



Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

This document reflects current legislation and statutory guidance in relation to child protection and safeguarding in school and education settings.

This policy sits alongside the following suggested model policy documents written for schools in Knowsley:

Model Allegations Management Policy, September 2026

Model Safer Recruitment Policy, September 2026

2026 – 2027

Date written:	October 2026
Date agreed by Governors:	October 2026
Date to review:	October 2027

‘LEARNING FOR LIFE’

At Whiston Willis Primary Academy, we are a safe, happy and inclusive community where everyone is valued, respected and celebrated. We embrace difference and promote equity, ensuring that every child feels a strong sense of belonging and has the support, opportunities and encouragement they need to thrive.

We have high expectations for every child and are committed to enabling all pupils to reach their full potential academically, socially and emotionally. Through an ambitious, inclusive and engaging curriculum, we develop knowledge, skills and understanding while nurturing curiosity, confidence, independence and a love of learning.

We believe that every child should have a voice. Through purposeful talk, active listening and respectful dialogue, we empower our pupils to express their ideas, listen to others, challenge themselves and participate confidently in their learning and the wider world.

We are committed to developing the whole child. Through positive relationships, shared values and a strong sense of community, we support our pupils to become resilient, respectful and compassionate individuals who understand their responsibilities towards others and approach their future with a strong moral purpose.

Learning is a lifelong journey. We aim to inspire motivated, independent and reflective learners who are equipped with the knowledge, character and confidence to embrace opportunities, overcome challenges and make a positive contribution to an ever-changing world.

1. Purpose and Status

The aim of this school policy is to promote a safe environment where safeguarding concerns in relation to a child can be managed in an appropriate way.

Whiston Willis Primary Academy acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice standards and Ofsted requirements.

Para 2.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. 'Children' means everyone under the age of 18. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, Sept 2026

1.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Concerns about adults and senior leaders:

Staff must promptly report allegations and low-level concerns about adults in accordance with the current Wade Deacon Trust allegations management, staff code of conduct and whistleblowing arrangements. Concerns about the Principal must be raised directly with the designated Trust recipient or other authorised independent contact, not with the Principal. Concerns about the DSL must be referred through a route that bypasses the DSL where appropriate. Where the harm threshold may be met, the case manager must consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in line with statutory guidance; staff must not undertake their own investigation.

WWPA and Wade Deacon Trust governance:

Whiston Willis Primary Academy is part of Wade Deacon Trust. The Trust Board, as proprietor, retains overall accountability for safeguarding. The Principal is responsible for implementing safeguarding arrangements within the academy, while the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), supported by appropriately trained deputies, leads day-to-day safeguarding and child protection procedures.

The Trust Board provides strategic oversight of safeguarding, with responsibilities delegated to the Local Governing Body in accordance with the Trust's current Scheme of Delegation.

The academy maintains up-to-date safeguarding contact arrangements, including the Trust's designated safeguarding representative, the academy's safeguarding governor or link representative, and the appropriate escalation routes for concerns involving senior leaders. These arrangements are communicated to staff and reviewed whenever responsibilities or personnel change.

All Staff:

All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn. They should be able to identify children who may benefit from community-based Family Help, by providing early support as soon as the problem emerges at any point in a child life from foundation years to the teenage years. The aim is to prevent the concerns escalating.

All staff will be aware of the school safeguarding support systems which include understanding their professional responsibilities detailed in the school Staff behaviour/code of conduct for staff policy. All staff should understand that behaviours displayed by children can be an indication of their emotional wellbeing and can be linked to mental health.

Behaviours displayed may communicate poor wellbeing, and *may* be an indicator of factors such as abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff should understand the children's experiences such of abuse, neglect, trauma, can impact on children's mental health, behaviour & education.

All staff should know the process for making a child protection referral into Knowsley MASH, including the information required to share and the expectation of the role they will be expected to fill. In the absence of a DSL or Principal being available, staff must not delay in directly contacting Children Social Care via the Knowsley MASH.

When staff have safeguarding concerns they should speak to the DSL/DDSL, or Principal (in the absence of a DSL) first to agree a course of action. In situations where the DSL/Principal may not be available, staff may contact the Knowsley School Safeguarding service via schoolsafeguarding@knowsley.gov.uk for advice and guidance.

All staff should have an awareness that Children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful.

Designate Safeguarding Leads and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads:

The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding. They should have the appropriate status and authority within the school to effectively carry out the duties of the post.

DSL's and deputies will:

- Be available during term time to discuss any safeguarding concerns with staff;
- Be the key person who manages referrals to Children's Social Care via the Knowsley MASH and Family/Early Help;
- Report to the Police as required, where a crime may have been committed. NSPCC Guidance When to Call the Police. [NSPCC When to Call the Police](#);
- Refer cases to the Channel Programme where there is a concern regarding radicalisation and support staff who make referrals to the Channel Programme;
- Work with others, including offering support and advice to all staff and acting as a point of contact with safeguarding partners;
- Share information and manage the child protection files, including the transfer of school records and child protection information;
- Raise awareness with staff of the school safeguarding policies and procedures, as well as ensuring these documents are available publicly;
- Provide support to staff ensuring that they are supported during the referrals process, and supporting them to consider how safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked, including the provision of academic and pastoral support;
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and understand the difficulties they may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication;
- Raise awareness of 'Low Level' concerns and be the point of contact for staff to share any 'low level' concerns they may have regarding an adult in the school/education setting;
- Take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection including online safety, understanding the filtering and monitoring the systems and processes in place.

The school, in line with KCSiE, 26 guidance, has in place a process for ensuring adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for out of hours/ out of term activities.

Contact	Name	Email
Out of Hours	Jill Watkins (DSL)	j.watkins@whistonwillis.co.uk
	Ian Cooper (DDSL)	i.cooper@whistonwillis.co.uk
	Leah Weaver (DDSL)	l.weaver@whistonwillis.co.uk
Out of Term Time	Jill Watkins (DSL) Ian Cooper (DDSL)	Staff are provided with phone numbers via the school contact list.

1.2 Equalities

Inclusive Safeguarding: As an inclusive UNICEF Gold Rights Respecting School, Whiston Willis Primary Academy listens to children and provides accessible ways to communicate concerns. Staff consider reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND, communication needs or disabilities and avoid attributing possible signs of abuse solely to a child's diagnosis or additional needs. The academy's Behaviour & Relationships Policy, SEND arrangements, Jigsaw PSHE/RSHE, Zones of Regulation and pupil voice opportunities complement but do not replace statutory safeguarding processes.

In line with the Equality Act 2010, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity or sexual orientation.

This policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that, regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, all children have a positive and enjoyable experience of activities at school in a safe child centred environment. In addition, ensuring the protection of children from abuse whilst participating in education wherever such learning/activity takes place.

