4 Link with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements: www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk

7 QUALITY ASSURANCE:

- 7.1 Monitor the implementation of and compliance with policy and procedures, including periodic audits of safeguarding and welfare concerns files (at a minimum once a year).
- 7.2 Complete an audit of the school's safeguarding arrangements at frequencies specified by the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership. Schools complete the 175 Audit page here: <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/section-11-175-audit/>
- 7.3 Provide regular reports to the Governing Body, detailing changes and reviews to policy, training undertaken by staff members and the number of children with Child Protection Plans and other relevant data.
- 7.4 Take lead responsibility for remedying any deficiencies and weaknesses identified in safeguarding arrangements.

8 SUPERVISION AND REFLECTION:

- 8.1 Working to ensure children and young people are protected from harm requires sound professional judgements to be made. It is demanding work that can be distressing and stressful. It is therefore essential that staff involved in this work have access to advice and a robust process of reflection / supervision to help them reflect upon and review their work.
- 8.2 The school will have a framework for providing an opportunity to staff who are working directly with vulnerable young people, particularly those who are being managed on a child protection, child in need or Team Around the Family Plan, to have regular access to an appropriate manager to talk through and reflect on their involvement with the child's case. A guidance document published by the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership for undertaking safeguarding reflection is published on the WSCP website and can be accessed here: <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/>

APPENDIX B

Safeguarding Procedure

1 DEFINITIONS:

- 1.1 **Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant; for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.
- 1.2 **Children** are any people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday; a 16-year-old, whether living independently, in further education, in the armed forces or in hospital, is a child and is entitled to the same protection and services as anyone younger. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) applies to providers of post-16 education as set out Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021.
- 1.3 **Child protection** is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and refers to activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, or significant harm is suggested.
- 1.4 **Early help** means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life.
- 1.5 **Harm** is ill treatment or impairment of health and development, including impairment suffered from witnessing the ill treatment of another.
- 1.6 **Safeguarding children** is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** is defined as:
- protecting children from maltreatment
 - preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
 - ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
 - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children's welfare and prevent concerns from escalating (KCSIE 2024).

All staff must be aware safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This is most likely to include, but is not limited to, bullying (including cyber-bullying), gender-based violence / sexual assaults, harassment and sexting. Staff should be clear as to the school's policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse, and on how the risk of child-on-child abuse is being minimised, how suspected abuse will be recorded and investigated; as well as how the victims and perpetrators will be supported. More support can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people>

It is important that schools record incidents across the whole spectrum of sexual violence, sexual harassment and harmful sexualised behaviours so that they can understand the scale of the problem in their own schools and make appropriate plans to reduce it. For more guidance go to: KCSIE 2024.

All such incidents should be immediately reported to the DSL or equivalent and managed in line with the school's child protection policies. Victims of harm should be supported by the school's pastoral system.

There is a bespoke helpline for children and young people who have experienced abuse at school, and for worried adults and professionals that need support and guidance. If you are concerned about something, you can contact the NSPCC helpline, Report Abuse in Education, on 0800 136 663 or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

1.7 **Significant harm** is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in the family in the best interests of the child. Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 states 'where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health or development, his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child'.

1.8 Any child may benefit from [Early Help](#), but all school staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for Early Help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs
- has Special Educational Needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care, [education](#) or from home
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/domestic-abuse-act-statutory-guidance>
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- has returned home to their family from care
- is a privately fostered child

2 CATEGORIES OF ABUSE:

2.1 **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such that it causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development and conveying that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include:

- not giving the child opportunities to express their views.
- deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature:

- age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.
- interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability.
- overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning.
- preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction.
- seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- serious bullying (including cyber-bullying).
- causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

2.2 **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, it may involve a parent failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment.
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate care givers.
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. Educational neglect is also considered:
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/neglect/>.

Neglect is the most common reason for a child to be the subject of a Child Protection Plan in the UK and research from the NSPCC tells us that one in seven secondary school age children and one in 20 children under 11 in the UK have been neglected at some point. To help combat neglect of children the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership has developed and published its multi-agency Neglect Strategy (June 2023): [Cherish – Wirral's Neglect Strategy](#).

- 2.3 **Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- 2.4 **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school policy and procedures for dealing with it as per [KCSIE 2024](#).

3. MENTAL HEALTH:

- 3.1 All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- 3.2 Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.
- 3.3 Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.
- 3.4 If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection procedures and speaking to the DSL or a deputy. Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-health-and-wellbeing>

The Department for Education has published advice and guidance on [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#) and [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#). In addition, Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, well-being and resilience among young people, including its guidance [Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing](#). Its resources include addressing issues related to social media, forming positive relationships, smoking and alcohol. See [Every Mind Matters](#) for links to all materials and lesson plans.

There are three thresholds for and types of referral that need to be considered:

Is this a child with additional needs, where their health, development or achievement may be adversely affected?

- Age-appropriate progress is not being made and the causes are unclear or,
- The support of more than one agency is needed to meet the child or young person's needs.

If this is a child with additional needs, discuss the issues with the Early Help Assessment Team (EHAT) trained practitioner in your school, the child and parents. You will need to obtain parental consent for an EHAT to be completed.

Is this a child in need matter? Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 says:

- they are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development, without the provision of services by a local authority.
- their health or development is likely to be impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services.
- they are SEND (and as such can face additional safeguarding challenges).

If this is a child in need, discuss the issues with the DSL and parents, obtaining their consent for referral.

Is this a child protection matter? Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 defines this as:

- children at risk or who are suffering significant harm.
- children suffering the effects of significant harm.
- serious health problems.

More on the thresholds can be found here:
<https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/multi-agency-thresholds/>.

If an employee is responding to a child protection matter, it should be discussed with the DSL and will need to be referred to the Integrated Front Door by the school as soon as possible: <https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/public/concerned-about-a-child/>.

