



Westfield Nursery School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Date policy last reviewed: 25.09.24

Signed by:

Headteacher

Date:

Safeguarding Governor

Date:

Latest Changes:

- Updated to latest versions of Keeping children safe & working together
- Updated names of staff
- Added hub details
- Added definitions and examples of special circumstances
- Added introductory paragraph into safer recruitment
- Added child on child abuse section
- Added Appendix Six- Child on Child Abuse Policy
- Added Appendix Nine- definitions of youth produced sexual images
- Added Appendix Seventeen- Low Level Concerns
- Added Appendix Eighteen- Staff Supervision Policy
- Updated page numbers

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1. Vision

At Westfield Nursery we aim to deliver against our vision 'Inspired beginnings, outstanding futures'.

2. School Acknowledgement

At Westfield Nursery School we are committed to safeguarding and child protection in line with statutory guidance. As required, all staff have read and understood Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is **Miss Heading**

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are **Miss Ball, Mrs Collins, Miss Dhenin & Miss Thomson**

The Safeguarding Administrator is **Miss Thomson**

The Safeguarding Governor is **Ms Gee**.

The Prevent single point of contact (SPOC) is **Miss Heading**

The Operation Encompass SPOC is **Miss Heading**

The LADO is **Stephen Lagan** LADO@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 300 8142

Access and Referral HUB Tel: 0300 300 8585 during office hours
0300 300 8123 out of hours

[Child protection - safeguarding children and young people | Central Bedfordshire Council](#)

At Westfield Nursery School there is a Safeguarding lead/ deputy on site from 8.00am to 4.00pm daily.

3. Local Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangement

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 (the Act) replaces Local Safeguarding Children Boards with new local safeguarding arrangements led by three safeguarding partners (local authorities, chief officers of police, and clinical commissioning groups). The Act places a duty on those partners to make arrangements for themselves and **relevant agencies** they deem appropriate, to work together for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in their area. Education is one of the relevant agencies.

4. Definitions

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

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

Child Protection is defined as:

- the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. **This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.** ([Working Together, DfE 2023](#))

This includes, but is not limited to safeguarding children in specific circumstances such as:

- Neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Bullying, including online and prejudice-based bullying
- Gender based violence/violence against women and girls
- Child Sexual Exploitation and trafficking
- Teenage relationship abuse
- Gang/youth violence including initiation/hazing
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Online including grooming via social networking, online gaming, video messaging
- Self-harm behaviours
- Upskirting
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse
- Radicalisation and/ or extremist behaviour
- Honour Based Abuse
- Child on Child abuse
- Substance abuse
- Domestic abuse/violence
- Forced marriage
- Poor parenting
- The impact of new technologies on sexual behaviour: e.g. Youth Produced Sexual Imagery
- Children/young people with mental health difficulties or illness
- Contextual/Extra familiar risks
- Exploitation

Philosophy

Westfield Nursery School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its children. We believe that:

- all children have an equal right to be protected from harm
- children need support which matches their individual needs, including those who may have experienced abuse
- all children have the right to speak freely and voice their values and beliefs
- all children must be encouraged to respect each other's values and support each other
- all children have the right to be supported to meet their emotional, and social needs as well as their educational needs
- schools can and do contribute to the prevention of abuse, victimisation, bullying, exploitation, extreme behaviours, discriminatory views and risk-taking behaviours (behaviours which may be perceived to be 'risky')
- all staff, volunteers and visitors have an important role to play in safeguarding children and protecting them from abuse.

Westfield Nursery School will fulfil their local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following documents:

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (DfE, December 2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2024)
- Information Sharing (DfE, May 2024)
- The procedures of the [Pan Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnerships and Safeguarding Adults Boards](#)
- [The Children Act, 1989](#)
- [The Education Act, 2002](#) (s175 / s157)
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (DfE, 2015)
- Use of reasonable force in schools (DfE, 2013)
- [Mental health and behaviour in schools: departmental advice \(DfE, 2018\)](#)
- Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies (DfE, 2017)
- [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\)](#)
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people (UK Council for Child Internet Safety, 2016)

- Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults county lines (Home Office guidance)
- Children missing education (DfE, 2016)
- Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care (DfE, 2017)
- Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners (DfE, 2017)
- Domestic abuse Act 2021
- Drugs (DfE and ACPO guidance)
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges (DfE, September 2021)
- [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for educational settings \(2024\)](#)

5. Aims

This policy will contribute to safeguarding our children and promoting their welfare by:

- clarifying standards of behaviour for staff and children.
- contributing to the establishment of a safe, resilient and robust ethos in the school, built on mutual respect, and shared values.
- creating an organisational culture that is safe for children.
- introducing appropriate work within the curriculum.
- encouraging children and parents to participate.
- developing staff's awareness of the risks and vulnerabilities children face to enable them to recognise and respond to concerns.
- addressing concerns at the earliest possible stage in the least intrusive way.

6. Key Principles

At Westfield Nursery School we will:

- always see the child first and consider what life is like for the child maintaining a culture of vigilance.
- provide support and intervention at the earliest possible opportunity in the least intrusive way.
- have conversations, build relationships and maintain professional curiosity.
- focus on securing improved outcomes for children.
- build a culture of openness and transparency where all staff are able to demonstrate understanding of their role and responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- every child is entitled to a rich and rounded curriculum.
- when issues arise, the Head teacher should speak out, addressing them internally where possible and engaging in a multi-agency response when required in accordance with interagency procedures.

7. Key Processes

All staff should be aware of the guidance issued by the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Panel (CBSCP) within the Central Bedfordshire's Threshold Framework in order to secure support and intervention for children and young people at the earliest possible opportunity in the least intrusive way. This document is integral to safeguarding children in Central Bedfordshire's educational establishments and we will always use the Threshold Framework to underpin decision-making.

8. Expectations

All staff and regular visitors will:

- be familiar with this safeguarding policy and implement this consistently in the course of their work with children and young people.
- be aware of the role and identity of the DSL and deputies for the school.
- refer child protection concerns to Children's Services in the absence of the DSL and be aware of the statutory assessments under Section 17 and Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 that they may contribute to.
- be subject to Safer Recruitment processes and checks, whether they are new staff, supply staff, contractors, volunteers etc.
- be involved in the implementation of individual education programmes, Early Help assessments and plans, Child in Need plans and interagency Child Protection plans.
- be alert to signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and possible abuse.

- record concerns and pass the record to the DSL, or Deputy.
- recognise and respond to concerns about the behaviour of staff, students and volunteers which indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children following interagency procedures agreed by the CBSCP.
- deal with a disclosure of abuse from a child in line with the guidance in Appendix Four
- all staff and Governors will receive safeguarding training, (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) at the point of induction.
- the DSL together with named deputies will undertake additional higher-level training in order to ensure they have appropriate knowledge and skills to undertake the role and will utilise these training opportunities available from the CBSCP and other organisations as agreed by the governing body - this training will be regularly updated at a minimum of two-yearly intervals.
- in addition to the above, all staff will receive annual safeguarding updates, which may include E-learning, circulation of information and guidance internally, staff meetings, inset training.
- the subject/ topics for training and updates will take into consideration CBSCP priorities, local context, and needs of our pupils and identified training needs of staff.

9. Operation Encompass (formerly Relay)

At Westfield Nursery School, we are working in partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedfordshire Police to identify and provide appropriate support to pupils who have experienced domestic abuse in their household; nationally this scheme is called Operation Encompass.

The system ensures that when the police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the key adult, usually the DSL or deputy in school, before the child or children arrive at school the following day.

This ensures that the school has up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable immediate support to be put in place, according to the child's needs.

Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures. Where appropriate, the police and/or schools should make a referral to local authority children's social care if they are concerned about a child's welfare.

Westfield Nursery School has an information sharing agreement in place with Bedfordshire Police for Operation Encompass. See Appendix [Fifteen](#)

Westfield Nursery School will receive Missing Persons notifications should a child go missing, in line with the addition to Operation Encompass.

10. A Safer School Culture

The culture at Westfield Nursery School is one that is safe for children and unsafe for adults that may pose a risk to children. There is a belief that safeguarding is the responsibility of all adults working or volunteering within the organisation and that all concerns will be reported to the DSL when concerns relate to an adult. The school has a culture of listening to and hearing the voice of the child.

11. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (Deputy DSL) and Safeguarding Assistants

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is [Poppy Heading](#) who takes lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school.

They will provide support to staff members to carry out their safeguarding duties and will liaise closely with other services such as the early help hub, children's social care, health, police etc.

The designated lead is supported by the following Deputy Designated Leads: [Stephanie Ball](#), [Elizabeth Collins](#), [Natalie Dhenin](#), and [Claire Thomson](#).

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/s are trained to the same level as the Designated Safeguarding Lead and will undertake this role operationally with direct oversight and management from the Designated Safeguarding Lead who maintains lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety, filtering, and monitoring).

The DSL is available to contact and be spoken to onsite during their working day. The Deputy DSL's are also available to be spoken to onsite during their working day.

The DSL is supported in developing knowledge and skills to:

- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, and in any measures the school put in place to protect them.
- understand the difficulties that children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication.

When the school has concerns about a child, the DSL or Deputy will decide, what steps should be taken in accordance with the Central Bedfordshire's Thresholds Framework and initiate a response accordingly. This may include providing a single agency early help response, undertaking an early help assessment or a referral to Children's Social Care for a statutory social work assessment. The Head teacher will be kept apprised of cases as appropriate.

The DSL will refer to the 'Model Setting Concern Process' if a concern becomes apparent regarding a child. For further information, please see Appendix [Thirteen](#).

The DSL and deputies should liaise with the three safeguarding partners and work with agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), [the NPCC – when to call police](#) should help the DSL understand when they should consider calling the police and what to expect if they do so.

For further information on the roles and responsibilities of the DSL, please see Appendix One.

The DSL will not disclose to a parent any information held on a child if this would put the child at risk of significant harm. In such circumstances, advice will be sought from Children's Social Care.

If a child moves from our school, the DSL will ensure child protection records are forwarded on to the DSL at the new school, with due regard to their confidential nature and in line with current government guidance on the transfer of such records.

The DSL shall ensure the child protection files are transferred to the new school 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 ([KCSIE 2024](#)).

The designated safeguarding lead will also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information that would allow the new school or setting to continue supporting children, in advance of the child leaving. Direct contact between the two schools may be necessary. We will record where and to whom the records have been passed and the date. We will ensure secure transit and obtain a confirmation of receipt.

If sending by post, children's records will be sent by "Special/Recorded Delivery". For audit purposes, a note of all children's records transferred or received should be kept in either paper or electronic format. This will include the child's name, date of birth, where and to whom the records have been sent and the date sent and/or received.

If a child is being removed from school roll in order to be home educated, the school will ensure all relevant safeguarding information is shared with the Elective Home Education team

When the DSL resigns their post or no longer has child protection responsibility, there should be a full face-to-face handover/exchange of information with the new post holder - this exchange should be recorded as part of the incoming role holder's induction/performance management.

In exceptional circumstances when a face-to-face handover is not feasible, the Head Teacher / Principal will ensure that the new post holder is fully conversant with all procedures and case files.

12. The Governing Body

The Governing Body will ensure they comply with their duties under legislation. They will have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 to ensure that the policies, procedures and training in our school are effective and comply with the law at all times.

Governing bodies and proprietors should be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

The nominated governor for child protection at the school is Debbie Cannings.

The nominated governor is responsible for liaising with the **Head teacher and** DSL over all matters regarding child protection issues. The role is strategic rather than operational; they will not be involved in concerns about individual children.

Please see Appendix One for the DSL role and Appendix Two for more information on the roles and responsibilities and of the Governing Body.

13. Inspection

Ofsted's inspections will be carried out under <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook-for-september-2023>

Westfield Nursery School will be aware of the inspection guidance and the requirements from Ofsted. Inspectors will always report on whether or not arrangements for safeguarding children and learners are effective.

14. Safer Recruitment and Selection

The safe recruitment of staff, governors and volunteers is the first step in the schools' commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. The Nursery expects all staff, governors and volunteers to share this commitment.

The school pays full regard to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (DfE 2024). Safer recruitment practice includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history, and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking interviews and undertaking appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations (where applicable) and prohibition order checks in respect of the following which will also include historic GTCE sanctions. Schools and colleges should "inform shortlisted candidates" that online searches may be carried out in the recruitment process.

Westfield Nursery School acknowledge that S128 checks should be completed on those members of staff and governors taking part in management. A section 128 would prohibit someone from serving as a governor of a maintained school. .

Elizabeth Collins, Poppy Heading and Samantha Hitchcock have undertaken Safer Recruitment training. One of the above will be involved in all staff/volunteer recruitment processes and sit on the recruitment panel.

Westfield Nursery School have decided to carry out online searches for shortlisted candidates as part of due diligence in our recruitment process, (as per KCSIE, paragraph 221). The searches are

conducted by Sam Hitchcock. This is recorded on the recruitment checklist. The process will be consistent, transparent, and fair and reflected within the Safer recruitment policy

All recruitment materials will include reference to the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children. See Recruitment Policy.

The Nursery will adhere to the CBC Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) policy for school-based employees.

15. Our Role in the Prevention of Abuse

In accordance with Working Together 2023, the school recognises the need to safeguard children from abuse.

Appendix Three contains more information about definitions and indicators of abuse, specifically:

- neglect
- emotional abuse
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse

In addition, the school are alert to the need to safeguard children in specific circumstances as defined within Keeping Children Safe in [Education 2024](#).

Our safeguarding policy cannot be separated from the general ethos of the school, which should ensure that children are treated with respect and dignity, taught to treat each other with respect, feel safe, have a voice, and are listened to.