Public Section Equality Duty places a general duty on schools, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, while advancing the equality and foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

Within this policy, the understanding is that some children, including children with special education needs and disabilities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and neglect. In this policy we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare and consider extra pastoral support for children with SEN and disabilities.

It is understood that:

Para. 247

"...additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudiced based bullying) than other children;
- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs;
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges risks that they do not understand that what is happening to them is abuse,
- the need for intimate care so that these children are isolated from others,
- that these children are more likely to be dependent on adults for care, and
- these children may have issues over cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges, or the consequences of doing so.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026

Vulnerable children may also include those:

- At risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs.

- Absent from education.
- Children who are in care, previously looked after or any children not growing up with their birth family (this covers private fostering and all kinship arrangements)
- Whose parent/carers has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated.

Through this safeguarding child protection policy, and in accordance with **Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026**, we will:

- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all children up to the age of 18;
- Ensure everyone, staff, pupils and parents understand their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and child protection;
- Ensure all staff have read Part 1 of the Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026 Guidance document, in full and have completed a signed record to say they have done so;
- Ensure everyone has appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people;
- Ensure in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse, appropriate action is taken in line with local procedures, and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose a concern;
- Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding and child protection concerns are maintained and securely stored and transferred securely following the agreed procedure;
- Prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals;
- Help protect children and young people from exploitation including radicalisation, child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation (county lines);
- Acknowledge that even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in school it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported, however, if child-on-child abuse is reported, ensure that appropriate action is taken;
- Ensure robust and effective safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation in school;
- Acknowledge that **'Children'** includes everyone under the age of 18 years.

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in school. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay, and may ultimately result in actions taken to safeguard children as detailed in the:

- Behaviour & Relationships Policy;
- Allegations Management Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct.

1.3 Definitions of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

Children have been abused, or are at risk of abuse, when their basic needs are not being met through acts of either commission, or omission.

The category of abuse and neglect are:

Physical Abuse	Emotional Abuse
Sexual Abuse	Neglect

The ability of staff to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse will depend upon their experience and training, however all members of staff should be alert to the possible signs of abuse. Staff should refer to the definitions and indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026), including its accompanying guidance.

In line with the EYFS Framework, 2026, education settings should ensure that those staff covering early years provision also access the appropriate training every 2 years.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the current edition of Working Together to Safeguard Children (including its March 2026 update), the definition of safeguarding for this document is as follows:

Para. 3

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing impairment of children's mental or physical health or development.
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026

2. Safeguarding in Schools

As part of a safer school's culture, effective child protection processes and procedures in schools and education settings should be fully embedded. To establish and maintain an open and safer culture we will:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and they feel listened to;
- Ensure robust and effective systems are in place to enable children to share their concerns;
- Ensure children know there are adults in school they can talk to if they are worried;
- Ensure that within the curriculum children are taught the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from all kinds of harm, including exploitation and online safety;
- Ensure that children who may be particularly vulnerable, such as those with SEND are supported;
- Ensure that children and young people that have English as an additional language have access to support and information that is clear, accessible and in their preferred language.

All staff have a role in preventing impairment of children's mental health/emotional wellbeing, including promoting positive mental health and identifying where students are struggling with their Mental Health. Staff should be aware that in some cases mental health concerns can develop into safeguarding concerns. This could include self-harm, suicidal ideation or risk of suicide. We regularly communicate messages to students regarding wellbeing and the promotion of positive mental health strategies through the curriculum, PSHE/RSHE, assemblies and planned personal development opportunities.

Concerns regarding a student's mental health/emotional wellbeing should be reported to a member of the school the safeguarding team in keeping with the school's safeguarding reporting arrangement so that students can be offered appropriate support, this may include local or national online services where appropriate. In addition, the school can make referrals to a wide range of external services to secure additional appropriate support for students.

2.1 Specific Safeguarding Issues

Para. 29

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that often overlap and can put children at risk of harm (including but not limited to those listed below). The following behaviours and indicators can be signs that children are at risk:

- Drug taking and/or alcohol misuse
- Unexplainable and /or persistent absence from education
- Serious violence, criminal exploitation (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation, and
- Consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, Sept 2026

Child Abduction and Community Safety Incidents:

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents, family members, as well as people known but not related to the child and by strangers.

In Knowsley, any concern of child abduction the school are made aware of should be reported to the Police and Knowsley MASH'

Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of the school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation.

In Knowsley there is a 'Stranger Danger' process that has been agreed with Merseyside Police. If there is a report made to the school that a child had been approached by an unknown adult outside of school, or if there is a concern of someone loitering near to the school the agreed 'Stranger Danger' process should be followed.

Staff must follow the current Knowsley and Merseyside Police procedures for responding to reports of suspicious approaches to children, including notifying the police and safeguarding partners as appropriate.

Children who are absent from education:

All staff should be aware that, children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. Children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include,

Abuse and neglect

Risk of substance misuse

Sexual abuse

Risk of travelling to conflict zones

Criminal or Sexual Exploitation

Risk of Female Genital Mutilation

Mental health problems

Risk of Forced Marriage/'Honour' or faith-based abuse

Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. It is important that staff are aware of their school's or college's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

It is important the school or college's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

In accordance with the academy's Attendance Policy and safeguarding procedures, Whiston Willis Primary Academy will respond promptly to unexplained or unauthorised absence, making appropriate enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and ensure their safety and welfare.

Where a child's absence raises safeguarding concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) will be informed immediately. Appropriate safeguarding action will be taken without delay, including referrals to Knowsley Children's Social Care/MASH or the police where necessary. Safeguarding action must not be delayed while awaiting a specified number of days of absence.

Where a child is believed to be missing education, the academy will follow current Department for Education guidance and Knowsley Local Authority Children Missing Education (CME) procedures, including the relevant notification, referral and information-sharing requirements.

The academy will work collaboratively with parents and carers, the Local Authority and relevant external agencies to identify barriers to attendance, support the child's return to education and ensure that safeguarding concerns are appropriately recorded, monitored and escalated.

Cybercrime:

Cybercrime is a criminal activity committed using computers and or the internet. Often children are vulnerable to becoming victims of cybercrime activity or can inadvertently become involved in committing Cybercrimes as they are unaware the activity they are engaging in is an offence.

Broadly categorised as 'cyber enabled' or 'cyber dependent' crimes, they include:

- Unauthorised access to computers (illegal hacking), e.g. accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers/change grades awarded;
- 'Denial of Service' (Dos or DDos) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer network / website unavailable or overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources;
- Making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, botnets, and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offences.

Cyber-dependent crimes continue to represent one of the most significant and rapidly evolving threats. Children can experiment with illegal online activity often without understanding the legal or ethical implication, and the impact can extend beyond immediate financial losses, with scope to cause disruption to national infrastructure.

For children with particular skills and interest in computing and technology they can inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependant crime, and a referral into the Cyber Choices programme should be considered.