APPENDIX C

Further Information

A full series of '7-minute briefings' have been designed to inform and engage staff in understanding a wide range of safeguarding concerns. The briefings can be found here: <https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/7-minute-briefings/> and new briefings are regularly added.

1 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- 1.1 FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM: <https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/harmful-practices/>
- 1.2 **Indicators** – there is a range of potential indicators that a girl may be at risk of FGM. Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation>. The FGM resource pack for agencies can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack>.
- 1.3 **Actions** – if staff have a concern they should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care. Mandatory reporting commenced in October 2015. These procedures remain when dealing with concerns regarding the potential for FGM to take place. Where a teacher or member of support staff discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18, there is a statutory duty upon that individual to report it to the police.
- 1.4 **Mandatory Reporting Duty** – Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) will place a statutory duty upon **teachers, along with social workers and healthcare professionals, to report to the police** where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining students, but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the school's DSL and involve the Integrated Front Door as appropriate.

2 Fabricated or Induced Illness / Perplexing Presentation

- 2.1 Staff must be aware of the risk of children being abused through fabricated or induced illness (FII). There are three main ways of the carer fabricating or inducing illness in a child. These are not mutually exclusive and include:
 - fabrication of signs and symptoms; this may include fabrication of past medical history.
 - fabrication of signs and symptoms and falsification of hospital charts and records, and specimens of bodily fluids; this may also include falsification of letters and documents.
 - induction of illness by a variety of means.
- 2.2 Where this is identified and considered a risk a referral will be made to the Integrated Front Door for support and guidance. School may involve other agencies in making their assessments. That could include, for example, the school nurse, community paediatrician, occupational therapists. For more on perplexing presentations go to: <https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/7-Minute-Briefing-Perplexing-Presentations-and-FII.pdf>.

3 Gang and Youth / Serious Violence

- 3.1 Children and young people who become involved in gangs are at risk of violent crime and as a result of this involvement are deemed vulnerable. Agencies and professionals have a responsibility to safeguard these children and young people, and to prevent further harm both to the young person and their potential victims. Risks associated with gang activity include access to weapons (including firearms), retaliatory violence and territorial violence with other gangs, knife crime, sexual violence and substance misuse.
- 3.2 Indicators may be (age in brackets):
- Troublesome (7-9; 10-12) / high daring (10-12) / positive attitude towards delinquency (10-12) / previously committed offences (7-9) / involved in anti-social behaviour (10-12).
 - Substance use (7-9) / aggression (7-9) / running away and truancy (7-9; 10-12) / marijuana availability / use (10-12) / disrupted family (7- 9; 10-12) / poor supervision (10-12).
 - Low academic achievement in primary school (10- 12) / learning disability (10-12) / peers involved in crime and/or anti-social behaviour (7-9; 10-12).
 - Children and young people in the neighbourhood involved in crime and/or anti-social behaviour (10-12).
- 3.3 For more information, see the following publications: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy> and [WSCP - children affected by gang and serious violence](#).
- 3.4 Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as County Lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

A number of the indicators for Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in County Lines. Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in County Lines are children who:

- go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from their home.
- have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (eg, knife crime).

4 Child Abuse Linked to Faith and Belief

- 4.1 Our policy recognises the ‘National Action Plan to Tackle Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief’ which describes this abuse as:
- ‘not about challenging people’s beliefs, but where beliefs lead to abuse that must not be tolerated. This includes belief in witchcraft, spirit possession, demons or the devil, the evil eye or djinns, dakini, kindoki, ritual or muti murders and use of fear of the supernatural to make children comply with being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation. The beliefs which are not confined to one faith, nationality or ethnic community.’*
- 4.2 When this type of abuse is suspected, staff will make a referral to Wirral Integrated Front Door (IFD – 0151 606 2008) for support and guidance. School may request the advice and support of MEAS service in making their assessments. For more information: <http://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/calfb/>.
- 4.3 Savera UK are a Liverpool based charity which specifically targets harmful practices, including FGM, Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage: <https://www.saverauk.co.uk/>.

5 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

- 5.1 The Modern Slavery Act 2015 is an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It is designed to combat modern slavery in the UK and consolidates previous offences relating to trafficking and slavery. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/modern-slavery-bill> The definition of human trafficking is:
- (a) “Trafficking of persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat of or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.
 - (b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in sub-paragraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used.
 - (c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in sub-paragraph (a) of this article. “Child” shall mean any person under 18 years of age.
- 5.2 Children trafficked into the country may be registered at a school for a term or longer, before being moved to another part of the UK or abroad. This pattern of registration and de-registration may be an indicator that a child has been trafficked. It has been identified as a particular concern in schools which are situated near ports of entry, but practitioners should be alert to this possibility in all schools. However, practitioners should always bear in mind that not all children who go missing from education have been victims of trafficking. For example, there may be instances of children from communities that move around – Gypsy, Roma, traveller or migrant families – who collectively go missing from school.
- 5.3 If a member of the school staff suspects that a child may have been trafficked they should act immediately to inform the DSL and ensure that police or local authority children’s social care are contacted immediately. The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support. To access support, [click here](#).

6 Risks Associated with Parent / Carer Mental Health

- 6.1 The majority of parents who suffer mental ill-health are able to care for and safeguard their children and/or unborn child. Some parents, however, will be unable to meet the needs and ensure the safety of their children. The school will follow the guidance outlined in [Think child, think parent, think family: a guide to parental mental health and child welfare](#).
- 6.2 Our approach is to recognise, seek support, instil preventive factors and monitor. The Integrated Front Door can provide links and support with Wirral Adult Social Care if required. The DSL should seek support through Team Around the Family (TAF) with family support but escalate to the Integrated Front Door if they are concerned that the child involved is being placed at immediate risk of harm. The offer includes mental health support services: <https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/professionals/what-is-early-help/>.