16. Links with Other Policies

Other school policies have an important role in Safeguarding. These include but are not restricted to Acceptable Use including internet safety, Code of Conduct for Employees, Confidential Reporting (whistle blowing), Health and Safety, Positive Handling and Safer Recruitment

17. The Curriculum

Westfield Nursery School will provide opportunities for children to develop skills, concepts, attitudes and knowledge that promote their safety and well-being together with preparing children for life in modern Britain and embedding Fundamental British Values.

Westfield Nursery School has a clear set of values and standards, upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. These are underpinned by the behaviour policy and support systems, as well as by delivering our curriculum including

- Communicates their feelings, wants and needs
- Looks after their health, safety and self-care needs
- Develops a friendship and
- Shows care for communities, the environment and living things

Which has been designed to be fully inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate (especially in considering the needs of children with SEND and other vulnerabilities).

In the Autumn the children learn about road safety, in the Spring on-line safety and in the Summer the NSPCC pants rule.

Themes cover all about me, my family, feeling and emotions, people who help us, road safety, staying healthy and keeping safe.

Regulations have been put in place whereby Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is mandatory for Primary pupils in state funded schools (2020). We have a Relationships and Sex Education statement in line with the age of our pupils.

18. Safeguarding in Special Circumstances

a. Additional Needs

Westfield Nursery School recognises that while all children have a right to be safe, some children may be more vulnerable to abuse, for example a young carer, a child frequently missing from

home/care, children with disabilities or special educational needs, a child living with domestic abuse, parental mental ill health or substance abuse, or a child who has returned home to their family from care.

We recognise that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in children with special educational needs or disabilities, medical or physical health conditions. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration.
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-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.
- cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or the consequences of doing so.

Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will therefore require close liaison with the DSL (or deputy) and the SENCo.

Westfield Nursery School will consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place.

If Westfield Nursery School is considering excluding, either fixed term or permanently, a vulnerable child and/or a child who is the subject of a child protection plan or where there is an existing child protection file, we will call a multi-agency risk-assessment meeting prior to making the decision to exclude.

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, we work together with Local Authority and other key professionals to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. We will do this before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker.

In the event of a one-off serious incident resulting in an immediate decision to exclude, the risk assessment *must* be completed prior to convening a meeting of the Governing Body. See exclusion policy.

b. Breast Ironing

Breast Ironing is practiced in some African countries, notably Cameroon. Girls aged between 9 and 15 have hot pestles, stones or other implements rubbed on their developing breast to stop them growing further. In the vast majority of cases breast ironing is carried out by mothers or grandmothers and the men in the family are unaware. The practice of breast ironing is seen as a protection to girls by making them seem 'child-like' for longer and reduce the likelihood of pregnancy. Once girls' breasts have developed, they are at risk of sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage and kidnapping; consequently, breast ironing is more prevalent in cities. Breast ironing is a form of physical abuse that has been condemned by the United Nations and identified as gender-based violence. Concerns have been raised that breast ironing is also to be found amongst African communities in the UK.

c. Child on child abuse

Westfield Nursery School recognises that children are vulnerable to, and capable of, abusing their peers. We take such abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. This includes verbal abuse as well as physical and sexual abuse. Child-on-child abuse will not be tolerated or passed off as part of "banter" or part of "growing up".

We are committed to a whole school approach to ensure the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of child-on-child abuse within our school and beyond.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), 2024 states that -

'All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children at any age (often referred to as child-on-child abuse). And that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports'

'All staff should be clear as to the school's or college's policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse'

In cases where child-on-child abuse or bullying is identified we will follow our child protection procedures, taking a contextual approach to support all children and young people who have been affected by the situation.

We recognise that child-on-child abuse can manifest itself in many ways such as:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- 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)
- 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 standalone 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 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)

Some of these behaviours will need to be handled with reference to other policies in school such as the behaviour policy and online safety policy.

Westfield Nursery School has a thorough understanding of contextual safeguarding and will make a referral in the first instance if apparent.

Westfield Nursery School manages the use of mobile and smart technology on the premises and reflect this in the behaviour/ child protection policy.

We carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, filtering and monitoring supported by an annual risk assessment that considers the risks to children.

'Report Abuse in Education' (NSPCC helpline) is still available. Young people and adults can contact the NSPCC helpline, Report Abuse in Education on 0800 136 663 or email help@nspcc.org.uk

Please see Appendix Six for further information.

d. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of imbalance in power or coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be most obvious factor, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. This abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and maybe accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual, and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of [technology \(DfE, 2024\)](#).

Child sexual exploitation can occur through use of technology without the child's immediate recognition, for example the persuasion to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones with no immediate payment or gain. In all cases those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

The school recognises that both boys and girls can be vulnerable to Child Sexual Exploitation and as such ensure staff are alert to signs and indicators

The school recognises that there are various 'models' of CSE which include but not limited to:

- gangs and groups
- boyfriend/girlfriend model
- child on child
- familial
- online
- abuse of authority

Where concerns are identified in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation the Central Bedfordshire Thresholds Framework will be consulted to ensure the child receives support at the earliest possible opportunity.

An Early Help multi agency response may be initiated by completing an Early Help Assessment form and engaging with the Early Help Hub.

If a child is thought to be at risk of significant harm through child sexual exploitation a referral will be made to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub within Children's Social Care.

Advice will be sought to establish if a [National Referral Mechanism](#) is appropriate.

In all cases, intelligence will be shared with Bedfordshire Police using the information sharing form which will also be copied to the Access and Referral Hub.

e. Cuckooing

Cuckooing is where a drug dealer befriends a vulnerable person, then takes over their home and uses it for their own purposes.

f. Cybercrime

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer).

Cyber-dependent crimes include unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded; Denial of Service (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'- attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources; making, supplying or obtaining malware such as viruses, with the intent to commit further offences.

If there are concerns about a child in this area, the DSL or Deputy DSL, should consider referring into the **Cyber Choices** programme. Cyber Choices is a nationwide police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency which aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low level cyber-dependent offences. Additional advice can be found at: [Cyber Choices](#)

g. Domestic Abuse (DA)/ Domestic Violence (DV)

All staff are aware of The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 which introduced the first statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises that children can be victims of domestic abuse; they may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home. All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

Staff will continue to develop their understanding of domestic abuse, and how all children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members.

Staff are aware exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children.

Westfield Nursery School recognises that domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Domestic abuse is not limited to physical acts of violence or threatening behaviour, and can include emotional, psychological, controlling or coercive behaviour, sexual and/or economic abuse.

Staff understand that 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.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by ex-partners, family members, teenage relationship abuse and adolescent to parent violence.

Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247.

h. Extremism

Westfield Nursery School seeks to protect children against the messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, or to Far Right/ Neo Nazi/ White Supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and extremist Animal Rights movements.

In accordance with the Prevent Duty placed upon the school by the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 we understand the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism. Westfield Nursery School is clear that this exploitation and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern.

Westfield Nursery School values freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs/ ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Both children and teachers have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion. Essential to this school are the fundamental British Values of Democracy, Rule of Law, Equality of Opportunity, Freedom of Speech and the rights of all women and men to live free from persecution of any kind and it would be expected that views and opinions expressed would be commensurate with these.

Definitions of radicalisation and extremism, and indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation are in Appendix [Seven](#).

Risk Reduction:

The school governors, DSL assess the level of risk within the school and put actions in place to reduce that risk. Risk assessment may include consideration of the school's curriculum, SEND policy, the use of school premises by external agencies, anti-bullying policy and other issues specific to the school's profile, community and philosophy.

In addition, the school Prevent Action Plan template may be used to demonstrate how the organisation is fulfilling the prevent duty. Please see Appendix 13. This risk assessment will be reviewed as part of the annual s175 return that is monitored by the local authority and the CBSCP.

In accordance with the Prevent Duty, [Poppy Heading](#) is the SPOC who will be the lead within the organisation for safeguarding in relation to protecting individuals from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism.

When any member of staff has concerns that a child/ family member may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with the SPOC/ DSL. Concerns must be recorded on the school's safeguarding referral form.

If a child or young person is thought to be at risk of radicalisation, a referral will be made using the National Prevent Referral Form which shall be sent directly to the Police. The referral form can be found [here](#).

Initial advice may be sought from the Bedfordshire Police Channel Team.

In all cases, in accordance with advice provided from the Early Help Hub, the school will ensure appropriate interventions are secured which are in line with local procedures in order to safeguard children assessed as being vulnerable to radicalisation.

If the school is concerned that a child may be at risk of significant harm in relation to radicalisation or involvement in violent extremism, a child protection referral will be made to Children's Social Care.

i. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It can be known as female circumcision or female genital cutting and is often carried out for cultural, religious, and social reasons within families and communities.

FGM is illegal in the UK and it's also illegal to take a British national or permanent resident abroad for FGM or help someone trying to do this.

Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon **teachers** (along with social workers and healthcare professionals) **to report to the police** where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM

appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. This is in addition to following the school's safeguarding reporting procedures. A teacher means any person within the Education Act 2002 (section 141A(1)) employed or engaged to carry out teaching work at schools or other institutions. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions.

If the school are concerned that a child has experienced or is at risk of FGM, a Child Protection referral will be made to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub in accordance with interagency procedures produced by the LSCB. In addition, all teachers will follow mandatory reporting duties. Please refer to [Pan Bedfordshire Practice Guidance for practitioners on Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\)](#) (Further information regarding FGM can be found in Appendix Eight.)

j. Forced Marriage (FM)

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

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

The Anti-social Behavior, Crime and Policing Act 2014 makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry - this includes:

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

Further multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage can be found here [The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage.](#)

k. Gang Related Violence (Contextual/Extra Familial Risk)

Westfield Nursery School recognises the risks posed to children in relation to gang related activity, which may be street gangs, peer group or organised crime. Young people who are involved in gangs are more like to suffer harm themselves, through retaliatory violence, displaced retaliation, and territorial violence with other gangs or other harm suffered whilst committing a crime. In addition, children may experience violence as part of an initiation or hazing practice.

The school understands that Early Help can be crucial in the early identification of children who may need additional support due to gang related activity, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care.

If, however, information suggests a child may be at risk of significant harm due to gang related activity, a referral will be made to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub within Children's Social Care.

Where there are concerns that a child or young person may be, or is at risk of, becoming involved in gang related activity, a referral will be made to the Multi-agency Gang panel (MAGPan) in accordance with local procedures as part of the safeguarding response.

Westfield Nursery understand the process of completing a multi-agency information sharing form which highlights broader concerns contextually occurring outside of the child's home.

See Appendix **Ten** for further information on risk indicators for gang involvement.

l. Homelessness

Westfield Nursery School recognises that being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare.

The DSL and deputies are aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Westfield Nursery School recognises that whilst in most cases school staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families.

Staff are aware of the indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness, to include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property.

Referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority will be progressed as appropriate but will not replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

The Local Authority has a legal duty to address concerns under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The focus is early intervention and to encourage those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.

m. Lesbian, gay, bi or trans (LGBT)

Westfield Nursery School recognise that our children are too young to make decisions about how they identify, however, whilst the fact that a child or person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, those who are LGBT can be targeted. Those who are perceived to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable.

n. Looked After Children (LAC) and Children Subject to Special Guardianship Orders (SGO)

A child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a looked after child. Looked after children are also often referred to as children in care, a term which many children and young people prefer.

In general, looked after children are:

- living with foster parents.
- living in a residential children's home, or
- living in residential settings like schools or secure units.

At Nursery we want the very best for children in care and we have an Early Years Personal Education Plan we complete to monitor children's learning, well-being, involvement and support.

A special guardianship order is an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's 'special guardian'. It is a private law order made under the Children Act 1989 and is intended for those children who cannot live with their birth parents and who would benefit from a legally secure placement.

It is a more secure order than a residence order because a parent cannot apply to discharge it unless they have the permission of the court to do so, however it is less secure than an adoption order because it does not end the legal relationship between the child and his/her birth parents. The Adoption and Children Act 2002 introduced Special Guardianship and Special Guardianship Orders.

o. Mental Health

All staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make diagnosis of a mental health problem. However, staff will observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Staff are aware of how these experiences, can impact on children's mental health, behaviour and education.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action will be taken following the child protection policy including discussion with the DSL or deputy.

The school will access a range of advice to help them identify children in need of extra mental health support. This includes working with external agencies as described in [Promoting and Supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges](#)

Types of mental health problems can include: Types of depression/ Stress and anxiety/ Sleep problems/ Suicide and self-harm/ Eating and body image/ Types of personality disorder/ Mania and bipolar/ Psychosis.

Mental health problems may be affected by life circumstances such as: divorce or separation/ unemployment/ financial hardship/ poor housing/ discrimination/ a lack of social support.

Staff are mindful to support parents whilst putting the needs of children first.

p. Modern Day Slavery

Modern slavery is the term used within the UK and is defined within the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Act categorises offences of Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour and Human Trafficking (the definition of which comes from the Palermo Protocol). Modern slavery crimes include holding a person in a position of slavery, servitude forced or compulsory labour, or facilitating their travel with the intention of exploiting them soon after

Although human trafficking often involves an international cross-border element, it is also possible to be a victim of modern slavery within your own country.

Types of human trafficking: There are several broad categories of exploitation linked to human trafficking, including:

- sexual exploitation
- forced labour
- domestic servitude
- organ harvesting
- child related crimes such as child sexual exploitation, forced begging, illegal drug cultivation, organised theft, related benefit frauds etc
- forced marriage and illegal adoption (if other constituent elements are present)

q. Sexualised behaviours

Where children display sexualised behaviours, the behaviours will be considered in accordance with the children's developmental understanding, age and impact on the alleged victim. Tools such as Brook Traffic Light Tool will be used to assist in determining whether the behaviour is developmental or a cause for concern. This will assist in ensuring the child/ren receive the right support at the right time either via an Early Help response or referral to Children's Social Care.