Additional advice can be found at: Cyber Choices, 'NPCC- When to call the Police' and National Cyber Security Centre - [National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk)

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE):

Extra-familial harm takes a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual abuse, serious youth violence, county lines, and radicalisation.

Para. 20

All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, Sept 2026

School staff and DSL will have a key role in sharing relevant information and contributing to contextual safeguarding approaches that will aim to extend the concept of 'capacity to safeguard' beyond families to those individuals and sectors who manage extra-familial settings in which children encounter risk.

DSL's and their deputies will be required to share information regarding children identified as vulnerable to extra-familial harm with the Knowsley Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meeting and the Knowsley Vulnerable Children's meeting.

Children discussed at MACE have already been identified having significant concerns in relation to being exploited, and as such a support and safety plan has been identified and put in place. These support and safety plans will include involvement from Children's Social Care or Early Help Services.

Children discussed at the Knowsley Vulnerable Children's Meeting, have been identified as potentially being at risk of exploitation, however they are not known or open to any existing services or accessing any additional support. DSL's who have concerns regarding pupils that may be at risk of exploitation but are not open to any services or accessing support can make a referral into the Knowsley Multi Agency Vulnerable Children's meeting for the child and the

concerns to be discussed. The DSL will follow the current Knowsley Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and use the appropriate referral documentation for consideration by the relevant multi-agency safeguarding service.

Where there are concerns regarding exploitation and a school setting, schools may be asked to contribute to contextual safeguarding assessments and utilising Knowsley resources detailed on the Knowsley Safeguarding Children Partnership practice procedures.

Child Exploitation and Modern-Day Slavery:

All staff should recognise child exploitation as a form of child abuse. This occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive children under the age of 18. The nature of exploitation can be sexual, where sexual activity takes place in exchange for something, the victim needs or wants, financial advantage, or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. It can also be criminal, where drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children to carry drugs and money across county lines, from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. It may also include children affected by gang activity and youth violence.

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the UK's framework for identifying and supporting victims of exploitation and modern slavery. Whatever form it takes, exploitation and modern slavery is child abuse and relevant child protection procedures must be followed. County Lines is a form of criminal exploitation, a First Responder who identifies any potential victim of county lines exploitation should complete the relevant child protection and modern slavery referrals as detailed in the Modern Slavery Guidance. [Child exploitation disruption toolkit \(accessible\) - GOV.UK](#)

[County Lines Toolkit For Professionals | The Children's Society](#)

Multi-agency practice principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm – non-statutory guidance for local areas, developed by the Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) Support Programme, [Multi-agency Practice Principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm \(researchinpractice.org.uk\)](#)

Serious Violence:

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include:

Increased School Absence

Changes in friendships

Friendships or relationships with older individuals

Significant decline in educational performance

Involvement or association with criminal networks or gangs

Signs of self-harm

Significant change in well being

Signs of assault or unexplained injuries

Unexplained gifts or new possessions

All staff should be aware of the associated risk to a child, or group of children in the school and understand the measures in place to manage these.

[Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#) [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines](#)

Factors that increased risk of a child becoming involved in serious violence include:

- Being male;
- Having been suspended, spent time in Alternative Provision or permanently excluded from school;
- Having experienced child maltreatment;
- Having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery;
- Having used drugs or alcohol in early adolescence;
- Having previously been a victim or previously perpetrated violence.

School staff need to be aware that incidents of violence can often peak before or after the school the day. The journey to and from school is a time of vulnerability where violent events can occur. They may also occur or be concentrated in particular places. It is essential that school and college staff try to understand where these places are, with a view to working with partners to promote safety for children. In Knowsley staff can make referrals into the vulnerable children's meeting in order to support through early intervention, or in cases where there are significant concerns about a child, link in with Team Shield.

Knowsley Team Shield:

Knowsley has a dedicated multi-agency team that works together with children, families and the community to offer a range of services to reduce the risk of child exploitation. Team Shield can provide a central point for professionals to receive expert support with reference to child exploitation. They provide a coordinated and proactive response to child exploitation: prevention, safeguarding and prosecution.

Where staff in school have concerns relating to child exploitation, and the case is not already open, they should follow the procedures detailed in this policy and complete a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF). Once completed it is sent into Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) where it will then be processed and forwarded to Shield.

If concerns are in relation to an open case in Knowsley, then school staff can complete a Child Exploitation Assessment form on the liquid logic Early Help module and send it to the MACE tray.

Further details can be found in the Knowsley Multi Agency Child Exploitation Policy and Procedure.

<https://knowsleyscp.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/knowsley-multi-agency-child-exploitation-policy-and-procedure?search=child%20exploitation>

Domestic Abuse:

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 formally recognised the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The definition of domestic abuse ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members. Both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be "personally connected".

The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

Psychological

Economic/Financial

Physical

Emotional

Sexual Violence

Coercive and controlling behaviour

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse (a form of child-on-child abuse falling under the definition of domestic abuse, depending on the age of the child) and child/adolescent to parent or care giver violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. Exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children.

Operation Encompass:

Whiston Willis Primary Academy participates in Operation Encompass, a police and education information-sharing initiative designed to provide timely support to children who have experienced or been affected by domestic abuse.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Ms J. Watkins, oversees the school's Operation Encompass arrangements, supported by the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs).

Notifications received through Operation Encompass are treated as confidential safeguarding information and reviewed promptly by an appropriately trained member of the safeguarding team.

Following receipt of a notification, the DSL or DDSL will:

- Consider the child's immediate safety, welfare and emotional needs.
- Determine whether additional safeguarding action, pastoral support or a referral to external services is required.
- Share relevant information with appropriate staff on a strictly need-to-know basis to ensure the child receives sensitive and appropriate support.
- Record the notification, decisions, actions and outcomes securely using the school's approved safeguarding recording system.
- Monitor the child's wellbeing and review support arrangements where necessary.

Information received through Operation Encompass will be managed in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy, information-sharing procedures and relevant data protection requirements.

Where a notification identifies an immediate safeguarding concern, the DSL or DDSL will take appropriate action without delay, including contacting Knowsley Children's Social Care/MASH or the police where required.

The school will maintain appropriate arrangements for receiving and responding to Operation Encompass notifications, including during periods when the usual designated contacts are unavailable.

Honour or Faith-based Abuse (HBA):

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):

FGM mandatory reporting for teachers. Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers, along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, 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.

Female Genital Mutilation (sometimes referred to as 'Cutting') 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 U.K. and is a form of child abuse with long-lasting and harmful consequences.

If staff have a concern Knowsley safeguarding procedures must be followed. Teachers must personally report to the police, cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should also still consider and discuss any such case with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases. In these cases, teachers should follow Knowsley Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures. Information on when and how to make a report can be found at: [FGM Mandatory Reporting - procedural information nov16 FINAL.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Forced Marriage:

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into the marriage.

The Forced Marriage Unit has published statutory guidance and Multi-agency guidelines, pages 32-36 of which focus on the role of schools and colleges. [The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage - GOV.UK](#) School

and college staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fmufcdo.gov.uk.