7 Drugs and Alcohol

- 7.1 Children can be at risk of drugs and alcohol directly and indirectly. They may be at direct risk of having access to these substances (see guidance on gangs) or indirectly because they affect family life at home through use by parents/carers, siblings, child-minders, etc. Risks associated with drugs and alcohol are built into the school PSHE and Science curriculum. The most up-to-date Wirral

School Drugs Policy can be found here: <https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/school-drug-policy/> and more information can be found at: <https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/substance-misuse/>.

8 Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriages

8.1 Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage refers to a collection of practices used to control behaviour within families to protect perceived cultural or religious beliefs and honour. Violence can occur when offenders perceive that a relative has shamed the family or community by breaking their 'code of honour'. Honour Based Violence cuts across all cultures and communities: Turkish, Kurdish, Afghani, South Asian, African, Middle Eastern, South and Eastern European, for example. This is not an exhaustive list. Where a culture is heavily male dominated, Honour Based Violence may exist.

8.2 'A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not (or, in the case of some vulnerable adults, cannot) consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. The age to marry has been raised to the age of 18 (February 2023). It is now a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their 18th birthday, even if violence, threats, or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages (KCSIE 2024).

8.3 For more information see:

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/when-things-go-wrong/forced-marriage/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-right-to-choose-government-guidance-on-forced-marriage>

<http://www.karmanirvana.org.uk/>

9 Managing Allegations Against Staff

9.1 **The Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations (LADO) must be told of allegations against adults working with children and young people within 24 hours.** The Chair of Governors should refer to this guidance if there is an allegation against the Headteacher. This includes all cases that meet the harms threshold where a person is alleged to have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child.
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child.
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The last bullet point above includes behaviour that may have happened outside school that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children; this is known as transferable risk. Where appropriate, an assessment of transferable risk to children with whom the person works should be undertaken. If in doubt, advice should be sought from the LADO.

9.2 There are two levels of allegation/concern:

1. Allegations that may meet the harms threshold (see definition above)
2. Allegation/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold – referred to in the guidance as 'low level concerns' (see KCSIE 2024).

Governing bodies and proprietors should have policies and processes to deal with concerns (including allegations) which do not meet the harm threshold. Concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example, suspicion, complaint or disclosure made by a child,

parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation, or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

It is important that schools have appropriate policies and processes in place to manage and record any such concerns and take appropriate action to safeguard children.

Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harms threshold are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical.

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO. Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- humiliating students

Such concerns such always be recorded and reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

9.3 The Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations (LADO) in Wirral is **Pamela Cope** / Education LADO is **Angela Reeve**.

Email any referral and / or consultation form to: safeguardingunit@wirral.gov.uk and kerrywilliams@wirral.gov.uk.

If judged appropriate during the initial contact with the LADO, an Allegations Referral Form must be completed by the senior manager in full and forwarded to the LADO via email within 24 hours. LADO referral form, flowcharts and information can be accessed here: <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/lado-allegations>

The LADO procedure does not replace safeguarding procedures and the **Integrated Front Door (IFD@wirral.gov.uk)** must be contacted if you have a safeguarding concern about a child. If you require advice about the school's response to an allegation please address this with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. Alternatively, you may contact the Integrated Front Door yourself.

The LADO can only provide advice and guidance regarding allegations in relation to a person in a position of trust. Any general safeguarding enquiries or concerns should be reported to Wirral Integrated Front Door on 0151 606 2008 or 0151 677 6557 out of hours.

10 Preventing Radicalisation

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of schools' wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse. During the process of radicalisation, it is possible to intervene to prevent 'susceptible' people being radicalised.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Specific background factors may contribute to 'susceptibility' which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people. As with

managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may need help or protection. School staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include making a referral to the Channel programme.

- 10.1 **Prevent** – from 1 July 2015 all schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 ('The CTSA 2015'). Schools must have regard to statutory Prevent guidance issued under section 29 of the CTSA 2015. Paragraphs 57-76 of the Prevent guidance are concerned specifically with schools' responsibility for the need to prevent young people being drawn into terrorism. This duty is known as the Prevent duty and it applies to a wide range of public-facing bodies.

The statutory Prevent guidance summarises the requirements on schools in terms of four general themes:

- risk assessment
- working in partnership
- staff training
- IT policies

Schools are expected to **assess the risk** of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology. This means being able to demonstrate both a general understanding of the risks affecting children and young people in the area and a specific understanding of how to identify individual children who may be at risk of radicalisation and what to do to support them. Schools should have clear procedures in place for protecting children at risk of radicalisation. **It is not necessary for schools to have distinct policies on implementing the Prevent duty.** The Prevent duty builds on **existing local partnership arrangements**; for example, governing bodies of all schools should ensure that their safeguarding arrangements take into account the policies and procedures of Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs).

The Single Point Contact for Sefton, Wirral & St Helens is Claire Wright, claire.wright@liverpool.gov.uk. All assessments are to be carried via Integrated Front Door. DSLs and other senior leaders should familiarise themselves with the [Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales](#).

The Prevent guidance refers to the importance of Prevent **awareness training** to equip staff to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. Individual schools are best placed to assess the training needs of staff in light of their assessment of the risk to students at the school of being drawn into terrorism. As a minimum, however, schools should ensure that the DSL undertakes Prevent awareness training and is able to provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation. To assist, the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership has produced the following '7 minute briefing' on Prevent: <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/7-minute-briefings/>.

Schools must ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when **accessing the internet** in schools. Schools should ensure that suitable filtering is in place. It is also important that schools teach students about online safety more generally. Further information and guidance is available on the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership website: <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/radicalisation-and-extremism/>.

The Department for Education has also published advice for schools on the Prevent duty that is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts other sources of advice and support: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty>.