Westfield Nursery School follow Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance (DfE, 2023) when responding to such issues alongside local interagency procedures and the Harmful Sexual Behaviours strategy. This includes responding to any reports in a child-centred manner and undertaking an immediate risk and needs assessment in relation to the victim, the alleged perpetrator and other children.

We will seek specialist advice, guidance and assessment and will work with partner agencies in relation to management of information and what should be shared with staff, parents and carers.

All staff will reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor will a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

In all cases of child on child abuse the school will consider the vulnerability of all children including those alleged to have caused the harm and those alleged to be victims and provide a safeguarding response consistent with the Central Bedfordshire Thresholds Framework. Consideration will be given to violence in young people's relationships.

Where necessary, the school's Behaviour and Child on Child Abuse policy will be invoked, and any sanctions applied will be consistent with these procedures.

Where issues indicate that a criminal offence may have been committed, a report will be made to Bedfordshire Police.

r. Substance Misuse

Alcohol misuse is harmful drinking and alcohol dependence.

- Harmful drinking is a pattern of alcohol use which causes alcohol-related health problems, including psychological problems such as depression, physical illnesses or alcohol-related accidents
- Alcohol dependence is characterised by craving alcohol and continued drinking in spite of harmful consequences. It's associated with increased criminal activity, domestic abuse and an increased rate of significant mental and physical health problems

Drug misuse is a dependence on, or regular excessive consumption of, psychoactive substances leading to social, psychological, physical or legal problems. Drug misuse is more prevalent in socially deprived areas. In England the most commonly used psychoactive substance is cannabis, followed by cocaine and ecstasy. Opioids such as heroin are used less commonly but present the most significant health problems.

Parents/ carers who misuse substances often have chaotic, unpredictable lifestyles and may struggle to provide their children with safe care and clear boundaries. The Nursery has a duty of care to put the needs of the child first.

s. Youth Generated Sexualised Imagery

Westfield Nursery School recognises the impact of online social communication and the issue of sending or posting sexually suggestive images including nude or semi-nude photographs via mobiles or over the internet. We pay due regard to the Guidance issued by the UK Council for Child Internet Safety in relation to how we respond to incidents.

In all cases where an incident of youth produced sexual imagery is reported, the following actions will be undertaken:

- the incident should be reported to the DSL as soon as possible.
- the DSL should hold an initial review discussion or meeting with appropriate school staff.
- there should be subsequent interviews with the young people involved (if appropriate).
- parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm.
- at any point in the process if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to Children's Social Care and/or Bedfordshire Police immediately.

An immediate referral will be made to Bedfordshire Police and Social Care in the following circumstances:

- the incident involves an adult.

- there is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to special educational needs).
- the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage or are violent.
- the imagery involves sexual acts and any pupil in the imagery is under 13.
- there is reason to believe a young person is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery, for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming.

If none of the above applies, the school may choose to deal with the incident without involving Bedfordshire Police or Children's Social Care. This will usually be the case where the DSL is confident that they have enough information to assess the risks to the pupils involved and the risks can be managed within the school pastoral support and disciplinary framework. All decisions and rationale for decision making will be recorded. All decisions will be based on the best interests of the child/ren.

The school will pay due regard to the Department for Education guidance: Searching, Screening and Confiscation advice.

Adults in the school will not view youth produced sexual imagery unless there is a good and clear reason to do so. Wherever possible the DSL will respond to an incident based on what they have been told about the imagery.

All incidents will be recorded.

More information is available in Appendix [Nine](#).

19. Special Circumstances (Further Guidance)

Further guidance in relation to safeguarding children in specific circumstances can be found on the [Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire & Luton Safeguarding Children Boards Procedures website](#)

20. What we do when we are concerned about a child

All concerns will be viewed alongside the Central Bedfordshire Thresholds Framework in order to ensure the appropriate support or intervention is provided at the earliest opportunity in the least intrusive way.

The school also places due regard to the guidance contained in 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused', 2015.

If, in consultation with the Central Bedfordshire Thresholds Framework, the level on concern sits at Level 2 or 3, an Early Help Assessment should be completed with the consent of the parent/carer. Early Help may also be provided on a single agency basis by the school, or additional support or advice for this work may be sought from the Early Help Team as a multi-agency response.

In cases where it is not possible to obtain consent from the parent/carer, the school will seek advice from the Early Help Team.

The school will review each case to ensure that any support or intervention provided has impacted positively on the welfare/safety of the child and that improvement is sustained.

In the event that provision of Early Help has not led to improvements for the child, or concerns escalate, the school will follow the step-up procedures published by the CBSCP.

In consultation with the Central Bedfordshire Thresholds Framework, if the concerns about the child or young person indicate that they may be at risk of or suffering significant harm, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care.

The parent/carer will be informed of the referral unless informing the parent may place the child at increased risk of harm.

In the event of a professional disagreement in relation to a specific concern, the school will follow the CBSCP procedures for resolution of professional disagreements, also known as escalation procedures.

Please see Appendix **Thirteen** for further information.

All concerns about a child will be recorded on a green sheet and handed to the DSL or Deputy. Discussions with parents will be recorded on yellow sheets and handed to the DSL or Deputy. Discussions with outside agencies will be recorded on pink sheets and handed to the DSL or Deputy. Written notes will be factual and have actions clearly stated. Chronologies will indicate where actions have been taken. **Conversations between staff regarding decision-making will be recorded on a purple sheet.**

22. Involving parents/carers

In general, we will discuss any safeguarding and child protection concerns with parents / carers before approaching other agencies and will seek their consent to making a referral to another agency. Appropriate staff will approach parents/carers after consultation with the DSL. However, there may be occasions when the school will contact another agency before informing parents/carers because it considers that contacting them may increase the risk of significant harm to the child.

Parents / carers will be informed about the safeguarding policy through the website, prospectus, newsletters and safeguarding posters.

23. Multi-Agency work

The school understands its role in the three safeguarding partner arrangements. Governing bodies, proprietors and the senior leadership teams, especially the DSL's, will make themselves aware of and follow their local arrangements.

Westfield Nursery School works in partnership with other agencies in the best interests of children. The school will, where necessary, liaise with the Health Visitor, initiate an Early Help Assessment, and make referrals to Children's Social Care. Referrals and contacts should be made by the DSL or one of the Deputies to Early Help/ Children's Social Care. Where the child already has a social worker, the request for service will go immediately to the social worker involved, or in their absence to their team manager or duty social worker.

We will co-operate with any child protection enquiries conducted by Children's Social Care: The school will ensure representation at appropriate inter-agency meetings such as Team Around the Family meetings, Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences, together with core group meetings.

We will provide reports as required for these meetings in accordance with the CBSCP interagency procedures. If the school is unable to attend, a written report will be sent. The report will, wherever possible, be shared with parents/carers at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Where a child is subject to an Inter-agency Child Protection Plan, Child in Need Plan or Early Help Assessment, the school will contribute to the preparation, implementation and review of the plan as appropriate.

If a child is subject to a referral to a multi- panel such as MARAC or CHANNEL, the school will contribute to such arrangements.

24. Responding to an allegation or concern about a member of staff

The school will comply with the CBSCP procedures for managing allegations and concerns about adults that work or volunteer with children in all circumstances.

These procedures should be used in any case in which it is alleged that a member of staff (including supply staff), governor, visiting professional or volunteer has:

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

We will consult with the LADO when an allegation is made against a member of staff to agree how to progress this.

Although it is an uncomfortable thought, it needs to be acknowledged that there is the potential for staff in school to abuse or mistreat children.

All staff working within our organisation must report any potential safeguarding concerns about an individual's behaviour towards children and young people **immediately**.

Allegations or concerns about colleagues and visitors must be reported directly to the Head teacher unless the concern relates to Head teacher. If the concern relates to the Head teacher, it must be reported immediately to the Chair of Governors. Alternatively, concerns can be reported directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in Children's Social Care, who will liaise with the Chair of Governors, and they will decide on any action required.

If the Head teacher is not available, the member of staff should report their concerns to the most senior member of staff available who will make contact with the LADO and discuss the concerns.

We will follow our safeguarding policies and procedure in the event of an allegation regarding an "incident that happened when an individual or an organisation was using their school premises for the purposes of running activities for children." This includes events such as community groups, sports associations, and more.

Contact with the LADO should happen at the earliest possible opportunity and within 1 working day.

The LADO in Central Bedfordshire can be contacted on 0300 300 8142.

The LADO may request a referral - if this is requested, the referral will be completed and submitted within 1 working day.

The school will engage with the LADO at all stages of the management of the allegation/concern and comply with the statutory guidance contained within Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) and the local procedures published by the CBSCP.

In this regard, the school will consider whether it is necessary to suspend the member of staff while the allegation or concern is investigated, however all reasonable alternatives to manage the risk will be considered.

Due consideration will be given to the view of the LADO in relation to suspension or in-work safeguards while a matter is investigated.

Should the school dismiss a member of staff/volunteer as a result of a substantiated allegation or should a member of staff/volunteer resign before an investigation has been completed, in accordance with statutory duty, a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service will be made.

If the member of staff is engaged in teaching work, the school will, in accordance with published guidance from the Department for Education, consider whether a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) should be made.

The school will adhere to the statutory guidance contained within [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2024\)](#) with regard to record keeping, references and compromise or settlement agreements.

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per the school's behaviour policy.

The school has appropriate policies and processes in place to manage and record any such concerns that do not meet the harm threshold and take appropriate action to safeguard children. Please see Appendix Five for more information. [Please see Appendix Seventeen for further information on low-level concerns.](#)

If a member of staff, student or volunteer has any concerns about poor, unsafe practice, or failures of the safeguarding regime, they are encouraged to raise this with the Head teacher, Senior Leadership Team or Governing Body, following the Whistle Blowing Procedures of the school.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their school or college. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email help@nspcc.org.uk. Please click [here](#) for information on the NSPCC website.

25. Missing Children

We understand the importance of ensuring all children are safe and that regular attendance improves progress and attainment. Although our children are not statutory school age, we follow Central Bedfordshire guidelines for missing children and always notify the appropriate authorities whenever we have concerns about a child's safety, welfare or education. Reference- Central Bedfordshire Children Missing in Education Procedures <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schools-portal/administration/inclusion/missing-education.aspx> See Missing Children's Policy

26. Conclusion

We believe all children should have a positive experience of their childhood and to this end the implementation of this policy will support the welfare, health, safety and guidance of every child.

APPENDICES

Appendix One- Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- support staff who make referrals to the Local Authority Children's Social Care and act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff
- refer cases to the Police where a crime may have been committed
- inform Head Teacher/ Principal of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations;
- be aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult. Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance – [PACE Code C 2019](#)
- seek advice in regard to safeguarding matters related to radicalisation and make referrals to Channel as required
 - liaise with the Designated Senior Manager for allegations to ensure where necessary referrals have been made to the Disclosure and Barring Service when a person is dismissed or resigned due to risk/harm to a child & liaise with the senior mental health lead and, where available, the Mental Health Support Team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health
- lead regular case monitoring reviews of vulnerable children. These reviews, together with any actions arising from the review and the rationale for decision-making will be recorded in case files
- ensure safeguarding and child protection information will be dealt with in a confidential manner and in accordance with the CBSCP's information sharing guidance.
- ensure staff will be informed of relevant details only when the Designated Safeguarding Lead feels their having knowledge of a situation will improve their ability to deal with an individual child and / or family.
- ensure a written record will be made of what information has been shared with whom, and when
- ensure that child protection files are kept up to date
- ensure safeguarding and child protection records will be stored securely in a central place separate from academic records
- ensure individual files will be kept for each child: the school will not keep family files
- ensure access to safeguarding and child protection records by staff other than by the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be restricted, and a written record kept of who has had access to them and when
- ensure parents are usually (subject to the point below) aware of information held on their children and are kept up to date regarding any concerns or developments by the appropriate members of staff
- ensure general communications with parents will be in line with any home school policies and give due regard to which adults have parental responsibility

Appendix Two- Roles and Responsibilities of the Governing Board

The governing body/equivalent will ensure that:

- the school contribute to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023' - this includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans
- the school provides an appropriate safeguarding response in accordance with the Central Bedfordshire Thresholds Framework in order to safeguard children.
- online safety is a running and interrelated theme whilst devising and implementing the whole school approach to safeguarding and related policies and procedures. This will include considering how online safety is reflected as required in all relevant policies and considering online safety whilst planning the curriculum, any teacher training, the role and responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) and any parental engagement.
- the school pays due regard to the need to safeguard children in specific circumstances such as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), vulnerability to radicalisation, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or child on child abuse which can include gang related violence, cyberbullying, sexually harmful behaviours, sexual violence, sexual harassment, upskirting or youth produced sexual imagery.
- the child protection policy reflects and addresses additional challenges exist for those children with special educational needs and disabilities and physical and mental health needs, and the school should consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place.
- the school maintains information about the legal status of all children including whether a looked after child is subject to S20 voluntary agreements, interim or full care order, contact details for persons with parental responsibility, level of delegated authority, details of the social worker and the virtual head in the authority that looks after the child
- there is a designated teacher with the appropriate training skills and knowledge appointed to work with the virtual school head to promote the academic achievement of looked after children and children previously looked after
- the school's safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the Local Authority as part of the inter- procedures, set up by the Local Multi Agency Safeguarding Board (LSCB). This includes working with Children's Social Care from other areas when children attend school in Central Bedfordshire however live outside of Central Bedfordshire.
- the school shares information with other professionals in the interests of safeguarding children in accordance with the guidance within Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers, 2015
- they recognise the importance of information sharing between practitioners and local agencies. This should include ensuring arrangements are in place that clearly set out the processes and principles for sharing information within the school and with children's social care, the safeguarding partners, other organisations, agencies, and practitioners as required.
- that school staff be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess, and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to the local authority children's social care.
- they are aware that among other obligations, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure.
- relevant staff have due regard to the relevant data protection principles
- the school will follow local procedures for sharing intelligence in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation with Bedfordshire Police, and the Single Point of Contact within Central Bedfordshire Council
- the school initiates appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect including sexual abuse, exploitation or radicalisation and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future
- the Head teacher ensures that safeguarding policies and procedures which have been adopted by the Governing Body are consistently implemented
- the school has a staff behaviour policy (sometimes called the code of conduct) which should amongst other things include - staff/child relationships and communications including the use of social media and other online platforms
- the school has procedures for managing any allegations and concerns about adults that work or volunteer with children, that may or may not meet the harm threshold and that these include the procedures for making referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service and TRA where appropriate.
- the school operates, "safer recruitment" procedures and ensures that appropriate checks are carried out on all new staff and relevant volunteers in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