In Knowsley, any concerns regarding an incident of forced marriage should be reported immediately to the police and a referral made into the MASH.

Preventing Radicalisation:

Children may be susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools or colleges safeguarding approach.

Page 166, Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026.

Children may become vulnerable and susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors. There is an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children and their families from violent extremism.

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Page 166, Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026

Schools are expected to assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for:

- Extremist ideals that are part of terrorist ideology. Schools should have clear procedures to protect children at risk of radicalisation. Further information can be found on the www.gov.uk website;
- Exploitation and radicalisation are a safeguarding concern. As such, in order to uphold the ethos and values of our school/ setting we will make a commitment to;
- Keep up to date on the latest advice and guidance provided to assist in addressing specific vulnerabilities and forms of exploitation;
- Support staff to recognise warning signs and symptoms in relation to children and young people and include such issues in the curriculum in an age-appropriate way;
- Support staff to talk to families about sensitive concerns in relation to their children and explore ways to address them;
- Ensure the Designated Safeguarding Lead knows where to seek and get advice as necessary;
- As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour that could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection.

Channel:

Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals may be passed to a multi-agency Channel Panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from the school or college may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment.

Page 167, Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026.

In Knowsley a referral made into the Channel Panel via the MASH. It falls to the referrer to highlight the concern in relation to the Prevent Duty. Referrals relating to concerns about radicalisation must follow the current Knowsley Prevent and Channel referral procedures.

Child-on-Child Abuse:

All staff should be clear as to the school policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse. This includes concerns that are thought to have taken place on or off-site. Child on child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the child subject to the behaviour and the child displaying the behaviour.

Child-on-Child is abuse and will never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'. Child-on-child abuse is preventable, and timely, evidence-based support can be key to preventing children from going on to commit abuse or violence.

All allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded as a child welfare concern and will be dealt with in line with the school behaviour policy and anti-bullying policy. Where a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm a safeguarding referral will be made into the Knowsley MASH, and where appropriate the police should be informed.

Para. 35

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudiced-based and discriminatory bullying);
- Abuse in intimate personal relationship between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse');
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- Serious physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon;
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- Consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026.

Making or sharing of Nudes or Semi-Nudes, including where generated by AI:

Making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes refers to the creation, sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images by children under the age of 18. The term 'images' includes all visual content, such as photographs, videos and livestreams.

Images may be taken by the child themselves or taken or created by another person. They may also be digitally altered or wholly generated using AI including what can be described as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes.'

All incidents involving the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes should be responded to in line with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy.

[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people \(updated March 2024\) - GOV.UK](#)

A young person is breaking the law if they:

- Take an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend;
- Share an explicit image or video of a child, even if it is shared between children of the same age;
- Possess, download or explore an explicit image or video of a child, even if the child gave their permission for it to be created.

As of January 2016, if a young person is found creating or sharing images, the police can choose to record that a crime has been committed but that taking formal action is not in the public interest.

The definition of Sexual Abuse now includes reference to:

Para. 27

‘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 or colleges policy and procedures for dealing with it.’

Keeping Children Safe in Education, Sept 2026

Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment:

Schools may come across a range of sexualised behaviours in children that range from, those they would expect to see as part of normal child development, to inappropriate and harmful.

In dealing with reports of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, the complexity of the presenting issues and the pressure staff are under to make difficult decisions quickly must be taken into account. All staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of ‘it could happen here’.

Para. 15

All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting any form of abuse and/or neglect. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, Sept 2026

Ultimately, any decisions made by the school staff must be done on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies such as Children’s Social Care and the police as required. KCSiE 2026, Part 5 and the following guidance sets out how schools should respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment.

[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\).](#)

Responding to report of sexual violence and sexual harassment:

Keeping Children Safe in Education, Sept. 2026 upholds the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.

In Knowsley, DSLs may request support, advice and guidance from the Education Safeguarding Officer in relation to the cases as they arise.

All victims should be supported and reassured that they are being taken seriously.

Where the report includes an online element staff should be aware of [Searching, Screening and Confiscation advice for Principals](#) and [UKCCIS Sexting](#) advice for schools.

Staff must not view or forward illegal images of a child.

While Staff can ask open questions such as those using the TED approach;

Tell, Explain, Describe.

They must not ask leading questions.

A written record should be made recording the facts as the child presents them.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed as soon as possible.

Once an incident of sexual violence has been disclosed the DSL should make an immediate risk and needs assessment.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour:

‘Harmful Sexual Behaviour’ is an umbrella term that applies to behaviour occurring online, face-to-face, or both. HSB should always be considered within a child protection context. These behaviours can occur between two or more children of any age and sex. It can occur also through a group of children towards a single child or towards another group of children.

Harmful Sexual Behaviours exists on a continuum and may escalate into sexual harassment or sexual violence. Early intervention in inappropriate behaviour such as misogyny can help to prevent escalation to more serious abuse such as sexual harassment and sexual violence. When assessing HSB, the ages and developmental stages of the children involved is critical. Children who display HAB have often experienced their own abuse and trauma and it is important that they are offered appropriate support.

In Knowsley for those DSL’s and members of the school safeguarding team have completed the *AIM – Understanding and Managing Sexual Behaviours in Education Settings* training, they should use the AIM Checklists to make an informed assessment decision on the nature and impact of the behaviour. If the checklists indicate the behaviour is problematic, violent or abusive then they should consider convening multi-agency RAMP (Risk Assessment Management Plan) meeting, to formulate a risk assessment management plan in line with the AIM guidance.

For those staff who have not completed the *AIM – Understanding and Managing Sexual Behaviours in Education Settings* training, they should consider using the risk identification tool. Staff should use the appropriate harmful sexual behaviour risk identification and assessment resources, in accordance with current safeguarding procedures and advice from the DSL. The risk and needs assessment should consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support
- Whether there have been other victims
- The child displaying the sexualised behaviour
- All the other children, and if appropriate staff at the school, especially and actions that are appropriate to protect them from further harmful sexualised behaviour.

In line with the Knowsley procedures, when considering a referral into Early Help, Children’s Social Care, or the Police, schools should access the guidance detailed in Chapter 5 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, 2026.

Options to manage the report:

Para. 570/571

It is important that schools and colleges consider every report of HSB, sexual harassment and sexual violence on a case-by case basis...There are four likely scenarios for schools and colleges to consider when managing any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment.

1. Manage internally: In some cases of sexual harassment, e.g. one-off incidents of HSB, the school may take the view that the children concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, taking actions in line with school behaviour policy. This response should be underpinned by the principal that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions must be recorded. For those DSL's and deputies in Knowsley that have completed the **AIM – Understanding and Managing Sexual Behaviours in Education Settings** training they can access the tools within the guidance to record the interventions and outcomes.