- 10.2 **Channel** – school staff should understand when it is appropriate to make a referral to the Channel team. Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being 'susceptible' to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be 'susceptible' to radicalisation. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

Section 36 of the CTSA 2015 places a duty on local authorities to ensure Channel panels are in place. The panel must be chaired by the local authority and include the police for the relevant local authority area. Following a referral, the panel will assess the extent to which identified individuals are 'susceptible' to being drawn into terrorism, and, where considered appropriate and necessary consent is obtained, arrange for support to be provided to those individuals. Section 38 of the CTSA 2015 requires partners of Channel panels to co-operate with the panel in the carrying out of its functions and with the police in providing information about a referred individual. Schools are required to have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education and, as partners, are required to cooperate with local Channel panels. Channel guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-and-prevent-multi-agency-panel-pmap-guidance>

[More on Channel and Prevent Process from Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

11 Child Missing Education

- 11.1 All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any Special Educational Needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area, or those 'unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education'.
- 11.2 A child going [missing from education](#) is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, or those 'unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education', particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.
- 11.3 Schools should put in place appropriate policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly children who are 'absent' from education, particularly on repeat occasions or for prolonged periods. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
- 11.4 The law requires all schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all students are boarders, an attendance register. All students must be placed on both registers. An appropriated response is needed when a child has poor attendance or is regularly missing education, or those 'unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education'. The Department for Education's missing education guidance can be found here: [Missing Education](#).
- 11.5 All schools must inform the Local Authority of any student who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:
- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system (for example, home education).
 - have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered.
 - have been certified by an appropriate medical practitioner as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
 - are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period.
 - have been permanently excluded.
- 11.6 The Local Authority must be notified when a school is to delete a student from its register under the above circumstances **by contacting the Admissions team (0151 666 4600)**. This should be done

as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting the student's name from the register. It is essential that schools comply with this duty, so that the Local Authority can, as part of its duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, or those 'unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education', follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

- 11.7 All schools must inform the Local Authority of any student who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the Local Authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).

12 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and County Lines

- 12.1 **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** – CSE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside of home, and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

All staff, but especially the DSL and Deputy DSLs 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), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.

The department has provided the following guidance: [Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners](#).

A full list of indicators can be found here: <https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/child-exploitation/>.

- 12.2 **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)** – while there is still no legal definition of 'Child Criminal Exploitation' or CCE, it is increasingly being recognised as a major factor behind crime in communities across Merseyside and the UK, while also simultaneously victimising vulnerable young people and leaving them at risk of harm. A simple definition of CCE is: CCE often occurs without the victim being aware that they are being exploited and involves young people being encouraged, cajoled or threatened to carry out crime for the benefit of others. In return, they are offered friendship or peer acceptance, but also cigarettes, drugs (especially cannabis), alcohol or even food and accommodation.

- 12.3 **County Lines** – this is a term used to describe gangs, groups or drug networks that supply drugs from urban to suburban areas across the country, including market and coastal towns, using dedicated mobile phone lines or 'deal lines'. They exploit children and vulnerable adults to move the drugs and money to and from the urban area, and to store the drugs in local markets. They will often use intimidation, violence and weapons, including knives, corrosives and firearms. County Lines is a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and missing persons. The response to tackle it involves the police, the National Crime Agency, a wide range of Government departments, local government agencies and voluntary and community sector organisations. County Lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing and exploitation has a devastating impact on young people,

vulnerable adults and local communities. Further information and PAN Merseyside CE / CCE documentation can be found here: <https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/child-criminal-exploitation-and-county-lines/>.

12.4 Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females and children or adults.

The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited, even when activity appears consensual. As well as being physical, the exploitation can be facilitated and/or take place online.

12.5 Further information and documentation can be found here: <https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/child-exploitation/>

13 Sexual Harassment & Violence, Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), and Harmful Sexual Behaviours (inc. child-on-child abuse and 'upskirting')

13.1 Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence refers to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, including rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault.

13.2 It is important that schools are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

13.3 Staff must challenge any form of derogatory and sexualised language or behaviour. Staff should be vigilant to sexualised / aggressive touching / grabbing. DfE guidance situates sexual violence, sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour in the context of developing a whole-school safeguarding culture, where sexual misconduct is seen as unacceptable, and not 'banter' or an inevitable part of growing up. Advice about tackling and reporting sexual harassment in schools can be found in [KCSIE 2024](#).

13.4 The Wirral Youth Justice Service has developed a multi-agency harmful sexual behaviours identification tool to help professionals determine and assess the level of sexual behaviours being displayed by a child. The tool and associated guidance set out for different age ranges what are expected and normal behaviours, what are inappropriate or concerning, and what are likely to be harmful. For each level of behaviour the tool provides clear advice about how to respond. Click here for the [Wirral Identification Tool](#).

13.5 It should be recognised that these issues are likely to occur, and so schools should have procedures in place to deal with them. Groups at particular risk include girls, students who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender+ (LGBT+), or are perceived by peers to be LGBT+, and students with SEND. We recognise that these children can be targeted by other children, so it is vital your school provide a safe space for these children to speak out and share their concerns with members of staff. Students are protected from 'upskirting', bullying, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic behaviour, racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination.

13.6 Violence against women and girls (VAWG) refers to a range of crimes, with the common theme that they disproportionately affect women and girls. The Wirral Domestic Abuse Alliance and the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership have published the [Wirral Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls](#) strategy. This strategy has been developed to help professionals identify, prevent and respond to all gender-based violence. The strategy includes a comprehensive local delivery plan, and with its emphasis on prevention and education involves closer work with schools.

13.7 Our school acknowledges the need to treat everyone equally, with fairness, dignity and respect. Any discriminatory behaviours are challenged, and children are supported to understand how to treat others with respect. We also have a statutory duty to report and record any of the above incidents. Schools must record incidents across the whole spectrum of sexual violence, sexual harassment, and harmful sexualised behaviours so that they can understand the scale of the problem in their own schools and make appropriate plans to reduce it.

All such incidents should be immediately reported to the DSL or a deputy and will be managed in line with the school's child protection policies and procedures. Victims of harm will be supported by the school's pastoral system and, their wishes and feelings considered, and it will be explained that the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them, not criminalise them.

13.8 The DSL should be familiar with the full guidance from the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS), 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>.