- the DSL is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and has lead responsibility for safeguarding which is not delegated - this is clearly defined within the role holder's job description and that this person has the appropriate authority, time, training, funding and resources to undertake this role as per Appendix C Keeping Children Safe in [Education 2024](#)
- the DSL maintains management oversight of any work undertaken by the Deputy DSL
- any Deputy DSL has the appropriate training skills and knowledge to undertake the operational function of the DSL as per appendix C of Keeping Children Safe in [Education 2024](#)
- the DSL and any Deputies undertake LSCB higher level training to ensure they have the appropriate training, skills and knowledge to carry out this role
- in addition, the DSL and any Deputies will update their knowledge by receiving safeguarding updates via the designated safeguarding lead forums, attendance at training and learning events offered by the CBSCP, online updates via NSPCC or attendance at professional development events
- the Head teacher and all other staff who work with children undertake safeguarding training in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education [2024](#) and that they receive annual safeguarding updates to ensure their continued professional development
- all Governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training should be regularly updated.
- training updates take account of CBSCP priorities, the local context, the needs of the pupils and other identified training needs
- all training will incorporate safeguarding children in specific circumstances which includes, but is not limited to: Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), vulnerability to radicalisation and child on child abuse
- the training will ensure that child on child abuse is never seen as 'banter' or part of growing up and incorporates issues of sexually harmful behaviours such as sexual touching or assault and gang initiation or hazing type violence - the training recognises how alcohol use, drug use, truanting and youth generated sexualised imagery increases risks of harm to children. In addition, the training will also ensure staff have the skills and knowledge about the additional vulnerability of Looked After Children
- the school has appropriate safeguarding responses for children who go missing from education which should include holding more than one emergency contact number for pupils
- temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's procedures for child protection and their responsibilities
- the school remedies any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to its attention without delay and recognises the importance of utilising the expertise of the DSL and Deputies in shaping safeguarding arrangements
- the school or college has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness.
- the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified.
- Governing bodies should consider the age range of their children, the number of children, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs verses safeguarding risks. Over blocking of material which could restrict children's online learning will be avoided.
- the curriculum is delivered in such a way to include educating children about how to stay safe which will include Relationship and Sex Education (RSE), online safety and broader safeguarding messages within PSCH
- children are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe, including online. It should be recognised that effective education will be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs or disabilities.
- the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place, and they should be well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback
- the governing body reviews the policies/procedures annually
- a member of the governing body, usually the chair, is nominated to liaise with the designated officer(s) from the relevant local authority and partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse made against the Head teacher

Appendix Three-Definitions and Indicators of Abuse

Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.

Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

Neglect

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

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

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

The following may be indicators of neglect (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- constant hunger
- stealing, scavenging and/or hoarding food
- frequent tiredness or listlessness
- frequently dirty or unkempt
- often poorly or inappropriately clad for the weather
- poor school attendance or often late for school
- poor concentration
- affection or attention seeking behaviour
- illnesses or injuries that are left untreated
- failure to achieve developmental milestones, for example growth, weight
- failure to develop intellectually or socially
- responsibility for activity that is not age appropriate such as cooking, ironing, caring for siblings
- the child is regularly not collected or received from school; or
- the child is left at home alone or with inappropriate carer.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

The following may be indicators of physical abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- multiple bruises in clusters, or of uniform shape
- bruises that carry an imprint, such as a hand or a belt
- bite marks
- round burn marks
- multiple burn marks and burns on unusual areas of the body such as the back, shoulders or buttocks
- an injury that is not consistent with the account given
- changing or different accounts of how an injury occurred
- bald patches
- symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication or poisoning
- unaccountable covering of limbs, even in hot weather
- fear of going home or parents being contacted
- fear of medical help
- fear of changing for PE
- inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance
- violence or aggression towards others including bullying; or
- isolation from peers.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or

non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males; women can also commit act of sexual abuse, as can other children.

The following may be indicators of sexual abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- sexually explicit play or behaviour or age-inappropriate knowledge
- anal or vaginal discharge, soreness or scratching
- reluctance to go home
- inability to concentrate, tiredness
- refusal to communicate
- thrush, persistent complaints of stomach disorders or pains
- eating disorders, for example anorexia nervosa and bulimia
- attention seeking behaviour, self-mutilation, substance abuse
- aggressive behaviour including sexual harassment or molestation
- unusual compliance
- regressive behaviour, enuresis, soiling
- frequent or open masturbation, touching others inappropriately
- depression, withdrawal, isolation from peer group
- reluctance to undress for PE or swimming; or
- bruises or scratches in the genital area.

Sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation occurs when a child or young person, or another person, receives 'something' (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of the child/young person performing sexual activities, or another person performing sexual activities on the child/young person.

The presence of any significant indicator for sexual exploitation should trigger a referral to children's social care. The significant indicators are:

- having a relationship of concern with a controlling adult or young person (this may involve physical and/or emotional abuse and/or gang activity)
- entering and/or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adult
- possessing unexplained amounts of money, expensive clothes or other items
- frequenting areas known for risky activities
- being groomed or abused via the Internet and mobile technology; and
- having unexplained contact with hotels, taxi companies or fast food outlets.

The intelligence reporting form on the LSCB website will be used to share information with Bedfordshire Police and Children's Social Care that raises a concern around CSE.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may also involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse (this is not designed to be used as a checklist):

- the child consistently describes him/herself in very negative ways – as stupid, naughty, hopeless, ugly
- over-reaction to mistakes
- delayed physical, mental or emotional development
- sudden speech or sensory disorders
- inappropriate emotional responses, fantasies
- behaviours such as rocking, banging head, regression, tics and twitches
- self-harming, drug or solvent abuse

- fear of parents being contacted
- running away
- compulsive stealing
- appetite disorders - anorexia nervosa, bulimia; or
- soiling, smearing faeces, enuresis.

N.B: Some situations where children stop communication suddenly (known as “traumatic mutism”) can indicate maltreatment.

Responses from parents

Research and experience indicate that the following responses from parents may suggest a cause for concern across all four categories:

- delay in seeking treatment that is obviously needed
- unawareness or denial of any injury, pain or loss of function (for example, a fractured limb)
- incompatible explanations offered, several different explanations or the child is said to have acted in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development
- reluctance to give information or failure to mention other known relevant injuries
- frequent presentation of minor injuries
- a persistently negative attitude towards the child
- unrealistic expectations or constant complaints about the child
 - alcohol misuse or other drug/substance misuse
 - parents request removal of the child from home; or
 - violence between adults in the household.

Disabled children

When working with children with disabilities, practitioners need to be aware those additional vulnerabilities to abuse and neglect such as:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child’s disability without further exploration
- children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Possible indicators of abuse and/or neglect may also include:

- a bruise in a site that might not be of concern on an ambulant child such as the shin, might be of concern on a non-mobile child
- not getting enough help with feeding leading to malnourishment
- poor toileting
- lack of stimulation
- unjustified and/or excessive use of restraint
- rough handling, extreme behaviour modification such as deprivation of medication, food or clothing, disabling wheelchair batteries
- unwillingness to try to learn a child’s means of communication
- ill-fitting equipment, for example callipers, sleep boards, inappropriate splinting
- misappropriation of a child’s finances; or
- inappropriate invasive procedures.

Appendix Four-Dealing with a Disclosure of Abuse

When a child tells me about abuse s/he has suffered, what must I remember?

- stay calm
- do not communicate shock, anger or embarrassment
- reassure the child
- tell her/him you are pleased that s/he is speaking to you
- never enter into a pact of secrecy with the child
- assure her/him that you will try to help but let the child know that you will have to tell other people in order to do this (state who this will be and why)
- tell her/him that you believe them
- children very rarely lie about abuse; but s/he may have tried to tell others and not been heard or believed
- tell the child that it is not her/his fault
- encourage the child to talk but do not ask "leading questions" or press for information
- listen and remember
- check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you
- praise the child for telling you
- communicate that s/he has a right to be safe and protected
- do not tell the child that what s/he experienced is dirty, naughty or bad
- it is inappropriate to make any comments about the alleged offender
- be aware that the child may retract what s/he has told you. It is essential to record all you have heard
- at the end of the conversation, tell the child again who you are going to tell and why that person or those people need to know
- as soon as you can afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's own language – include any questions you may have asked
- Do not add any opinions or interpretations.

NB. It is not education staff's role to seek disclosures; their role is to observe that something may be wrong, ask about it, listen, be available and make time to talk. The child may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.

Immediately afterwards

You must not deal with this yourself. Clear indications or a disclosure of abuse must be reported to Children's Social Care without delay, by the DSL.

Children making a disclosure may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak. Listening to and supporting a child/young person who has been abused can be traumatic for the adults involved. Support for you will be available from your DSL.

Appendix Five- Allegations and Concerns about a Member of Staff, Governor or Volunteer

Inappropriate behaviour by staff/volunteers could take the following forms:

- **Physical**

For example: the intentional use of force as a punishment, slapping, use of objects to hit with, throwing objects or inappropriate physical handling.

- **Emotional**

For example: intimidation; belittling; scapegoating; sarcasm; lack of respect for children's rights; excessive and/or aggressive shouting; and attitudes that discriminate on the grounds of race, gender, disability or sexuality.

- **Sexual**

For example: sexualised behaviour towards peers; sexual harassment; sexual communication including via social networking, email, text; grooming behavior; and sexual assault and rape.

- **Neglect**

For example: failing to act to protect a child or children, failing to seek medical attention or failure to meet a child's basic needs.

Behaviours which may pose a risk

Some behaviours which may take place outside of the workplace could present a transferable risk in an employee's professional role working with or in the vicinity of children. For example, alleged perpetrator of domestic abuse, offences demonstrating a sexual interest in children, abuse or neglect of their own children or behaviours that are incompatible with a professional role working with children.

If a child makes an allegation or raises a concern about a member of staff (including supply staff), governor, visitor or volunteer the Head teacher should be informed immediately. If the allegation or concern falls within the following criteria, the LADO will be contacted at the earliest possible opportunity and within 1 working day:

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

The Head teacher will not carry out the investigation him/herself or interview pupils.

If a child makes an allegation of physical abuse against an adult that works with children and there are visible bruises, marks or injuries, or if a child makes an allegation of sexual abuse against an adult that works with children, child protection procedures will be followed, and a referral made to Children's Social Care. The LADO will also be informed.

The Head teacher must exercise, and be accountable for, their professional judgement on the action to be taken, as follows –

- If the actions of the member of staff are felt likely to fall within the scope of the Interagency Allegation Management Procedures (as stated in point 2), the Head teacher will notify the Local Authority Designated Officer (0300 300 5026). The LADO will liaise with the Head teacher and advise about actions to be taken which will be in accordance with the Interagency Allegation Management Procedures.
- If the Head teacher is uncertain, whether the concern or allegation falls within the scope of the Interagency Allegation Management Procedures, a consultation with the LADO will take place and the advice provided will be acted upon. This consultation and the advice offered will be recorded and held on file.
- Where an allegation has been made against the Head Teacher/Principal, then the Chair of the Governing Body takes on the role of liaising with the LADO team in determining the appropriate way forward.

Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold

Our Governing body have policies and processes to deal with concerns (including allegations) which do not meet the harm threshold.

We recognise that concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources, for example:

- suspicion
- complaint
- disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation
- as a result of vetting checks undertaken

Westfield Nursery School understand that the term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out (as per [KCSIE 2024, paragraph 433](#))

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Westfield Nursery School have appropriate policies and processes in place to manage and record any such concerns and take appropriate action to safeguard children.

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

As good practice our Governing bodies will:

- set out their low-level concerns policy within their staff code of conduct and safeguarding policies
- ensure procedures are implemented effectively
- ensure their staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others
- empower staff to share any low-level safeguarding concerns with the DSL (or a deputy)
- address unprofessional behaviour and support the individual to correct it at an early stage
- provide a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- help identify any weakness in the school safeguarding system.

If staff have a safeguarding concern or an allegation about another member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers or contractors) that does not meet the harm threshold, then this should be shared in accordance with the school's low-level concerns policy.

Low-level concerns about a member of staff will be reported to the DSL. Please see Appendix 16.

Appendix 6- Child-on Child Abuse Policy

Westfield Nursery School recognises that children are vulnerable to, and capable of, abusing their peers. We take such abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. This includes verbal abuse as well as physical and sexual abuse. Child-on-child abuse will not be tolerated or passed off as part of “banter” or part of “growing up”.

We are committed to a whole school approach to ensure the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of child-on-child abuse within our school and beyond.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), 2024 states that -

‘All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children at any age (often referred to as child-on-child abuse). And that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports’

‘All staff should be clear as to the school’s or college’s policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse’

In cases where child-on-child abuse or bullying is identified we will follow our child protection procedures, taking a contextual approach to support all children and young people who have been affected by the situation.

We recognise that child-on-child abuse can manifest itself in many ways such as:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- 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)
- 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 standalone 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 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)

Some of these behaviours will need to be handled with reference to other policies in school such as the behaviour policy, anti- bullying policy, child protection policy and online safety policy.