2. Universal Services and community based Early Help: The school may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions but may benefit from Early Help via a referral into Knowsley MASH. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent Harmful Sexual Behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence. This response should be underpinned by the principal that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions must be recorded.

3. Referrals to Children's Social Care: Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger a referral should be made to the Knowsley MASH. Schools should not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a children's social care investigation before protecting the victim and other children in the school.

Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the school or college (especially the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy) should be working alongside, and cooperating with, the relevant lead social worker. Collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator(s) and any other children that require support.

All Knowsley schools may seek advice, guidance and support from the Education Safeguarding Officer on the best way to implement safeguarding and risk identification processes. For those DSL's and deputies in Knowsley that have completed the **AIM – Understanding and Managing Sexual Behaviours in Education Settings** training they should use the relevant checklist tool to record their decision-making process and utilise this assessment to inform their referral into the MASH. Schools will also support the completion of a specialist AIM 3 assessments by a trained professional if required.

This response should be underpinned by the principal that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions must be recorded.

4. Reporting to the Police: Any report to the Police will generally be in parallel with a referral to the children's social care via the Knowsley MASH. Where a report of a rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is this information should be passed to the Police. In Knowsley the DSL will make this report to the Vulnerable Persons Unit in the Police.

Schools will generally be informing the parents or carers of the children involved in the incident, unless there are compelling reasons not to, for example, informing the parent or carer is likely to put the child at further risk. In circumstances where parents or carers have not been informed, it will be especially important that the school or college is supporting the child in any decision they take. This should be with the support of children's social care and any appropriate specialist agencies.

Where an incident has been reported to the police, the school should consult with the Police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, in particular, the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. They should also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

In some cases, it may become clear very quickly that the police (for whatever reason) will not take further action. In such circumstances, it is important that the school or college continue to engage with specialist support for the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) as required.

Additionally, whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator(s), it will be important for the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) to work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the school or college take do not jeopardise the police investigation.

Part 5, Keeping Children Safe in Education, Sept. 2026 details further information in regard to cases that are referred into the criminal justice process.

Mental Health:

All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some case, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. While only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem, staff in school are well placed to observe children day to day and identify those who may be struggling with their mental well-being.

Para. 48

If staff have a concern about a child's mental health that is also a safeguarding concern, they should follow their child protection policy and speak to their designated safeguarding lead or deputy.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026

If a child is struggling with their mental health there are likely to be potential warning signs, education staff are well placed to recognise signs such as;

- Significant changes in behaviour
- Ongoing difficulty sleeping
- Withdrawing from social situations
- Not wanting to do things they usually like and
- Physical signs of self-harm or neglecting themselves.

Education staff have an important role to play. Specifically, they can support the fulfilment of 4 key roles:

- promoting good mental wellbeing and preventing the onset of mental illness,
- observing pupils and identifying early those who may be experiencing mental health problems or being at risk of developing one,
- ensuring early targeted support is provided, and
- liaison with/referral to specialist services where needed.

Schools and colleges can access a range of advice to help them identify children in need of extra mental health support, this includes working with external agencies. More information can be found in the mental health and behaviour in schools' guidance, colleges may also wish to follow this guidance as best practice. [Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing - GOV.UK](#)

Children who are questioning their gender:

From a safeguarding and child protection perspective school and college staff have a duty to act in the best interest of the child and to ensure as with their peers those children who may be questioning their gender are respectfully represented in school policies and procedures.

It is not for schools to initiate an action in this area; however, schools should be confident to respond in circumstances where a child or their parent has raised a request relation to social transition.

Children who may be questioning their gender are potentially vulnerable to complex mental health issues, as well as having psychosocial needs relating to relationships with family, peers or their broader social environment, and also bullying. Issues such as bullying and poor mental health can be detrimental to a child's ability to thrive at school.

A strong and proactive stance against all forms of bullying should be taken by the school, and bullying should be tackled at the earliest opportunity to prevent escalation.

Some children, especially those in primary school, may have socially transitioned, and be 'living in stealth', meaning that other children or staff may be unaware of their biological sex, and schools should be aware of related safeguarding concerns. These children are likely to approach puberty in a fearful and anxious state. Schools staff and the DSL should take into consideration the presentation of children and with parental consent look to access community based early help support.

Further guidance is available in KCSiE,26.

Powers to Screen and Search:

Headteachers and staff they authorise have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item listed, or any other item that the school rules identify as an item which may be searched for.

The list of prohibited items is:

- knives and weapons;
- alcohol;
- illegal drugs;
- stolen items;

Any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be used:

- to commit an offence, or
- to cause personal injury to, or damage to property of; any person (including the pupil) an article specified in regulations:
- tobacco and cigarette papers;
- fireworks; and
- pornographic images.

Under common law, school staff have the power to search a pupil for any item if the pupil agrees. The member of staff should ensure the pupil understands the reason for the search and how it will be conducted so that their agreement is informed.

The power to screen and search must be referenced in the school behaviour policy. Further guidance to follow [Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for Schools 2022](#)

Adultification:

Adultification bias is a form of racial prejudice where children of minority groups are treated by adults as being more mature than they actually are. Black children are likely to be impacted by Adultification Bias, and actions carried out by these children, that would ordinarily be deemed normal for child development are more likely to be treated as opportunities for discipline and children are more likely to be seen as having malicious intention. Adultification bias is a breach of child safeguarding legislation and guidance.

Davis and Marsh (2020) define adultification as:

'The concept of adultification is when notions of innocence and vulnerability are not afforded to certain children. This is determined by people and institutions who hold power over them. When adultification occurs outside of the home it is always founded within discrimination and bias. There are various definitions of adultification, all relate to a child's personal characteristics, socio-economic influences and/or lived experiences. Regardless of the context in which adultification take place, the impact results in children's rights being either diminished or not upheld.'

Awareness and understanding of Adultification Bias by school safeguarding teams is important as it can mean that the vulnerability of certain groups of children, specifically Black children is overlooked, and rather than being safeguarded in relation to specific safeguarding issues such as exploitation, they are perceived as deviant and criminal.

Adultification reduces professional and organisational responsibility to safeguard and protect children, while simultaneously increasing the responsibility on the child to safeguard themselves.

Online Safety – Filtering and Monitoring:

It is essential that children are safeguarding from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. This can include:

- Content that is illegal, inappropriate, or harmful. Including Pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.
- Contact and harmful interaction with other users. This can include peer-to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
- Conduct and online behaviour that increases the likelihood of or causes harm. Examples include, making sending or receiving explicit images – e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi- nude images and or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying.
- Commerce such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

Concerns that staff or students are at risk of online scams or phishing can be reported to the Anti-Phishing Working Group. <https://apwg.org/>

It is the responsibility of the governing body/proprietors to ensure there is an appropriate monitoring and filtering system in place in school. The effectiveness of this system should be reviewed regularly. [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The Department has published Generative AI: product safety expectations to support schools to use generative artificial intelligence safely, and explains how filtering and monitoring requirements apply to the use of generative AI in education.