13.9 **Upskirting** – 'upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender can be a victim. The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019.

13.10 **What is consent?** Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another; for example, to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. Further information about consent can be found here: [Rape Crisis England & Wales](#).

13.11 **Sexual Consent** – a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity. The age of consent is 16.

14 Digital Safety, Remote Learning & Filtering and Monitoring

14.1 The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Where child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and/or sexual predation occur, technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm. An effective approach to online safety empowers a school to protect and educate the whole school community in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene and escalate any incident where appropriate.

14.2 The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into three areas of risk:

- Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material
- contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users
- conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm.

- 14.3 The school has several digital safety policies (including the ICT Acceptable Use Policy and E-Safety Policy) which cover the use of mobile phones, cameras and other digital recording devices. The policies reinforce the importance of online safety, including making parents aware of what school ask children to do online (for example, sites they need to visit or who they will be interacting with online).
- 14.4 For online safety, students are not permitted to use their mobile phones in school, preventing them accessing the internet using data on their phones (3G or 4G networks).
- 14.5 **Filtering and monitoring** – the Governing Body and senior leadership do all that they reasonably can to limit children’s exposure to the above risks from the school’s IT system. As part of this process, the Governing Body ensures the school has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and that they are regularly reviewed.
- 14.6 Whilst considering their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, the Governing Body considers the age range of students, the number of students, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs vs risks. Additional support documents from the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership can be found here: [digital safety](#).
- 14.7 The appropriateness of any filters and monitoring systems are a matter for individual schools and will be informed, in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty. The UK Safer Internet Centre has published guidance as to what “appropriate” filtering and monitoring might look like: [UK Safer Internet Centre: appropriate filtering and monitoring](#). There is guidance below designed to help parents and carers to keep their children as safe as possible when online: <https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/online-safety-guidance-parents/>.
- 14.8 All staff are to understand their role in the published standards for 'Filtering and Monitoring' and the DSL has a 'lead responsibility'. The standards can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/filtering-and-monitoring-standards-for-schools-and-colleges>.
- 14.9 The school maintains the capability to provide remote education when it is not possible for some or all of their students to attend in person. This will be delivered in accordance with the school’s e-safety procedures and DfE best practice guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providing-remote-education-guidance-for-schools>.

15 Pre-Appointment Checks and Safer Recruitment

- 15.1 Any offer of appointment made to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, must be conditional on satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-employment checks.
- 15.2 When appointing new staff, the school will:
- verify a candidate’s identity (identification checking guidelines can be found on the GOV.UK website).
 - obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity).
 - obtain a separate barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available.
 - recognise that the ‘relationships and associations’ that staff have in school and outside (including online), may have an implication for the safeguarding of children in the school. Where this is the case, the member of staff must speak to the school (Childcare Act 2006 – as amended).
 - verify the candidate’s mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. A job applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role.

- verify the person's right to work in the UK. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, advice on the GOV.UK website will be followed.
- if the person has lived or worked outside the UK, make any further checks the school considers appropriate and verify professional qualifications, as appropriate.
- carry out prohibition check for all staff with QTS.
- complete a risk assessment for each volunteer to decide whether they need to do an enhanced DBS check or not. (Please note, even if it is decided an enhanced DBS is to be requested, if the volunteer is not in regulated activity, then school is not legally allowed to do a barred list check).
- carry out an online search of shortlisted candidates as part of due diligence (and informing them of this prior to any searches) to help identify any issues that are publicly available online.

The Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021 extended safeguarding provisions to providers of post 16 Education: 16-19 Academies, Special Post-16 institutions and Independent Training Providers.

15.3 The school Safer Recruitment Policy should focus on ensuring potential applicants are given the right messages about the school's commitment to recruit suitable people. Further safer recruitment guidance can be found in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2024\)](#).

16 Single Central Record (SCR)

16.1 The school keeps a SCR containing information about all staff (including supply staff, and teacher trainees on salaried routes) who work at the school. The information that must be recorded in respect of staff members (including teacher trainees on salaried route) is whether the following checks have been carried out or certificates obtained, and the date on which each check was completed / certificate obtained:

- An identity check / a barred list check / an enhanced DBS check/certificate / a prohibition from teaching check.
- Further checks on people who have lived or worked outside the UK; this would include recording checks for those EEA teacher sanctions and restrictions.
- A check of professional qualifications; and a check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom.

16.2 For supply staff, school will include whether written confirmation that the employment business supplying the member of supply staff has carried out the relevant checks and obtained the appropriate certificates, whether any enhanced DBS check certificate has been provided in respect of the member of supply staff, and the date that confirmation was received.