This policy concentrates on child-on-child abuse in the context of sexual harassment and sexual violence. It is compliant with the statutory guidance on child-on-child abuse as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024) and should be read in conjunction with the Local Safeguarding Children Board’s (LSCB) Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, and any relevant Practice Guidance issued by it.

Aims

The policy will: -

- Set out our strategies for preventing, identifying and managing child-on-child abuse
- Take a contextual approach to safeguarding all children and young people involved. Acknowledging that children who have allegedly abused their peers or displayed harmful sexual behaviour are themselves vulnerable and may have been abused by peer, parents or adults in the community.

Understanding Child-on-child abuse

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex or a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

The impact of this behaviour on children can be very distressing and have an impact on academic achievement and emotional health and wellbeing.

Sexual harassment and sexual violence may also occur online and offline.

The Context

All behaviour takes place on a spectrum. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on a spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it.

In this policy we recognise the importance of distinguishing between problematic and abusive sexual behaviour (Harmful Sexual Behaviour HSB).

We are adopting the NSPCC definition of HSB as: -

"Sexual behaviours expressed by children...that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child...or adult."

We will also use Simon Hackett's continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours.

Simon Hackett (2010) has proposed a continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours

| Normal | Inappropriate | Problematic | Abusive | Violent |
|--------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| Developmentally expected | • Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour | • Problematic and concerning behaviours | • Victimising intent or outcome | • Physically violent sexual abuse |
| Socially acceptable | • Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group | • Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected | • Includes misuse of power | • Highly intrusive |
| Consensual, mutual, reciprocal | • Context for behaviour may be inappropriate | • No overt elements of victimisation | • Coercion and force to ensure victim compliance | • Instrumental violence which is physiologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator |
| Shared decision making | • Generally consensual and reciprocal | • Consent issues may be unclear | • Intrusive | • Sadism |
| | | • May lack reciprocity or equal power | • Informed consent lacking, or not able to be freely given by victim | |
| | | • May include levels of compulsivity | • May include elements of expressive violence | |

presented by children and young people, from those that are normal, to those that are highly deviant:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1657/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework.pdf>

Vulnerable groups

At Westfield Nursery School all our children are vulnerable due to their age ,however we acknowledge that some groups are more vulnerable. This can include children or young people who:

- have experience of abuse within their family
- are living with domestic violence
- are young people in care
- are children who go missing
- are children with additional needs (SEN and/or disabilities)
- are children who identify or are perceived as LGBT and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010

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 absence from school
- a change in their behaviour
- signs of self-harm or a significant change in well-being
- signs of assault or unexplained injuries.
- unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs

Responding to Alleged Incidents

Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment

All reports of child-on-child abuse will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, with the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy taking a leading role using their professional judgement. Support will be sought from other agencies such as social care, or the police as required.

An assessment of an incident between peers should be completed and consider:

- Chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved
- Difference in their power or authority in relation to age, race, gender, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability
- All alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident
- Whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation
- What was the degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery?
- The effect on the victim
- Any attempts to ensure the behaviour and incident is kept a secret
- The child or young person's motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred
- Whether this was a one-off incident, or longer in duration

It is important to deal with a situation of peer abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the children and the parents when they become involved. Avoid language that may create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled.

Staff will talk to the children in a calm and consistent manner. Staff will not be prejudiced, judgmental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

The immediate response to a report

- The school or college will take all reports seriously and will reassure the victim that they will be supported and kept safe
- All staff will be trained to manage a report
- Staff will not promise confidentiality as the concern will need to be shared further (for example, with the designated safeguarding lead or social care) staff will however only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it
- It is important to explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them
- Staff will record conversations and any actions using the appropriate coloured sheet
- Assess the needs of the victim and child alleged to have caused harm
- Where the report includes an online element the school or college will follow advice on searching, screening and confiscation. The staff will not view or forward images unless unavoidable and only if another member of staff (preferably the Designated Safeguarding Lead) is present
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed as soon as possible and consider a referral to the police and social care
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead must complete a risk assessment where sexual violence has occurred. This must be shared with Children's Social Care

When recording sexualised behaviour, it is essential that:

- Record as soon as possible, as you can quickly forget or confuse detail
- Be clear, explicit and non-avoidant, and avoid vague statements or euphemisms
- Use proper names for body parts but record exactly any language or vocabulary used by the child
- Use the child's exact words in quotation marks
- Note where and when the incident happened and whether anyone else was around

Gather the Facts

Westfield Nursery School recognise that not all children can verbally converse to fact find when incidents take place. Therefore, appropriate staff will fact find by conversing with those involved including, children and staff. Staff will use consistent language and open questions for each account. Ask the young people to tell you what happened. Use open questions, 'where, when, why, who'. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene?). Do not interrogate or ask leading questions.

Decide on your next course of action

If you believe any young person to be at risk of significant harm you must report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately; they will follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

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

Informing parents/carers

Westfield Nursery School aim to work in partnership with parents/carers and will communicate any incidents with them promptly. This will be done face-to-face whenever possible. When handing over information to parents/carers staff will present factual information to communicate the incident.

Anonymity

As a matter of effective safeguarding practice, Westfield Nursery School will do all we reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. Amongst other things, this will mean carefully considering, based on the nature of the report, which staff should know about the report and any support that will be put in place for the child/ren involved.

Risk Assessment

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will make an immediate risk and needs' assessment. This will be shared with Children's Social Care. The risk and needs' assessment should consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support.
- The child alleged to have caused harm; and
- All the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school or college, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them.
- The time and location of the incident, and any action required to make the location safer.

Risk assessments will be recorded and kept in safeguarding files and be kept under review.

Follow up Actions

Children sharing a classroom:

Whilst Westfield Nursery School establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children's social care and the police:

- Where appropriate the child alleged to have caused harm will be removed from any classes they share with the victim.
- Staff within the classrooms will be made aware of the situation to ensure they can support the child alleged to have caused harm and the victim

These actions are in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the child alleged to have caused harm.

Options to manage the report

Manage internally

1. In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, it may be appropriate to handle the incident internally, through utilising the behaviour and bullying policies and by providing additional support for the child and family. This decision is considered on the outcome of contact with Children's Social Care and submission of a completed risk assessment.

This decision will be made based on the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All decisions, and discussions around making these decisions, will be recorded and stored by the DSL in safeguarding files.

Details of sanctions for the child alleged to have caused harm will not be shared with any other persons, other than those providing care for them. This is to maintain confidentiality and privacy for the child involved.

2. In line with point 1 above, we may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions but may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consult the local threshold document when deciding if Early Help is appropriate.
3. Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, we will make a referral to Children's Social Care following locally agreed protocols.

Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy will 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 child alleged to have caused harm and any other children that require support.

Reporting to the Police

Designated Safeguarding Leads have a responsibility to report all alleged crimes to the police.

[when-to-call-the-police-guidance-for-schools-and-colleges](#)

Westfield Nursery School will follow local processes for making safeguarding referrals.

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this will be passed on to the police immediately. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the child alleged to have caused harm is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare approach, rather than a criminal justice approach.

Children and Young People's Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ChISVAs) provide emotional and practical support for victims of sexual violence. They are based within the specialist sexual violence sector and will help the victim understand what their options are and how the criminal justice process works if they have reported or are considering reporting to the police. ChISVAs will work in partnership with schools and colleges to ensure the best possible outcomes for the victim

Where a report has been made to the police, the school or college will consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, the child alleged to have caused harm and their parents or carers. They will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

Where there is a criminal investigation, we will work closely with the relevant agencies to support all children involved (including potential witnesses). Where required, advice from the police will be sought in order to help us, such as management of bail conditions.

Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the child alleged to have caused harm, we will 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.

The end of the criminal process

If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, Westfield Nursery School will update our risk assessment, ensuring relevant protections are in place for all children. We will consider any suitable action following our behaviour policy. If the child alleged to have caused harm remains at Westfield Nursery School we will be very clear as to our expectations regarding the child alleged to have caused harm now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions we think are reasonable and proportionate about the child alleged to have caused harm's timetable.

Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other pupils or students in the school or college. We will ensure all children involved are protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).

Where cases are classified as "no further action" (NFA'd) by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, we will continue to offer support to the victim and the child alleged to have caused harm for as long as is necessary. A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with their case will likely be traumatic for the victim. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. We will continue to support all parties in this instance.

It is also important to note that by law, every child has the right to an education.

Support for Children Affected by Sexual Assault

Westfield Nursery School recognise that the support children require depends on the individual. Westfield Nursery School will follow advice and guidance given to them to support the individual child. In addition, Westfield Nursery School may support the child through additional intervention groups.

We will support the victim of sexual assault to remain in school but if they are unable to do so we will enable them to continue their education elsewhere. This decision will be made only at the request of the child and

their family. If the child moves to another school, Westfield Nursery School will ensure the new school is aware of the ongoing support they may need. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will support this move.

Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, we may, if we have not already done so, consider any suitable sanctions using our behaviour policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion.

All the above will be considered with the needs and wishes of the victim at the heart of the process (supported by parents and carers as required). Any arrangements will be kept under review.

For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour

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

Specific support from identified services may be necessary through an early help referral and the young person may require additional support from family members.

Westfield Nursery School will also refer to our Behaviour Policy.

Online Behaviour

Many forms of child-on-child abuse have an element of online behaviour including behaviours such as cyberbullying and sexting. Policies and procedures concerning this type of behaviour can be found in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Acceptable Use Policy.

Prevention

Westfield Nursery School actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of child-on-child abuse by: Educating all Governors, Senior Leadership Team, staff and volunteers, and parents about this issue. This will include training all Governors, Senior Leadership Team, staff and volunteers on the nature, prevalence and effect of child-on-child abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it.

This includes:

- Contextual Safeguarding
- The identification and classification of specific behaviours
- The importance of taking seriously all forms of child-on-child abuse (no matter how low level they may appear) and ensuring that no form of child-on-child abuse is ever dismissed as horseplay or teasing
- Educating children about positive relationships through our curriculum
- Pupils/Students are frequently told what to do if they witness or experience such abuse, the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it, including vulnerability of those who inflict such abuse
- They are regularly informed about the school's approach to such issues, including its zero- tolerance policy towards all forms of child-on-child abuse
- Engaging parents on this issue by:
 - (a) talking about it with parents
 - (b) asking parents what they perceive to be the risks facing their child and how they would like to see the school address those risks; and
 - (c) involving parents in the review of school policies and lesson plans; and (d) Encouraging parents to hold the school to account on this issue
- Ensuring that all child-on-child abuse issues are fed back to the school's safeguarding team so they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify pupils/students who maybe in need of additional support
- Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside the classroom)
- Working with Governors, Senior Leadership Team, all staff and volunteers, pupils/students and parents to address equality issues, to promote positive values, and to encourage a culture of tolerance and respect amongst all members of the school community
- Creating conditions in which our pupils/students can aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships
- Creating a culture in which our pupils/students feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgmental environment, and have them listened to
- Responding to cases of child-on-child abuse promptly and appropriately

Appendix Seven- Indicators of Vulnerability to Radicalisation

1. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.
2. Extremism is defined by the Government in the Prevent Strategy as:
'Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.'
3. Extremism is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service as:
'The demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views which:
 - encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;
 - seek to provoke others to terrorist acts
 - encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts; or
 - foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK.'
4. There is no such thing as a "typical extremist": those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity.
5. People may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors - it is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. It is vital that school staff are able to recognise those vulnerabilities.
6. Indicators of vulnerability include:
 - identity crisis – the person is distanced from their cultural / religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society
 - personal crisis – the person may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation; and low self-esteem; they may have dissociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging
 - personal circumstances – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the child's country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy.
 - unmet aspirations – the person may have perceptions of injustice; a feeling of failure; rejection of civic life
 - experiences of criminality – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment, and poor resettlement / reintegration
 - special educational need – children may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others

However, this list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that all young people experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purposes of violent extremism.

More critical risk factors could include:

- being in contact with extremist recruiters
- accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element
- possessing or accessing violent extremist literature
- using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage
- justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues
- joining or seeking to join extremist organisations; and
- significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour
- experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and/or personal crisis.

Appendix Eight- Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but where there's no medical reason for this to be done.

It's also known as "female circumcision" or "cutting", and by other terms such as sunna, gudniin, halalays, tahur, megrez and khitan, among others.

FGM is usually carried out on young girls between infancy and the age of 15, most commonly before puberty starts. It is illegal in the UK and is child abuse.

It's very painful and can seriously harm the health of women and girls. It can also cause long-term problems with sexual intercourse, childbirth and mental health.

Effects of FGM

There are no health benefits to FGM, and it can cause serious harm, including:

- constant pain
- pain and/or difficulty having sex
- repeated infections, which can lead to infertility
- bleeding, cysts and abscesses
- problems passing urine or incontinence
- depression, flashbacks and self-harm
- problems during labour and childbirth, which can be life-threatening for mother and baby.

Some girls die from blood loss or infection as a direct result of the procedure.

Why FGM is carried out

FGM is carried out for various cultural, religious and social reasons within families and communities in the mistaken belief that it will benefit the girl in some way (for example, as a preparation for marriage or to preserve her virginity).

However, there are no acceptable reasons that justify FGM. It's a harmful practice that isn't required by any religion and there are no religious texts that say it should be done. There are no health benefits of FGM. FGM usually happens to girls whose mothers, grandmothers or extended female family members have had FGM themselves or if their father comes from a community where it's carried out.

Where FGM is carried out

Girls are sometimes taken abroad for FGM, but they may not be aware that this is the reason for their travel. Girls are more at risk of FGM being carried out during the summer holidays, as this allows more time for them to "heal" before they return to school.

Communities that perform FGM are found in many parts of Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Girls who were born in the UK or are resident here but whose families originate from an FGM practising community are at greater risk of FGM happening to them.