School leadership and staff are required to have an awareness and understanding of the online safeguarding provisions in place including the filtering and monitoring system.

All staff are required to know how to escalate safety concerns regarding the online environment that children may be encountering. This includes referrals to the relevant bodies and also where necessary following child protection processes.

Mobile Phone's - All schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default; anything other than this should be by exception only.

Homelessness:

Bing homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The DSL and deputies should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they may raise and progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include;

- Household Debt
- Rent arrears,
- Domestic abuse
- Anti-social behaviour

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act places a new duty on local housing authorities in England to notify educational institutions, health visiting services and general medical practices, when a child is placed in temporary accommodation. This notification should be made when consent has been given from the parent or those with parental responsibility.

The expectation is this notification will enable school and college staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of these children at the earliest opportunity and support them to improve their outcomes.

In Knowsley a referral into Family First Early Help services can be considered.

2.2 Staff have a particular contribution to make, in listening to children and young people who have experienced abuse.

The contribution of all staff to safeguard and protect children should be valued and recognised. However, it should be clearly understood that this work will only be carried out as part of an agreed plan and with a view to ensure it does not impact on any legal processes the child may be involved.

It is recognised that children who are abused or who witness domestic abuse may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helpless, humiliated and hold some sense of blame. School may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children and young people who are at risk.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance, September 2026, we will endeavour to support children and young people through:

- Ensuring the content of the curriculum encourages self-esteem and self-motivation
- The identification of a Designated Safeguarding Lead and any deputies. (See Appendix 1)
- Promoting an ethos of positive support and create a safe and secure environment for staff and students.
- Upholding the school behaviour policy, ensuring students are aware that whilst some types of behaviour are unacceptable, they are valued and not blamed for any abuse that may have occurred.
- Recognising that children and young people living in environments where they may be exposed to ACE's (Adverse Childhood Experiences) such as domestic abuse, adult drug/alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and/or criminality, are vulnerable and may be in need of support and protection
- Monitoring the welfare of children and young people who are its students, keeping accurate records, and notifying Children's Social Care via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as soon as there is a child protection concern in line with the [Knowsley: Helping Children Thrive 2020](#) document.
- Identifying a key member of staff as an Operation Encompass Champion whose role is to receive information from the Police relating to incidents of Domestic Abuse and Missing from home and returns.
- Using assessment tools when they are concerned that a child may be experiencing neglect.
- Initiating and contributing to assessments relating to the child or young person and their family, including Early Help Assessments in line with the Knowsley Helping Children Thrive Model.

Para. 84

Governing bodies and proprietors should have a senior board level (or equivalent) lead to take leadership responsibility for their school or college's safeguarding arrangements.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026.

2.3 Children potentially at a greater risk of harm:

Some children are recognised as potentially being at a greater risk of harm. All staff should be aware that these children can be particularly vulnerable:

- Children who need a social worker and are subject to Child in Need or Child Protection Plans

- Children who are absent from education
- Children who are Electively Home Educated
- Children requiring mental health support.
- Looked after children and previously looked after children.
- Care Leavers
- Children with special educational needs and disabilities
- Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning.

When assessing the impact of abuse and neglect on a child, staff should ensure consideration is given to the above criteria which may indicate additional vulnerability.

In order to support students and their families when dealing with safeguarding and potential child protection issues, school staff will,

Undertake discussions with the parents (or if appropriate the child or young person), to gain consent to share information prior to the involvement of another agency unless this may put the child at increased risk of significant harm.

Ensure parents have a clear understanding of the duty placed on school staff with regards the safeguarding and child protection.

Ensure that parents are aware of the intention to make a referral into Children's Social Care via the Knowsley MASH, unless to do so may put the child at increased risk of significant harm.

2.4 Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is the term used to describe all types of abuse, neglect, and other potentially traumatic experiences that occur to people under the age of 18.

Professionals who work with children should have an understanding of how Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) can have a tremendous impact on child development and the vulnerability of children. ACE's can have an impact on the child in terms of future violence victimization and perpetration, and lifelong health and opportunity.

Adverse Childhood Experiences have been linked to:

risky health behaviors

chronic health conditions

low life potential

early death

As the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk for these outcomes.

The presence of ACEs does not mean that a child will experience poor outcomes. However, children's positive experiences or protective factors can prevent children from experiencing adversity and can protect against many of the negative health and life outcomes even after adversity has occurred.

It is important to address the conditions that put children and families at risk of ACEs so that we can prevent ACEs before they happen.

2.5 Community Based Early Help Assessment

Para. 575

Universal services and community based Early Help play a crucial role in identifying emerging problems and providing support at an early stage. They are not an individual service, but a system of support delivered by local authorities and their partners working together and taking collective responsibility to provide the right provision in their area. This level of Early Help is provided through universal services and other voluntary and community services. This includes universal services such as education and health services, as well as support delivered through Best Start Family Hubs, youth services, after school clubs and housing provision.

In order to effectively initiate and contribute to the Early Help Assessment process staff will actively participate and contribute to the development of a common assessment process that considers the needs of the child and the family.

Early Help Assessments are conducted in order to facilitate earlier identification and intervention supporting children with additional needs.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of the Early Help Assessments school staff will:

- Participate in Early Help Assessment training.
- Develop effective links with other services and agencies.
- Work in partnership with children, young people and their families
- Identify an Early Help Lead person within the school.

In making an Early Help referral in Knowsley a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) must be completed and submitted to the MASH.

Para. 584

Practitioners, including school staff, who being working with families at the targeted early help stage can continue to lead work with families if the child is later assessed to be a child in need as defined by Section 17 or the Children's Act 1989.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2026

3. Child Protection Procedures

In accordance with statutory guidance, governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that the school/education setting has the following in place:

- An effective child protection policy and procedures in place that are in accordance with the local authority guidance and locally agreed multi agency safeguarding arrangements put in place by the three safeguarding partners.
- That the child protection policy and procedures are made available on the school website or to pupils, student and parents on request.
- Procedures in place for dealing with complaints about safeguarding arrangements that are accessible to staff, pupils and parents.

The child protection procedures for schools and education settings will ensure:

- The procedures set out in the Knowsley Safeguarding Children Partnership (KSCP) Safeguarding Children Procedures Manual are followed, together with the KSCP multi agency Child Protection Standards. These multi agency procedures are updated and held online at [KSCP Tri X multi agency procedures](#) [Home - KSCP](#)
- A member of staff who has child protection concerns about a child or young person, will immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and record accurately the events giving rise to the concern.
- If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable the member of staff should speak to the Deputy Designated Lead if they have one, or to the named person in the Local Authority, Safeguarding Education Officer, for advice. Under no circumstances should the member of staff attempt to resolve the matter without first taking advice.
- Understanding that taking no action does not safeguard children, once information is received there should not be an assumption that someone else will act. Discussions should be had, and the outcome should clearly note what actions will be taken, by who and why. (*For Child Protection Procedures flow chart see appendix 2.*)

Para. 14

All staff should know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused, exploited 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 involve, such as the designate safeguarding lead (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.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026.