16.3 A record of staff leavers will be maintained on the SCR.

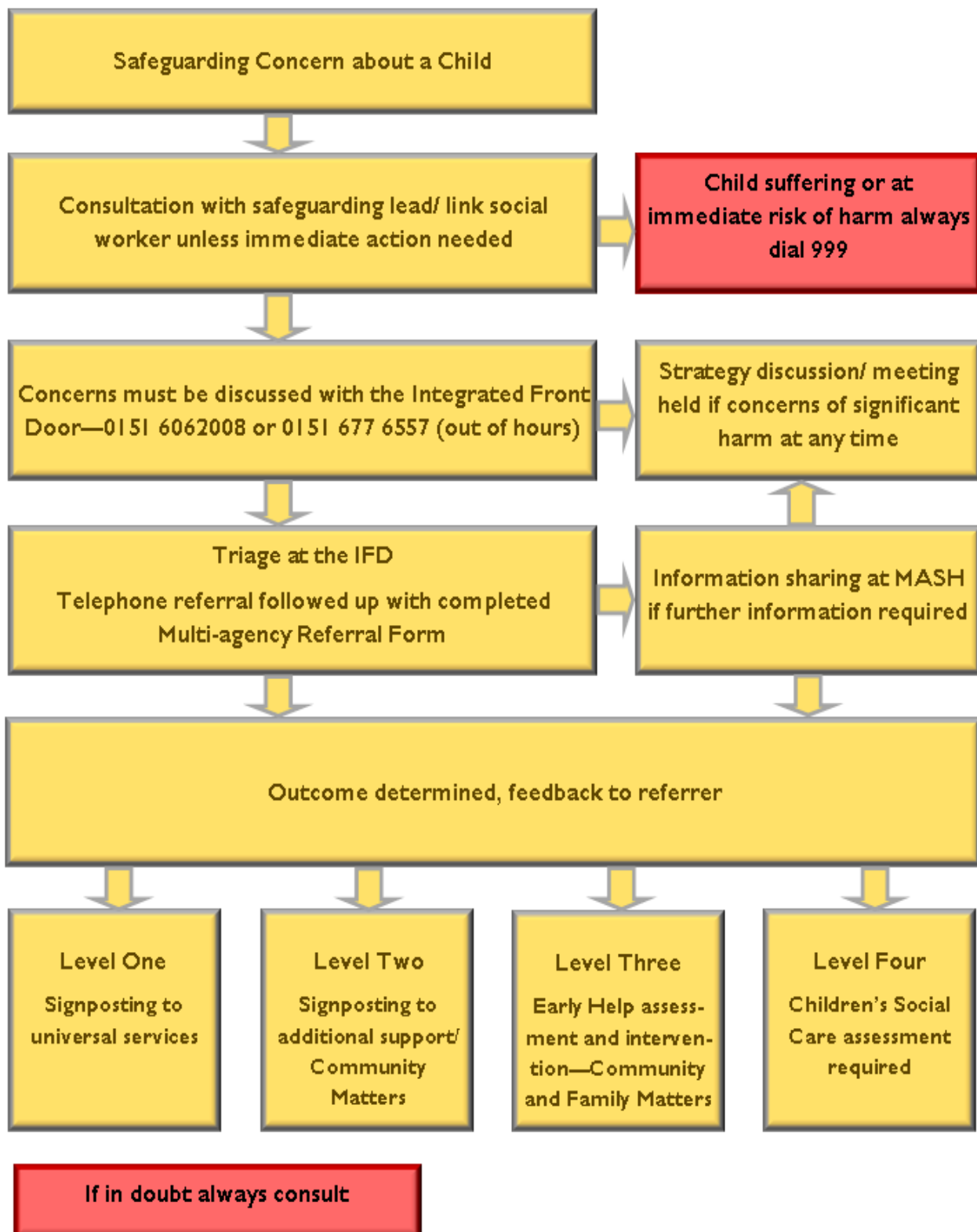
16.4 Trustees / Governors are required to have an enhanced criminal records certificate from the DBS. It is the responsibility of the Trust Board / Governing Body to apply for the certificate for any of their Governors who does not already have one. Governance is not a regulated activity and so they do not need a barred list check unless, in addition to their governance duties, they also engage in regulated activity.

16.5 The school will maintain a record of checks undertaken by staff employed by contractors who regularly work on site (including caretaking, catering and cleaning staff).

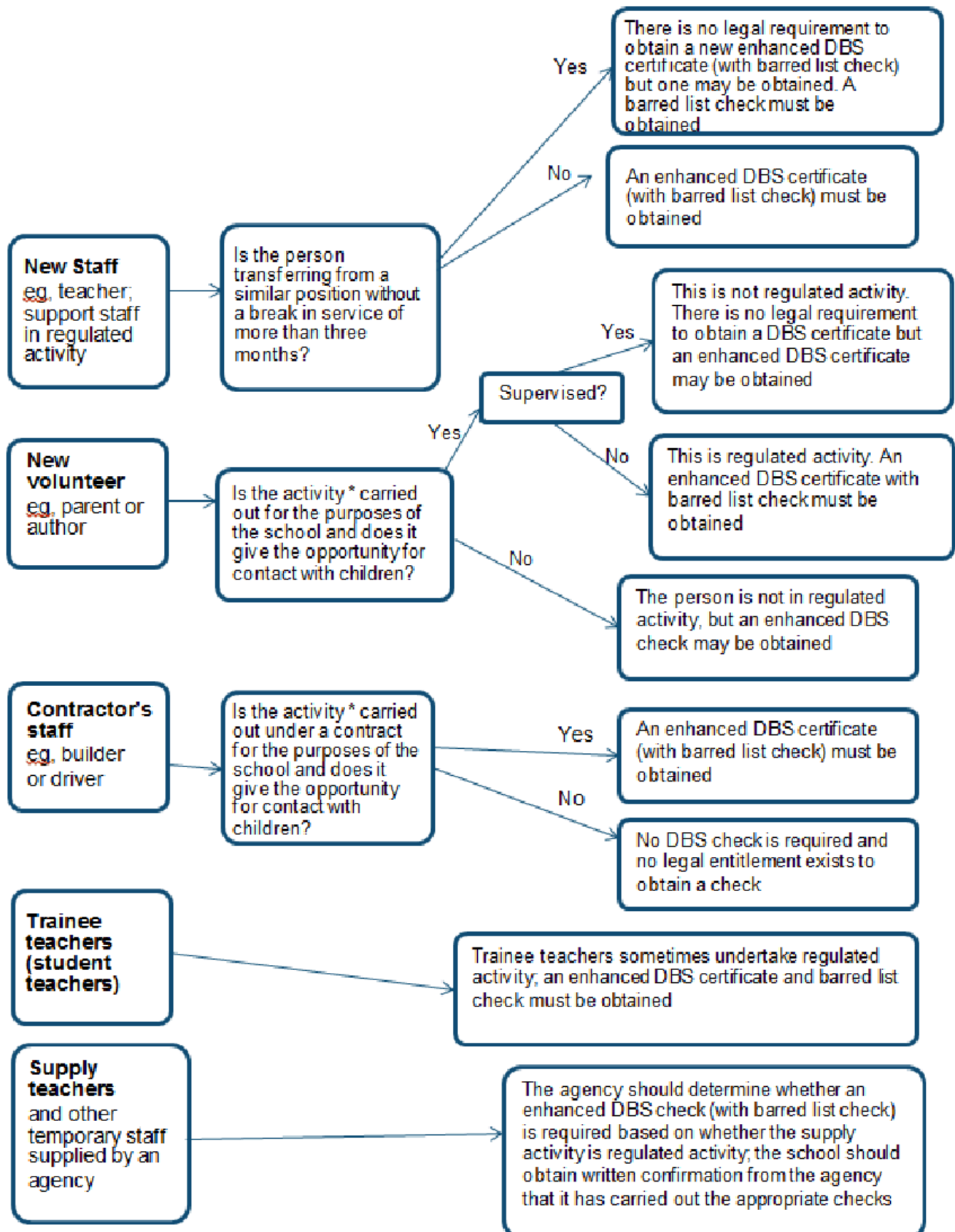
16.6 The SCR shall be updated in the light of any further legislation.