Communities at particular risk of FGM in the UK originate from:

Egypt, Yemen, Eritrea, Sudan, Oman, Ethiopia, Somalia, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Mali, Guinea, Nigeria, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Ivory Coast, Malaysia, Kenya, Iraq, Kurdistan & Liberia

The law and FGM

FGM is illegal in the UK. It is a criminal offence to:

- perform FGM (including taking a child abroad for FGM)
- help a girl perform FGM on herself in or outside the UK
- help anyone perform FGM in the UK
- help anyone perform FGM outside the UK on a UK national or resident
- fail to protect a girl for whom you are responsible from FGM.

Anyone who performs FGM can face up to 14 years in prison. Anyone found guilty of failing to protect a girl from FGM can face up to seven years in prison.

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers (along with social workers and healthcare professionals) to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.

Possible signs and indicators of FGM

A girl or woman who's had FGM may:

- have difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- spend longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet
- have unusual behaviour after an absence from school or college
- be particularly reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations
- ask for help but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.

Below are some warning signs that MAY indicate a girl is at risk of FGM:

- parents requesting additional periods of leave around school holiday times
- if the girl comes from a country with a high prevalence of FGM
- mother and siblings have undergone FGM
- child may indicate that they are going for a special event (in the UK or abroad).

Further information can be obtained from:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/512906/Multi_Agency_Statutory_Guidance_on_FGM_-_FINAL.pdf

Guidance on Pan Bedfordshire FGM pathways, and FGM screening tool can be found at:

[Click here to view Appendix 1: Pan Bedfordshire FGM Pathways.](#)

Appendix Nine- Youth Produced Sexual Imagery

Definition: This advice uses the term 'sharing nudes and semi-nudes' to mean the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos, or live streams by young people under the age of 18 online. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. It could also involve sharing between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop which works offline.

Incidents covered by this policy:

- person under 18 creates a sexual image of themselves and shares it with another person under 18
- a person under 18 shares an image of another under 18 with another person under 18 or an adult
- a person under 18 is in possession of sexual imagery created by another person under 18

Incidents not covered by this guidance:

- under 18s sharing adult pornography
- under 18s sharing sexual texts without sexual imagery
- adults sharing sexual imagery of under 18s. (This is child sexual abuse and must always be reported to police.)

The Law

Making, possessing, and distributing any imagery of someone under 18 which is indecent is illegal. This includes imagery of yourself if you're under 18.

Indecent is not definitively defined in law, but images are likely to be considered indecent if they depict:

- a naked young person
- a topless girl
- an image which displays genitals
- sex acts including masturbation
- indecent images may also include overtly sexual images of young people in their underwear.

The term 'indecent images' also include pseudo-images which are computer-generated images that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video. These may be created using tools such as photo/video editing software, deepfake apps and generators (to combine and superimpose existing images or videos onto other images and videos), and AI text-to-image generators.

These laws were not created to criminalise young people but to protect them. Although sharing sexual images of themselves is illegal and risky, it is often the result of curiosity and exploration. We believe young people need education, support, and safeguarding, not criminalisation.

The National Police Chiefs Council has made clear that incidents of youth produced sexual imagery should be treated primarily as a safeguarding issue. However, the police may need to be involved in cases to ensure thorough investigation including collection of evidence. If a young person has shared imagery consensually, such as when in a romantic relationship, or as a joke, and there is no intended malice, it is usually appropriate for the school to manage the incident directly. In contrast any incidents with aggravating factors, for example, a young person sharing someone else's imagery without consent and with malicious intent, should generally be referred to the police and/or Children's Social Care.

If you have any doubts about whether to involve other agencies, you should make a referral to the police.

Assessing the risks

The circumstances of incidents can vary widely. If at the initial review stage, a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or Children's Social Care, the DSL should conduct a further review (including an interview with the young people involved) to establish the facts and assess the risks. When assessing the risks, the following should be considered:

- Why was the imagery shared?
- Was the young person coerced or put under pressure to produce the imagery?
- Who has shared the imagery?
- Where has the imagery been shared?
- Was it shared and received with the knowledge of the pupil in the imagery?
- Are there any adults involved in the sharing of the imagery?
- What is the impact on the young people involved?
- Do the young people involved have additional vulnerabilities?
- Does the young person understand consent?
- Has the young person taken part in this kind of activity before?

Informing parents/carers

Parents/carers should be informed and involved in the process at an early stage unless informing will put the young person at risk of harm. Any decision not to inform the parents/carers would generally be made in conjunction with other services such as Children's Social Care and/or the police, who would take the lead in deciding when the parents/carers should be informed.

DSLs may work with the young people involved to decide on the best approach for informing parents. In some cases, DSLs may work to support the young people to inform their parents/carers themselves.

Searching devices, viewing and deleting imagery

Viewing the imagery

Adults should not view youth produced sexual imagery unless there is good and clear reason to do so. Wherever possible, responses to incidents should be based on what DSLs have been told about the content of the imagery.

If a decision is made to view imagery, the DSL would need to be satisfied that viewing:

- is the only way to make a decision about whether to involve other agencies (i.e. it is not possible to establish the facts from the young people involved)
- is necessary to report the image to a website, app or suitable reporting agency to have it taken down, or to support the young person or parent/carer in making a report
- is unavoidable because a young person has presented an image directly to a staff member or the imagery has been found on a school device or network.

If it is necessary to view the imagery, then the DSL should:

- never copy, print or share the imagery; this is illegal
- discuss the decision with the Head Teacher/Principal
- ensure viewing is undertaken by the DSL or another member of the safeguarding team with delegated authority from the Head Teacher/Principal
- ensure viewing takes place with another member of staff present in the room, ideally the Head Teacher/Principal or a member of the senior leadership team (this staff member does not need to view the images)
- wherever possible, ensure viewing takes place on school or college premises, ideally in the Head Teacher/Principal or a member of the senior leadership team's office
- ensure wherever possible that images are viewed by a staff member of the same sex as the young person in the imagery
- record the viewing of the imagery in the school's safeguarding records including who was present, why the image was viewed and any subsequent actions and ensure the safeguarding recording procedures for the school are followed.

The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized, a teacher who has been formally authorised by the Head Teacher/Principal can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

If during a search a teacher finds material which concerns them and they reasonably suspect the material has been or could be used to cause harm or commit an offence, they can decide whether they should delete the material or retain it as evidence of a criminal offence or a breach of school discipline. They can also decide whether the material is of such seriousness that the police need to be involved.

Further details on searching, deleting and confiscating devices can be found in the [DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation advice](#) (note this advice is for schools only)

Appendix Ten- Gang involvement

There are particular risk factors and triggers that young people experience in their lives that can lead to them becoming involved in gangs. Many of these risk factors are similar to involvement in other harmful activities such as youth offending or violent extremism.

Risk indicators may include:

- becoming withdrawn from family
- sudden loss of interest in school - decline in attendance or academic achievement
- starting to use new or unknown slang words
- holding unexplained money or possessions
- staying out unusually late without reason
- sudden change in appearance - dressing in a particular style or 'uniform'
- dropping out of positive activities
- new nickname
- unexplained physical injuries
- graffiti style tags on possessions, school books, walls
- constantly talking about another young person who seems to have a lot of influence over them
- broken off with old friends and hanging around with a new group
- increased use of social networking sites
- starting to adopt codes of group behaviour e.g. ways of talking and hand signs
- expressing aggressive or intimidating views towards other groups of young people some of whom may have been friends in the past
- being scared when entering certain areas
- being concerned by the presence of unknown youths in their neighbourhood

This is not an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide.

Appendix Eleven-Safeguarding in Specific circumstances: Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation takes different forms - from a seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for attention, affection, accommodation or gifts, to serious organised crime and child trafficking.

Child sexual exploitation involves differing degrees of abusive activities, including coercion, intimidation or enticement, unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying (including cyber bullying), and grooming for sexual activity. There is increasing concern about the role of technology in sexual abuse, including social networking, internet sites and mobile phones. The key issue in relation to child sexual exploitation is the imbalance of power within the 'relationship'. The perpetrator always has power over the victim, increasing the dependence of the victim as the exploitative relationship develops.

Many children and young people are groomed into sexually exploitative relationships, but other forms of entry exist. Some young people are engaged in informal economies that incorporate the exchange of sex for rewards such as drugs, alcohol, money or gifts. Others exchange sex for accommodation or money as a result of homelessness and experiences of poverty. Some young people have been bullied and threatened into sexual activities by peers or gangs which is then used against them as a form of extortion and to keep them compliant.

The key indicators of child sexual exploitation include:

Health

- physical symptoms (bruising suggestive of either physical or sexual assault)
- chronic fatigue
- recurring or multiple sexually transmitted infections
- pregnancy and/or seeking an abortion
- evidence of drug, alcohol or other substance misuse
- sexually risky behaviour

Education

- truancy/disengagement with education or considerable change in performance at school.

Emotional and Behavioural Issues

- volatile behaviour exhibiting an extreme array of mood swings or use of abusive language
- involvement in petty crime such as shoplifting, stealing etc.
- secretive behaviour
- entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults
- reports of being seen in places known to be used for sexual exploitation, including public toilets known for 'cottaging' or adult venues (pubs and clubs)

Identity

- low self-image
- low self-esteem
- self-harming behaviour, e.g. cutting, overdosing
- eating disorders
- promiscuity

Relationships

- hostility in relationships with staff, family members as appropriate and significant others
- physical aggression
- placement breakdown
- reports from reliable sources (e.g. family, friends or other professionals) suggesting the likelihood of involvement in sexual exploitation
- detachment from age-appropriate activities
- associating with other young people who are known to be sexually exploited
- known to be sexually active
- sexual relationship with a significantly older person, or younger person who is suspected of being abusive
- unexplained relationships with older adults
- possible inappropriate use of the Internet and forming relationships, particularly with adults, via the Internet
- phone calls, text messages or letters from unknown adults
- adults or older youths loitering outside the home
- persistently missing, staying out overnight or returning late with no plausible explanation

- returning after having been missing, looking well cared for in spite of having no known home base
- missing for long periods, with no known home base
- going missing and being found in areas where they have no known links

Please note: Whilst the focus is often on older men as perpetrators, younger men and women may also be involved and staff should be aware of this possibility.

Social Presentation

- change in appearance
- going out dressed in clothing unusual for them (inappropriate for age, borrowing clothing from older young people)

Family and Environmental Factors

- history of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse; neglect; domestic violence; parental difficulties

Housing

- pattern of previous street homelessness
- having keys to premises other than those known about

Income

- possession of large amounts of money with no plausible explanation
- acquisition of expensive clothes, mobile phones or other possessions without plausible explanation
- accounts of social activities with no plausible explanation of the source of necessary funding

This list is not exhaustive.

Appendix Twelve- Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect, and in promoting children's welfare, including their educational outcomes. Schools have clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>

This HM Government advice is non-statutory and has been produced to support practitioners in the decisions they take to share information, which reduces risk of harm to children and young people and promotes their well-being.

This guidance does not deal with arrangements for bulk or pre-agreed sharing of personal information between IT systems or organisations other than to explain their role in effective information governance.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) **do not** prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy. Fears about sharing information **must not** be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.'

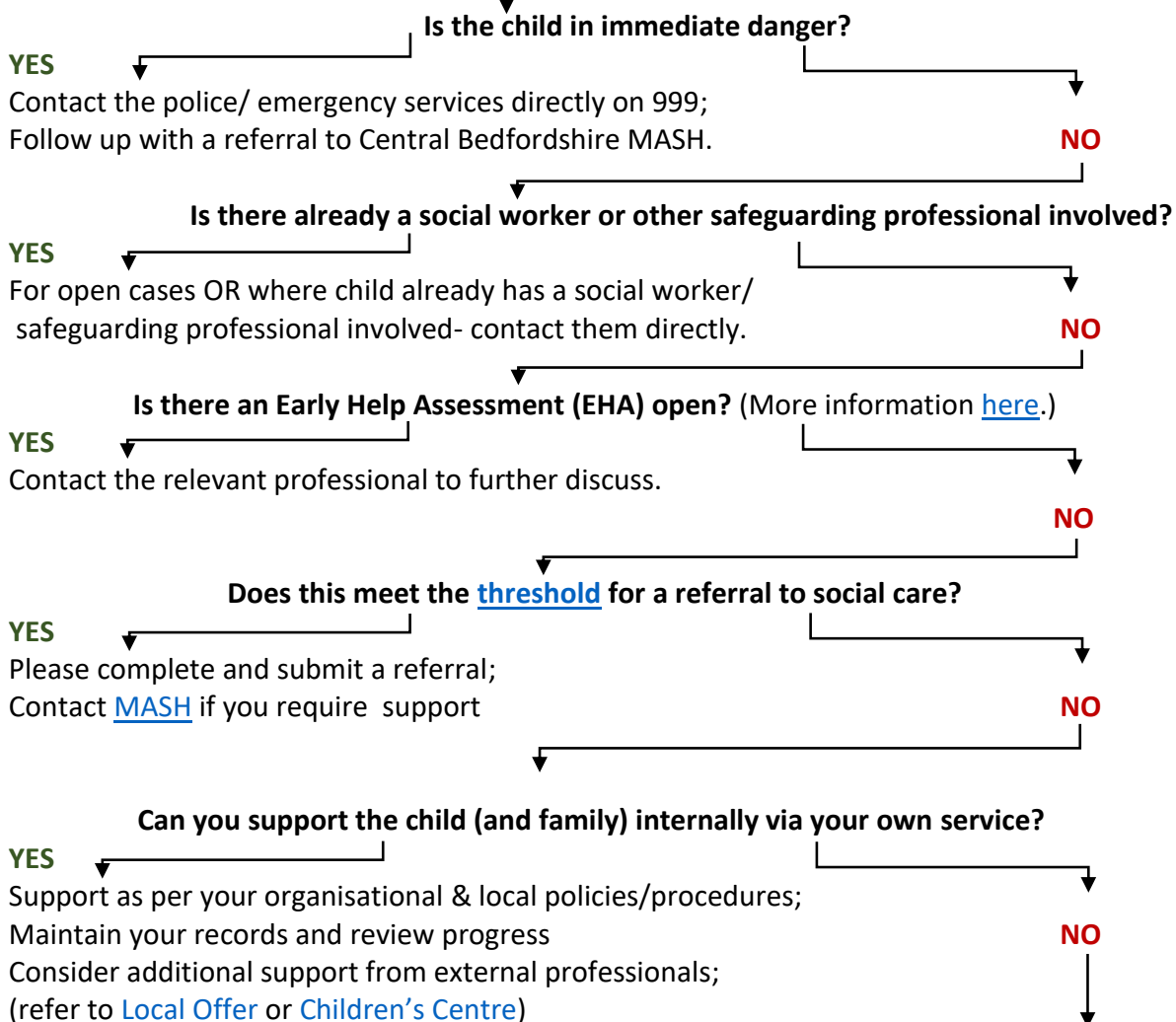
Further guidance can be found at:

[Pan Bedfordshire Practitioner's Guide to Information Sharing to Safeguard Children & Young People](#)
[Information Sharing & Consent Summary](#)
[Myth Busting: Information Sharing](#)

Model Setting Concern Process 2022

You have a worry or concern about a child

Record the concern (electronically / on paper) and pass on to your DSL.
Follow the procedures as per your school Child Protection / Safeguarding Policy.