As part of the extended school provision, should any member of staff delivering this provision become aware of a child protection concern where a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, they should follow the procedure and contact the Children's Social Care Duty Team via the MASH. They should record their concerns and actions, and inform the setting Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as practicable.

3.1 Dealing with a disclosure**Do**

- Remain calm, approachable and reassuring.
- Listen carefully, take the child seriously and allow them to speak at their own pace.
- Use open, non-leading prompts only where necessary to clarify a concern.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you and that the abuse is not their fault.
- Explain sensitively that information must be shared with appropriate safeguarding staff to help keep them safe.
- Record the disclosure promptly, accurately and factually, using the child's own words wherever possible.
- Report immediately to the DSL or deputy, following school safeguarding procedures.
- Follow safeguarding procedures and ensure the child's immediate safety.
- Explain what will happen next, as far as you know.

Don't

- React with shock, disbelief or judgement.
- Interrupt, rush or pressure the child to continue.
- Ask leading, suggestive or investigative questions.
- Blame the child or make them feel responsible.
- Promise confidentiality or agree to keep secrets.
- Interpret, speculate or alter the child's account.
- Delay reporting or assume somebody else will act.
- Investigate independently or confront the alleged perpetrator.
- Make promises about outcomes you cannot guarantee.

Once a disclosure has been made or a concern has been shared, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider the information, if necessary, take advice, and will make a decision to select one of following:

Para. 58

Options will then include:

- managing any support for the child internally via the school's or college's own pastoral support processes, including considering where doing so does not place the child at additional risk, whether the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should inform parents or carers to further support the child's wellbeing,
- undertaking a family held assessment, or
- making a referral to statutory services for example as the child might be in need, is in need or suffering, or is likely to suffer harm.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026.

Once the decision is made to make a referral the Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact the MASH and make a telephone referral. This must be followed up in writing using the Multi Agency Referral Form within 24 hours.

As part of the KSCP multi agency procedures Children's Social Care will inform the referrer of the outcome progress of the referral within 3 working days. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead does not receive this information, it is their responsibility to follow up the progress of the referral.

3.2 Making a Referral

Para. 63

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to local authority children's social care and if appropriate the police is made immediately. Referrals should follow the local referral process.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026

All staff will know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused or neglected. Staff members working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'** where safeguarding and child protection are concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the **best** interests of the child.

As such all staff should be aware through training how to make a referral into the Knowsley MASH. See **(Appendix 2)**

- When making a referral the following information is required.
- Your name and where you are from
- The child's details – name, address, date of birth etc.
- Details of the child's parents/carers
- What's Working Well
- What you are worried about (Nature of the referral relating to significant harm and the category of abuse)
- Any relevant context that supports the referral information
- What needs to happen to ensure the safety/wellbeing of the child?
- If the parents been informed of referral, and if not the reason why.

3.3 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Sharing information is essential in working together to safeguard children. Professionals, agencies and services are required to share information securely:

- About children and their health and development in relation to exposure to possible abuse and neglect
- About parents who may not be able to care adequately and safely for children
- About individuals who may present a risk to children
- Where there are concerns that a child is, or may be at risk of significant harm, the needs of the child must always come first; the priority must always be to protect the child.
- If there is any doubt about confidentiality, staff should seek advice from a senior manager or outside agency as required.

The Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will ensure that safeguarding information is shared appropriately, securely and on a need-to-know basis, in accordance with data protection legislation and statutory safeguarding guidance.

Information sharing decisions will be informed by the Department for Education's *Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers*, including the Seven Golden Rules for Information Sharing.

Information will be shared where necessary and proportionate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Data protection legislation does not prevent the lawful sharing of information for safeguarding purposes, and staff must not delay sharing information where a child may be at risk of harm.

3.4 Record Keeping and Safeguarding Escalation

At Whiston Willis Primary Academy, all safeguarding and child protection concerns must be reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Ms J. Watkins, or, in her absence, a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

Recording Safeguarding Concerns

Until CPOMS is implemented, the academy will maintain a secure paper-based safeguarding recording system. All safeguarding concerns, disclosures, incidents and actions taken must be recorded promptly, accurately, factually and confidentially using the school's agreed safeguarding concern forms.

Records must include:

- The date, time and nature of the concern.
- The child's own words, wherever possible.
- Relevant factual observations, distinguishing facts from professional opinions.
- Details of any immediate action taken.
- Decisions made, the reasons for those decisions and any follow-up actions.
- The name and signature of the member of staff completing the record.

Completed safeguarding concern forms must be handed directly to the DSL or DDSL as soon as possible. Where immediate handover is not possible, records must be placed in the designated secure, locked safeguarding storage area, accessible only to authorised safeguarding personnel, and the DSL or DDSL must be alerted without delay.

The DSL is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding records are organised, securely stored, regularly reviewed and updated to reflect actions taken and outcomes.

Implementation of CPOMS

Following the formal implementation of CPOMS, the academy will use it as its approved electronic safeguarding recording system. Staff will receive appropriate training on recording and reporting procedures.

Once CPOMS is operational, paper-based recording will remain available as a contingency arrangement if the electronic system is temporarily unavailable.

Any temporary paper records must be transferred securely to CPOMS as soon as practicable by an authorised member of the safeguarding team, preserving the original date, time and details of the concern. Original paper records will be retained or securely disposed of in accordance with the academy's approved records-retention and information governance procedures.

Safeguarding Escalation

Where there is an immediate safeguarding concern, staff must speak directly to the DSL or DDSL without delay. Completing a written or electronic safeguarding record does not replace the requirement to report urgent concerns verbally.

If the DSL or DDSL is unavailable, staff must not delay necessary safeguarding action. They should follow the academy's safeguarding escalation procedures and contact Knowsley Children's Social Care/MASH or the police directly where appropriate.

All safeguarding records must remain confidential, with access restricted to authorised personnel. The DSL is responsible for ensuring concerns are reviewed, appropriate action is taken and outcomes are recorded.

3.5 Transfer of Child Protection Records

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to pass on confidential information to the pupil's next school, college or education setting. Transfer of records checklist:

- The Headteacher should inform a child's social worker immediately if they are aware that a child is moving to a new Borough.
- Arrangements should be made before the records are transferred.
- All original child protection records should be forwarded for the attention of the Headteacher of the receiving school.
- In event of not being able to trace a child, the school should contact the School Attendance Improvement Officer (SAIO) and ask them to make further enquiries.

Where a pupil joins Whiston Willis Primary Academy and there is evidence of previous safeguarding or child protection concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will liaise with the previous school or education setting to ensure that the child's safeguarding records are transferred securely and promptly.