16.7 Where school premises are used for non-school activities, those providers are expected to meet the guidance in [Keeping Children Safe in Out of School Settings](#).

Actions to take when there are safeguarding concerns about a child

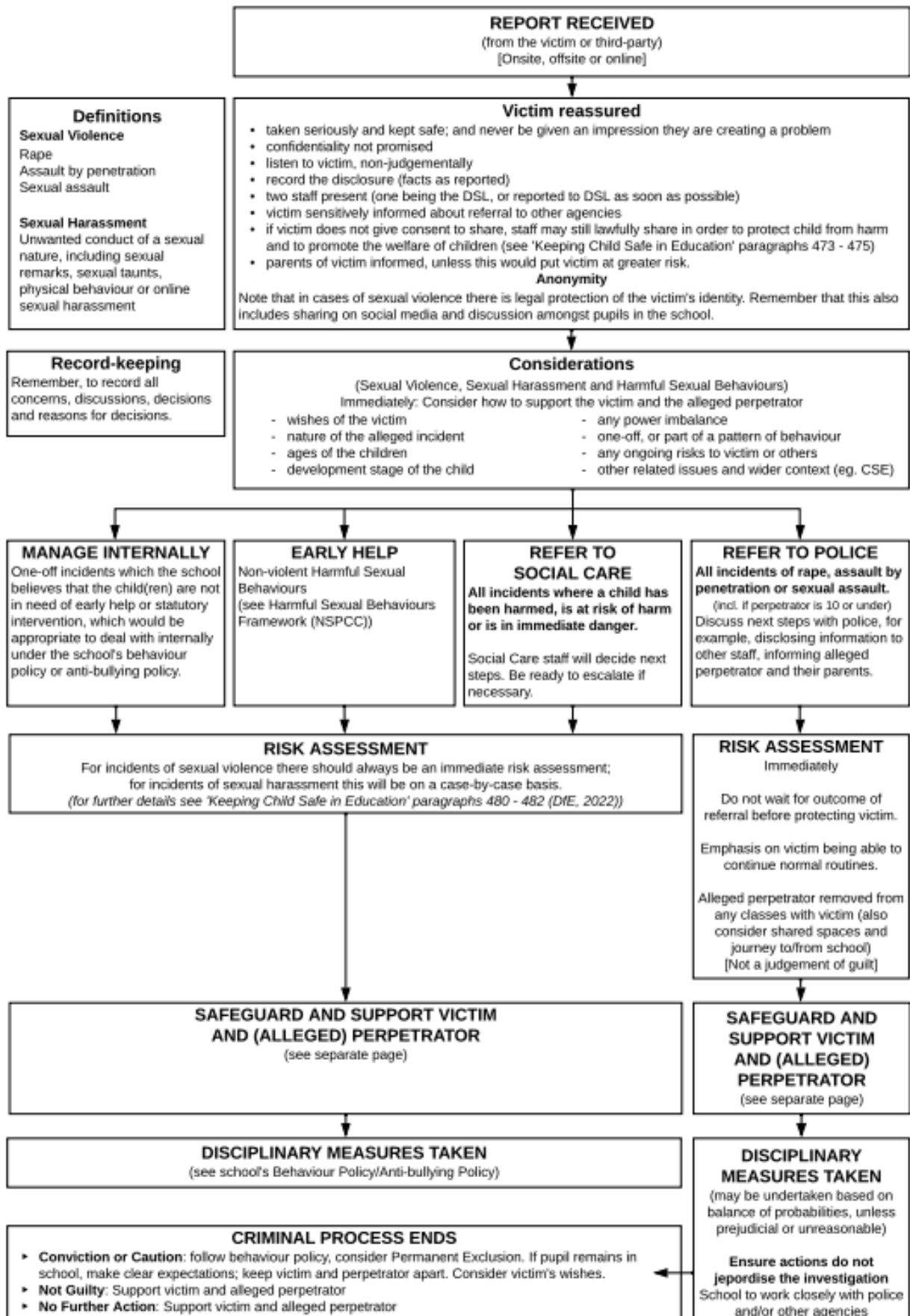


Flowchart of Disclosure and Barring Service Criminal Record Checks and Barred List Checks



* Activities listed under the guidance's definition of regulated activity and which are carried out 'frequently'

***PART FIVE: CHILD-ON-CHILD SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT**



LADO FLOWCHART

STAGE ONE

WORKING TOGETHER TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN 2018 REQUIRES EMPLOYERS TO INFORM LADO WITHIN ONE WORKING DAY OF BECOMING AWARE OF AN ALLEGATION.

IF YOU SUSPECT A CHILD IS AT RISK OF IMMEDIATE HARM CONTACT IFD AND / OR MERSEYSIDE POLICE VIA 101 EMPLOYER TO COMPLETE LADO CONSULTATION FORM AND SEND TO safeguardingunit@wirral.gov.uk LINK TO WIRRAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP WHERE LADO INFORMATION AND FORMS ARE AVAILABLE.
<https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/professionals/lado-allegations/>

LADO WILL LIAISE WITH EMPLOYER AND POLICE AND MAKE A DECISION ON WHETHER THE CONCERNS MEET THE THRESHOLD FOR FORMAL LADO INVESTIGATION.