Complete the form, submit and organise a meeting with relevant professionals.
Remember to include the child/ young person (as appropriate) and parents/ carers.
(Contact the [Early Help Team](#) for any support in completing the Early Help Assessment

If the child concerned is not in immediate danger but you are unsure of what to do, please contact 0300 300 8585 or cs.accessandreferral@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk (Out of hours: 0300 300 8123)

At all stages, remember to record your concerns and actions in line with your schools' policies and procedures. Remember safeguarding is everyone's business. [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) has details of information sharing to support safeguarding.

Appendix Fourteen - Prevent in Education Risk Assessment and Practice Action Plan

| | YES | NO | Existing Controls | Further Action | Staff Responsible | Due Date |
|--|-----|----|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------|
| Does your Safeguarding policy make explicit that the school sees protection from radicalisation and extremist narratives as a safeguarding issue? | | | | | | |
| Is the lead contact for Prevent responsibilities clearly identified in the policy? | | | | | | |
| DSL / Prevent Single Point of Contact (SPOC) | | | | | | |
| Governor Safeguarding Lead | | | | | | |
| Does SG policy make explicit how PREVENT concerns should be reported within school? | | | | | | |
| Fundamental British Values are considered in curriculum planning | | | | | | |
| Thinking about an incident of radicalisation and/or extremism - Has the setting considered specific potential areas of risk such as Processes in place to manage Subject Access Requests/Freedom of Information Requests should they be made? | | | | | | |
| The process in place for the management of information should there be media interest or if information requested into the community? | | | | | | |
| How will information be shared and with whom? | | | | | | |
| Does the school have clear guidance for visiting speakers? Checks for external speakers to the school -Has the identity of the speaker been confirmed, and due diligence carried | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| out? -Checks for premises use by externals? | | | | | | | |
| Have ALL staff received appropriated training on PREVENT? | | | | | | | |
| Does this include support staff? | | | | | | | |
| Are there provisions for new staff induction? | | | | | | | |
| Have Governors received a PREVENT briefing? | | | | | | | |
| Do all staff know what to do if they have a PREVENT concern and to whom to report it? | | | | | | | |
| Does the E-Safety Policy refer to the requirements of the Prevent guidance? | | | | | | | |
| Appropriate filtering is in place to ensure that staff and children are unable to access unauthorised or extremist websites online through school systems. | | | | | | | |
| Protocols are in place to manage the layout, access and use of any space provided for the purposes of prayer, contemplation and faith facilities | | | | | | | |
| Clear guidance on governing the display of materials internally at the school | | | | | | | |

Appendix Fifteen-Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass operates in all police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children.

Operation Encompass connects the police with schools to enable that the appropriate support is in place for children who are subject to/witness incidents of domestic abuse. The school environment enabling rapid provision allows for appropriate safeguarding to be put in place against the short, medium and long-term effects of domestic abuse. Following an incident, children may arrive at school distressed, anxious or upset and Operation Encompass ensures that appropriate staff are aware early enough in order to support children in making them feel safe.

Please click [here](#) for more information.

Operation Encompass provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members from educational settings who may be concerned about children who have experienced domestic abuse. The helpline is available 8AM to 1PM, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990 (charged at local rate).

Appendix Sixteen- Online Safety

Having measures in place to facilitate and promote the safe use of technology (in line with the Local Authority Guidance e-Safeguarding: Creating Working Procedures in Schools and the nurseries safety policy by:

- e-Security: keeping the electronic data we hold about pupils and families secure
- e-Safety: Promoting e-safety awareness amongst children and their parents/carers and ensuring all members of the school community know their access rights and responsibilities in using ICT
- Having an Acceptable Use Policy in relation to the use of technology (including mobile phones and photographic equipment) in the school and which contains the detail of how we will achieve e-security and promote e-safety (including harmful online challenges or hoaxes)
- Conducting, through the Governing Body, an annual review of the school's Acceptable Use Policy
- Ensuring that the school's internet connection and any system connected to it, is filtered using a Becta accredited filtering system, to ensure inappropriate content of whatever nature is blocked (including racist and hate material, material which promotes violence or attacks on individuals or institutions on the basis of religious, racial or gender grounds)
- Ensuring that all members of staff with access to ICT systems are responsible for taking the appropriate steps to select and secure their passwords
- Making staff and pupils/students aware that all school ICT activity and on-line communications may be monitored, including any personal and private communications made via the school network
- Making all staff and pupils aware that they have a responsibility to report e-safety or e-security incidents
- Establishing an incident reporting procedure and recording reported incidents in an Incident Log (in Line with Local Authority Guidance). The Incident Log shall be formally reviewed, and any outstanding actions delegated, by the Strategic Leadership Team at a minimum frequency of once per term. Through this review process, management shall update the risk assessment considering new incidents as appropriate
- Carrying out, through the Governing Body, an annual review of this Incident Log and accompanying action plans

Appendix Seventeen- Low-level concerns against a Staff Member, Volunteer or Governor

Intent

Westfield Nursery School understands the importance of acknowledging, recording and reporting **all** safeguarding concerns, regardless of their perceived severity. We understand that, while a concern may be low-level, that concern can escalate over time to become much more serious.

Our school prides itself on creating a safe and prosperous environment for pupils, and our staff are expected to adhere to high standards of behaviour when it comes to professional conduct regarding pupils. The school has clear professional boundaries which all staff are made aware of and will adhere to. We are committed to ensuring that any safeguarding concerns are dealt with as soon as they arise and before they have had a chance to become more severe, to minimise the risk of harm posed to our pupils and other children.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'
- DfE (2024) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Positive Handling Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy
- General Data Protection Regulations Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, a low-level concern is defined as any concern had about an adult's behaviour towards, or concerning, a child that does not meet the harms threshold (see below) or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral at the time of its reporting.

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant – a low-level concern is any concern that suggests an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- Does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO

Low-level concerns are differentiated from concerns that can cause harm. The harms threshold is the point at which a concern is no longer low-level and constitutes a threat of harm to a child. This threshold is defined as allegations that an adult has:

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

While low-level concerns are less serious than concerns which meet the harms threshold, the school understands that many serious safeguarding concerns often begin with low-level concerns, e.g. being overly friendly with children. The school will ensure that all staff are aware of the importance of recognising concerns before they have an opportunity to escalate from low-level to serious.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school complies with its duties under child protection and safeguarding legislation
- Ensuring that policies, procedures, and training opportunities with regard to reporting safeguarding concerns are compliant and effective
- Guaranteeing that there is an effective Staff Code of Conduct that outlines behavioural expectations
- Ensuring that a suitably trained DSL has been appointed, alongside deputy DSLs where appropriate
- Ensuring that there are robust reporting arrangements, including inter-agency collaboration
- Ensuring that there are appropriate procedures in place to handle allegations and low-level concerns reported against members of staff

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Being a point of contact for all staff when they have safeguarding concerns, whether serious or low-level
- Assessing whether safeguarding concerns about staff members meet the threshold for being termed an allegation, or whether they are low-level concerns
- Implementing this policy, and all related policies, throughout the school, and ensuring that staff adhere to it at all times
- Safeguarding pupils' wellbeing and maintaining public trust in the teaching profession
- Ensuring that all staff have undertaken safeguarding training
- Ensuring that all staff have an ongoing awareness of low-level concerns and reporting procedures.

The DSL will be responsible for:

- Being a point of contact for all staff when they have safeguarding concerns, whether serious or low-level
- Assessing whether safeguarding concerns about staff members meet the threshold for being termed an allegation, or whether they are low-level concerns
- Following all procedures outlined in this policy for acting upon low-level concerns
- Liaising with the headteacher, staff members, the governing board and all relevant agencies to act upon concerns, where necessary
- Keeping detailed, accurate and secure records of all low-level concerns and keeping records of decisions made regarding safeguarding concerns, including the rationale for those decisions

Staff will be responsible for:

- Adhering to all the relevant policies and procedures, including acting within the Staff Code of Conduct at all times
- Interacting with pupils in a way that is respectful and appropriate for their level of authority and has due regard to the power imbalance between pupils and staff members
- Understanding the importance of reporting low-level safeguarding concerns
- Reporting any and all safeguarding concerns they may have about pupils immediately
- Reporting any and all safeguarding concerns they may have about the behaviour of a member of staff immediately

Prevention amongst staff

Appropriate and inappropriate behaviour

The school will ensure that all staff members are aware of the standards of appropriate behaviour expected towards pupils.

Staff will ensure that they pay due regard to the fact that:

- They are in a unique position of trust, care, responsibility, authority, and influence in relation to pupils
- There is a significant power imbalance in the pupil-staff dynamic
- There are more stringent expectations on their behaviour with regard to pupils due to their position as a public professional

Staff will remain aware of the fact that all pupils under the age of 18, regardless of the phase and year group they are at within the school, are children by law – resultantly, staff will ensure that they do not assume maturity on behalf of a pupil and do not engage with pupils as they would with their own peers. Staff will be aware that where there is any doubt regarding whether the behaviour of another adult is appropriate, this should be reported to the DSL, headteacher or other nominated person immediately.

Inappropriate behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour to behaviour which is ultimately intended to enable abuse. Examples of inappropriate behaviour that would constitute a low-level concern that should be reported to the DSL include, but are not limited to:

- Being overly friendly with children – this could include, but is not limited to, communicating with a child through personal social media or allowing inappropriate conversations or enquiries to occur with pupils, e.g. conversations that are about a staff member's personal life or are of a sexual nature
- Having favourites – this could include, but is not limited to, calling pupils by pet names or terms of endearment or buying pupils gifts
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phones, contrary to school policy
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Humiliating children

Staff will be aware that some of the above low-level concerns may meet the harms threshold depending on certain factors, e.g. the age or needs of the child or the content of exchanged messages, and that some of

the above incidents may not be concerns in context, e.g. a pre-approved, one-to-one meeting with a child behind a closed door between the child and a school counsellor who has received all appropriate safety checks.

Staff will also be made aware that behaviour which raises concerns may not be intentionally inappropriate, and that this does not negate the need to report the behaviour. Staff members who engage in low-level inappropriate behaviour in relation to pupils inadvertently will be made aware and supported to correct this behaviour in line with the Staff Code of Conduct. The headteacher will also evaluate whether additional training would be beneficial for any staff members exhibiting concerning behaviour, or the staff cohort as a whole where low-level concerning behaviour is seen more widely.

School culture

The school understands that spotting the early signs of harmful behaviour towards children can be difficult, and that many will be hesitant to report concerns they have about their colleagues' behaviour, particularly the behaviour of their superiors. Staff are encouraged to maintain an attitude that recognises that abuse can happen anywhere, in any setting, and that anyone can be a perpetrator regardless of their age, sex, level of authority, personality, etc.

The school will ensure that all staff members have received training as part of their induction that outlines appropriate behaviour towards pupils for staff members. All staff will read, understand, and adhere to the Appropriate and inappropriate behaviour subsection of this policy, as well as the Staff Code of Conduct. Staff will address any questions they have regarding safeguarding to the DSL. The school will work to foster an environment where personal and professional boundaries are clearly set and respected for all individuals in the school community, e.g. pupils are not treated as friends and an appropriate professional distance is maintained by staff.

The school will ensure that all staff are sufficiently trained surrounding the reporting of safeguarding concerns as part of their induction, and that refresher training is conducted as necessary. The school will ensure that all staff understand how to recognise and report safeguarding concerns. Staff will be trained to identify inappropriate, concerning, or problematic behaviour towards pupils that may indicate a safeguarding concern, and how to identify signs of abuse or harm in pupils.

Evaluating school culture following concerns

The school will ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the school's culture and whether or not it has enabled the inappropriate behaviour to occur. The headteacher will review whether any changes need to be made to relevant policies or training programmes in light of any evaluations of the school's culture, in order to achieve an open and transparent culture that deals with all concerns promptly and appropriately.

Reporting concerns

The school will promote a culture in which safeguarding pupils is the uppermost priority, beyond any perceived professional loyalties to colleagues, ensuring that staff are actively encouraged to report concerns, regardless of their relationship with the staff member.

Staff will report all safeguarding concerns they have to the headteacher, DSL, or deputy immediately in line with the procedures laid out in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Staff members will report concerns without undue delay. Where the report concerns a specific incident, staff members will report their concerns no later than 24 hours after the incident where possible. Staff members will be aware that concerns are still worth reporting even if they do not seem serious.