When a pupil leaves Whiston Willis Primary Academy, the DSL (or Deputy DSL) will ensure that the child protection file is transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file, in accordance with statutory guidance and agreed procedures.

The DSL will obtain and retain written confirmation that the receiving school or education setting has received the child protection records. A secure record of the transfer, including the date, receiving setting and confirmation of receipt, will be maintained in accordance with the academy's safeguarding record retention procedures.

Para. 148

Where children leave the school or college, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term to allow the new school or college to have support in place for when the child arrives. The designated safeguarding lead should ensure secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. For schools, this should be transferred separately from the main pupil file. Receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCO's) or the named persons with oversight for special educational needs and disability (SEND) in a college, are aware as required. It will then be for the designated safeguarding lead to consider whether the other information should be shared with other relevant staff and when appropriate to do so.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026

In addition to the information transferred as part of the Child Protection file, the DSL should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school in advance of the child leaving, including information that would allow the new school to continue support to children who have a social worker, have been the victims of abuse or who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' Programme.

Why is all of this important?

Para .74

It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address safeguarding risks, prevent issues escalating and to promote children's welfare. Research and serious case reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action.

- failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse and neglect
- poor record keeping
- failing to listen to the views of the child
- failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve
- not sharing information with the right people within and between agencies
- sharing information too slowly, and
- a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026

3.6 Childcare Disqualification

Para. 343

For staff who work in childcare provision or who are directly concerned with the management of such provision, the school needs to ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026.

Further information on the staff to whom these regulations apply, the checks that should be carried out, and the recording of these checks can be found in the [Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006](#) statutory guidance.

3.7 Access to Safeguarding Guidance and Procedures

Whiston Willis Primary Academy follows current statutory safeguarding guidance, Wade Deacon Trust policies and Knowsley Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for ensuring that relevant referral forms, risk assessment tools and local safeguarding procedures are accessible to authorised staff and that staff understand how to obtain guidance when required.

These resources are maintained within the academy's safeguarding arrangements and reviewed to reflect changes in statutory guidance, local procedures and professional practice. Staff must not delay safeguarding action because a particular form or resource is unavailable.

4. Monitoring and Review

This policy document will be monitored and reviewed annually in accordance with best practice or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- As required by the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership, and Ofsted
- As a result of any other significant change or event.

In the interests of safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and young people it is suggested that all staff receive a copy of the settings Safeguarding Child Protection policy and sign a safeguarding checklist to say they have read and understood the content.

Appendix 1: Key Contacts and Immediate Action

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Ms J. Watkins. Deputy DSLs identified in the source policy are Ian Cooper and Leah Weaver.

Concern or situation	Required action
Child in immediate danger	Call 999. Ensure the child is safe and alert the DSL/deputy without delay.
Disclosure or safeguarding concern	Listen, reassure, make a factual record using the child's words, and report immediately to the DSL or deputy.
DSL/deputy unavailable	Do not delay action. Follow the school's escalation arrangements and contact Knowsley children's social care/MASH or police as appropriate.
Concern about a member of staff	Follow the Trust allegations/low-level concerns procedure promptly. Do not investigate independently.
Concern about Principal or DSL	Use the independent escalation route specified by the Trust and seek LADO advice where the harm threshold may be met. [Insert verified named route.]

Appendix 2: Responding to a disclosure

Do	Do not
Stay calm; listen carefully and take the child seriously.	Express shock, disbelief or judgement.
Let the child speak at their own pace.	Interrupt, press for details or investigate.
Use only necessary open, non-leading prompts to clarify immediate concerns.	Ask leading questions or suggest an answer.
Reassure the child they were right to tell you and are not to blame.	Promise secrecy or guarantee a particular outcome.
Explain sensitively that you must share the concern with safeguarding staff.	Confront the alleged perpetrator.
Record the child's words accurately and report promptly to the DSL/deputy.	Delay, speculate or assume someone else will report.

Staff must listen, reassure, record and report. Staff should not conduct an investigation. Where a child is in immediate danger, urgent protective action takes priority.

Appendix 3: Reporting and Recording Expectations

All staff at Whiston Willis Primary Academy have a responsibility to recognise, record and report safeguarding concerns promptly, accurately and confidentially.

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

- All safeguarding concerns, disclosures and incidents must be reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Ms J. Watkins, or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).
- Where a child is at immediate risk of harm, staff must inform the DSL or DDSL verbally without delay. Recording a concern electronically does not replace this requirement.

- If the DSL or DDSL is unavailable, staff must not delay necessary safeguarding action and should contact Knowsley Children's Social Care/MASH or the police directly where appropriate.
- Staff must not assume that another member of staff has reported a concern or taken appropriate action.

Recording Safeguarding Concerns

All safeguarding concerns must be recorded promptly using the academy's agreed paper-based safeguarding concern forms until CPOMS is formally implemented.

Once CPOMS is operational, it will become the academy's approved electronic safeguarding recording system. Paper-based recording will remain available as a contingency where the electronic system is unavailable.

Records must:

- Include the date, time and nature of the concern.
- Record the child's own words wherever possible.
- Distinguish factual observations from professional opinions.
- Identify relevant individuals and any witnesses.
- Detail immediate actions taken, decisions made and follow-up arrangements.
- Be completed as soon as possible following the concern or disclosure.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- Safeguarding records must be stored securely, with access restricted to authorised personnel.
- Information must only be shared with individuals who need it to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.
- Staff must never promise confidentiality when receiving a safeguarding disclosure.
- The DSL is responsible for overseeing safeguarding records, ensuring appropriate actions are taken and outcomes are documented.

System Unavailability

Where CPOMS is unavailable, staff must complete the academy's agreed paper-based safeguarding concern form and report the concern directly to the DSL or DDSL without delay.

Completed forms must be handed directly to the DSL or DDSL. Where immediate handover is not possible, they must be stored securely in the designated locked safeguarding storage area, accessible only to authorised safeguarding personnel.

Once CPOMS is available, an authorised member of the safeguarding team will ensure that the information is transferred accurately and securely. Original paper records will be retained or securely disposed of in accordance with the academy's records-retention procedures.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff must:

- Follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.
- Attend relevant safeguarding training and remain familiar with reporting arrangements.
- Report concerns without delay, regardless of their perceived significance.
- Follow up with the DSL or DDSL where concerns remain or appropriate action has not been confirmed.

- Escalate unresolved safeguarding concerns through the appropriate procedures.

Safeguarding concerns must always be acted upon. Recording a concern alone does not discharge a member of staff's responsibility to ensure appropriate safeguarding action is taken.

Appendix 4: External guidance and local procedures

Staff should use the latest versions of the following, rather than relying on outdated forms reproduced in a published policy:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (DfE).
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (current edition).
- Knowsley Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and MASH referral arrangements.
- Wade Deacon Trust allegations management, whistleblowing, safer recruitment and staff conduct policies.
- Current Operation Encompass and Prevent/Channel procedures.