IF THRESHOLD IS NOT MET CONSULTATION WILL BE CLOSED AT THIS STAGE. LADO WILL RECORD DECISION ON CONSULTATION FORM AND RETURN TO EMPLOYER

IF THRESHOLD IS MET EMPLOYER WILL BE REQUESTED TO COMPLETE LADO REFERRAL FORM



STAGE TWO

LADO WILL CONVENE A LADO MANAGEMENT OF ALLEGATIONS MEETING WITHIN FIVE WORKING DAYS

AT THIS MEETING THE PLAN OF INVESTIGATION WILL BE AGREED TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ANY POLICE INVESTIGATION AND SAFEGUARDING ACTIONS WILL BE CONFIRMED.

TIMEFRAME WILL BE AGREED AND SUPPORT TO THE EMPLOYEE WILL BE CONFIRMED.

EMPLOYER TO UPDATE LADO DURING INVESTIGATION.

EMPLOYER TO INVOKE DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES IF APPROPRIATE.



STAGE THREE.

LADO CLOSURE MEETING HELD AND WILL INVOLVE ALL APPROPRIATE PROFESSIONALS WHERE THE EMPLOYER WILL PRESENT THEIR FINDINGS/ACTIONS.

OUTCOME TO THE LADO PROCESS AGREED BY ALL PROFESSIONALS.

SUBSTANTIATED - There is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation that a child has been harmed or there is a risk of harm.

UNFOUNDED - There is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.
It might indicate that the person making the allegation misinterpreted the incident or was mistaken about what they saw. Alternatively, they may not have been aware of all the circumstances.
The chair of the meeting / discussion should make a record of the agreed outcome and forward this to the employer

UNSUBSTANTIATED - There is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence

MALICIOUS - There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive. The police should be asked to consider what action may be appropriate in these circumstances

FALSE ALLEGATIONS - There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
There is no evidence to suggest that there was a deliberate intention to deceive.
False allegations may be an indicator of abuse elsewhere which requires further exploration. If an allegation is demonstrably false, the employer, in consultation with the LADO, should refer the matter to local authority children's social care to determine whether the child is in need of services, or might have been abused by someone else.

CLOSURE MEETING WILL AGREE ON DBS REFERRAL IF APPROPRIATE AND CLOSURE LETTER TO EMPLOYEE.

Early Help - On a Page

<https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/professionals/what-is-early-help/>

Early Help & Prevention Offer	All People	Some People	Specific People	
	Global Prevention	Focused Prevention	Targeted Early Support	Reactive Intervention
What are we aiming to do?	Provide education and encouragement to empower children, young people and families	Prevent anticipated need arising by supporting children, young people and families	Meet needs and reduce the likelihood of referral to Children's Services	Deliver focused activity to reduce the need for Children's Social Care intervention
Who?	All children and young people	Children and young people belonging to a vulnerable group	Children and young people at level 2 on the continuum of need	Children and young people at level 3 on the continuum of need
How will we know about them?	Universal coverage with opportunity for self-identification/selection	Identification through universal access, data analysis and insight	Professional identification and referral to Community Matters	Professional identification and referral to Family Matters and/or Children's Services
What will we do	Partnership approach to providing a wide range of activities, information, advice and guidance	Partnership approach to providing a wide range of preventative activity, signposting and guidance	Partnership Early Help Episode: Lead Worker, EHAT, Family Plan	LA Early Help Episode: Lead Worker, EHAT, Family Plan
Who will do this?	Partnership offer: published on WSCB website, the Hive Youth Zone, Healthy Child Programme, 3 and 4 year old funding for early education LA Services: Children's Centre Universal Offer, Play Services Youth Hubs and Hubs, Health Services in Schools	Partnership offer: published on WSCB website, 2 year old funding for early education LA Services: Early Years Family Workers, Children's Centre Groups, Health Services in Schools 1:1s and Parent Education, Creative Youth Development, Alcohol and Substance Education	Community Matters services: WEB, WIRED, Safer Wirral Hub, Caritas, Fender Community Hub, The Open Door Centre LA Services: Early Years Portage Team, Detached Youth Work, Youth Projects- GIRLS, LADS, Life Skills	Family Matters services: Targeted Family Support, Pre-Birth & Infant Team, Adolescent Response Team, Family Group Conferencing LA Services: Alcohol & Substance Misuse Work, Counselling,
How? Methods/model?	Range of activities provided through the Children's Centre What's On guides, guided play sessions; open access to youth hubs and clubs with a range of activities, advice and guidance, drop in sessions for all secondary school pupils	Range of parenting programmes, 1:1 support, peer support, parent education sessions, theatre and arts activity, briefings, multi-agency workshops, partnership with schools	Partnership Early Help Episode: Lead Worker, EHAT, Family Plan underpinned by SFEF Community Matters services: parenting, mental health support, advocacy, family support, debt advice, health & wellbeing, whole-family approach	Early Help Episode: Lead Worker, EHAT, Family Plan underpinned by SFEF Family Matters services: parenting, reducing conflict, family mediation, 1:1 support; 1:1 nurture programme, 1:1 gateway programme, housing advice, whole-family support plan, co-ordination of multi-agency approach
How will we know the impact?	Data on engagement: registrations, reach, contact, sustained contact, evaluations from children, young people and families	Increase in early help activity, reduction in contacts to Children's Social Care, evaluations from children, young people and families	Reduction in contacts to Children's Social Care, cases closing with needs met, family evaluations	Reduction in referrals to Children's Social Care, progress of step downs, cases closing with needs met, family evaluations

Children, young people and families are at the heart of our services - We will ensure that we engage with children, young people and families to improve and co-produce future service provision.