Where the DSL is informed of low-level concerns, they will inform the headteacher in a timely fashion according to the nature of the concerns. The headteacher will be the ultimate decision maker in respect of all low-level concerns; however, they may take a more collaborative approach with the DSL to make a decision.

Staff members will report their concerns to the headteacher or deputy headteacher verbally. When submitting concerns, staff will take care to ensure that they observe the Confidentiality Policy and the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy and protect the identity of all individuals to which the concern pertains as far as possible.

Staff members may request anonymity when reporting a concern, and the school will endeavour to respect this as far as possible. The school will not, however, promise anonymity to staff members who report concerns in case the situation arises where they must be named, e.g. where it is necessary for a fair disciplinary hearing. In line with the Whistleblowing Policy, staff will be protected from potential repercussions caused by reporting a genuine concern.

Where a low-level concern relates to the headteacher, it should be reported to the chair of governors. Where a low-level concern relates to a person employed by a supply agency or a contractor to work in the school, staff will also be required to report this to the headteacher, who will, in turn, inform the employer of the subject of the concern.

All concerns reported to the headteacher will be documented in line with the Records Management Policy. In line with the [Evaluating concerns](#) section of this policy, if the school receives an allegation of a low-level safeguarding concern regarding an organisation that has hired the school premises, the school will follow its usual safeguarding procedures and process for managing allegations.

Self-reporting

On occasion, a member of staff may feel as though they have acted in a way that:

- Could be misinterpreted.
- Could appear compromising to others.
- They realise, upon reflection, falls below the expected professional standards set out in the Code of Conduct for Staff

The school will ensure that an environment is maintained that encourages staff members to self-report if they feel as though they have acted inappropriately or in a way that could be construed as inappropriate upon reflection. The headteacher and DSL will, to the best of their abilities, maintain a culture of approachability for staff members, and will be understanding and sensitive towards those who self-report. Staff members who self-report will not be treated more favourably during any resulting investigations than staff members who were reported by someone else; however, their self-awareness and intentions will be taken into consideration.

Evaluating concerns

Where the headteacher is notified of a safeguarding concern, they will use their professional judgement to determine if the concern is low-level or if it must be immediately escalated, e.g. where a child is at immediate risk of harm. When deciding if a concern is low-level, the headteacher will discuss the concern with the DSL and the deputy headteacher and will seek advice from the LADO where there is any doubt about whether the concern in fact meets the harm threshold. When seeking external advice, the headteacher will ensure they adhere to the Data Protection Policy, and the information sharing principles outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, at all times.

To evaluate a concern, the headteacher and DSL will:

- Speak to the individual who raised the concern to determine the facts and obtain any relevant additional information
- Review the information and determine whether the behaviour displayed by the individual about whom the concern was reported is consistent with the Staff Code of Conduct and the law
- Determine whether the concern, when considered alongside any other low-level concerns previously made about the same individual, should be reclassified as an allegation and dealt with alongside the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Consult with, and seek advice from, external agencies when in doubt over the course of action to follow
- Speak to the individual about whom the concern has been raised to inform them of the concern and to give them an opportunity to respond to it
- Ensure that accurate and detailed records are kept of all internal and external conversations regarding evaluating the concern, and any actions or decisions taken

Acting on concerns

Where the concern is unfounded

If it is discovered upon evaluation that the low-level concern refers to behaviour that was not considered to be in breach of the Staff Code of Conduct, the law, the headteacher will speak to the individual about whom the concern was made to discuss their behaviour, why and how the behaviour may have been misconstrued, and what they can do to avoid such misunderstandings in the future. The headteacher will also speak to the individual who shared the concern, outlining why the behaviour reported is consistent with school standards and the law. The headteacher will take care to ensure that conversations with individuals who reported concerns that transpired to be unfounded do not deter that individual from reporting concerns in the future. The headteacher will discuss the concern with the DSL (and if they have been involved, the LADO) to discern whether the behaviour, and the reporting of this behaviour, is indicative of ambiguity in the school's policies or procedures, or the training it offers to staff. Where such ambiguity is found, the DSL and headteacher will work together to resolve this with input from other staff members, as necessary. If a concern has been raised via a third party, the headteacher will collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

- Directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously.
- To the individual involved and any witnesses.

Where the concern is low-level

Where the headteacher determines that a concern is low-level, the school will respond to this in a sensitive and proportionate manner. The following procedure will be followed:

- The DSL will hold a meeting with the individual about whom the concern was reported, during which they will:
 - Talk to the individual in a non-accusatory and sympathetic manner
 - Inform them of how their behaviour was perceived by the individual who reported the concern (without naming them, where possible)
 - Clearly state what about their behaviour was inappropriate and problematic
 - Discuss the reasons for the behaviour with the individual
 - Inform the individual clearly what about their behaviour needs to change
 - Discuss any support that the individual may require in order to achieve the proper standards of behaviour
 - Allow the individual the opportunity to respond to the concern in their own words
- The DSL will ask the individual to re-read the Staff Code of Conduct depending on the nature of the concern
- The DSL and the headteacher will consider whether the individual should receive guidance, supervision or any further training
- Where considered appropriate in the circumstances, the headteacher will develop an action plan, with input from the individual, that outlines ongoing and transparent monitoring of the individual's behaviour and any other support measures implemented to ensure the staff member's behaviour improves
- Where it is necessary to undergo an investigation into the behaviour, this will be done discreetly, and information will only be disclosed to individuals on a need-to-know basis
- Where any pupil or other individual has been made to feel uncomfortable by the individual's behaviour, they will be offered pastoral support, where appropriate

The headteacher will ensure that all details of the low-level concern, including any resultant actions taken, are recorded and securely stored in line with the Records Management Policy and the Data Protection Policy. The headteacher will ensure that these records are kept organised and up-to-date, and that it is easy to refer back to them if any other concerns are reported about the same individual.

The specific approach to handling low-level concerns will be adapted on a case-by-case basis. It is unlikely that a low-level concern will result in disciplinary procedures; however, individuals may be given warnings in line with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure where behaviour does not improve once it is brought to their attention. Where behaviour does not improve over a longer period of time, the concerns will be escalated and dealt with in line with the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

Where the concern is serious

The headteacher may decide upon evaluation that a concern is more serious than the reporter originally thought, e.g. when viewed in conjunction with other evidence or other concerns made about the same individual. Where this decision is made, the concern will be escalated and dealt with as an allegation. The headteacher will then follow the procedures laid out in the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

Record keeping

The school will retain all records of low-level concerns, including those that were found to be unfounded. The headteacher will ensure that all records include the most accurate and up-to-date information and will store them in the electronic low-level concerns file. The headteacher will ensure that all low-level concerns are stored together, in an organised and consistent manner, to ensure they can be easily reviewed and analysed where necessary.

Records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern.
- The context in which the concern arose.
- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved.
- A note of any action taken, decisions reached, and the outcome.
- The name of the individual sharing concerns – if the individual wishes to remain anonymous, this will be respected as far as reasonably possible.
- The rationale for decisions made regarding any concerns.

The DSL will periodically review the recent low-level concerns made to ensure that they are being appropriately dealt with and to check for any concerning behaviour patterns amongst the staff cohort as a whole. The DSL will keep records of these reviews.

Where any concerning patterns of behaviour have been identified with regard to a member of staff, the DSL will consult with the headteacher to decide on a course of action. Where a pattern of behaviour has become so concerning that it meets the harms threshold, this will be referred to the LADO as soon as practicable. It should be considered whether there are any wider cultural issues within the school that enabled the behaviour to occur and where appropriate policies, including this one, could be revised, or extra training provided to staff to decrease the risk of it happening again.

Records of low-level concerns will not be kept in the personnel file of the individuals to whom the concerns pertain, unless there have been multiple low-level concerns made about the same individual. Where a concern is thought to be serious and is processed as an allegation, records of this will be kept in staff personnel files. Where multiple low-level concerns have been made about the same individual, these will be kept together, and in chronological order.

Where an allegation is made about an individual who has previously been subject to such allegations, or where a low-level concern is reclassified as a serious concern after meeting the harms threshold, all records of low-level concerns about that individual will be moved to the staff personnel file and kept alongside records of the allegation.

In line with the Data Protection Policy, records will be kept confidentially and held securely to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR. The school will consider how long information needs to be retained; however, it will be retained at least until the individual leaves their employment.

When providing employment references, the school will ensure that any information provided confirms whether they are satisfied with the applicant's suitability to work with children, and only provide the facts of any substantiated safeguarding concerns or allegations, including a group of low-level concerns about the same individual, that meet the harm threshold.

Any repeated low-level safeguarding concerns or allegations which do not meet the harm threshold which have been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated, or malicious will not normally be included in any reference.

The headteacher will decide in exceptional circumstances if a reference cannot be provided or if certain questions asked by the prospective employer cannot be answered, with HR advice sought when appropriate.

Appendix Eighteen -Safeguarding Supervision Policy

Vision

At Westfield Nursery we aim to deliver against our vision 'Inspired beginnings, outstanding futures'.

Philosophy

The Headteacher will ensure that all staff members working with vulnerable children have access to effective management and supervision. This includes family workers or other members of teaching or non-teaching staff who have had or has continuing involvement in safeguarding and child protection matters. This supervision and management will be provided by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Designated Safeguarding Deputy. This ensures that there is clarity about lines of accountability and how issues of performance management will be dealt with.

Definition of Supervision

Supervision refers to a participative process whereby supervisors ensure that employees are performing their role to a satisfactory standard and have the appropriate support and training to do so.

Supervision is an accountable process which supports, assures and develops the knowledge, skills and values of the individual, group or team.

Aims

The purpose of safeguarding supervision in education is to:

- Improve the quality of services to children, families and carers to achieve better outcomes for children
- Ensure supervisee is clear about roles and responsibilities
- Offer guidance and support regarding individual cases
- Provide space for case discussions
- Encourage critical reflection
- Identify gaps in learning
- Contribute to workers emotional resilience by their feeling valued, supported and motivated

Supervision Agreement

The individual supervision agreement sets out the framework for supervision and ensures that everybody involved has the same understanding of the supervisory process. These will be kept in the blue Safeguarding supervision file.

Our supervision guidance specifically addresses the process of supervision for staff involved in safeguarding children. The process specifies how the roles identified above will be carried out. Staff should have the opportunity to discuss with a supervisor all children who are causing them concern or who are receiving enhanced service provision, not only children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan.

The following process applies:

Planned/ Formal Meeting

Notes of these meetings are recorded on the Safeguarding Supervision Log to ensure that any actions are followed up and reviewed for best practice. These will be kept in the blue safeguarding supervision file.

- Each member of identified staff has a formal review meeting each term.
- Case loads and actions are reviewed – these will often be cases that are complex. As a guide the supervisee should consider the following when determining the cases that should be discussed at supervision:
 - Families avoidant or difficult to engage
 - Increasing concerns or escalating risk
 - Cases that are causing concern
 - Cases that are lacking in progress, or stuck or experiencing drift
 - Cases where there are professional disagreements
 - Cases where multi-agency involvement yet to be established and is thought to be needed
 - CP referrals or recent concerns which do/may reach a significant harm threshold
- Multi-agency working is highlighted
- Training is then identified and sourced
- Any support needed for work life balance is identified
- Where there are specific concerns about risk/ harm staff can use the 'Evaluating Risk' form to help identify concerns. This will be added to the chronology in the child's safeguarding file
- Where staff in the supervision 'deep dive' into one case staff can use the 'Case File Discussion' form to support the discussion. This will be added to the chronology in the child's safeguarding file

The safeguarding log will be reviewed with all cases, in terms of numbers and at what level of the thresholds framework they have been assessed at, will be updated.

Informal /Ad-hoc Meeting (actions must still be recorded)

- Staff seek advice when necessary regarding safeguarding issues
- Day to day contact with elements of support and advice

Notes of these meetings are recorded on the purple staff discussion sheet to ensure that any actions are followed up and reviewed for best practice.

Agenda

In accordance with the supervision agreement, both the supervisor and supervisee will ensure they have undertaken preparation for supervision to ensure this is as effective as possible.

Supervision Records

All supervisions will be accurately recorded. Supervision records will be stored securely and separately from children's records. Any actions arising from supervision that relate to individual cases/children must be recorded on the child's file.

All actions previously set will be reviewed at each subsequent supervision, outcomes of all actions will be recorded on the child's file and captured in brief on the supervision record.

Roles and Responsibilities

Both supervisor and supervisee have responsibility for making supervision work by preparing each supervision discussion and actively participating in the process. Supervisees should be open and share information with their supervisor, be clear and honest when seeking assistance, accept responsibility for their own work performance and learning together with providing and accepting constructive feedback.

The ethos should be constructive, restorative and focussed on learning and ensuring the best outcomes for children. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring supervision discussions are planned and only rearranged in exceptional circumstances.

Summary

This policy together with appendices provides a framework for supervision at Westfield Nursery school. Supervision is essential as it provides a forum for problem solving management and oversight of cases to ensure children receive the correct service at the right time in the least intrusive way in accordance with Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Panel (CBSCP) Thresholds Framework. Supervision may also assist in determining when to invoke the CBSCP procedures for dealing with professional disagreements in relation to specific cases.

**Westfield Nursery School
Individual Supervision Agreement**

Interruptions will be kept to a minimum and ideally be avoided completely. Our supervision relationship will be based upon mutual respect for each other's skills, knowledge and experience. Any performance management issues will be highlighted and action taken in a timely and fair way according to organisational policies and procedures.

All information between supervisor and supervisee will be treated with respect and in a professional manner.

Formal supervision sessions will be structured, with preparation work having been carried out and, where possible, an agenda will be set a few days before the supervision session. Both parties will prioritise the agenda items at the beginning of the session in order to make the most effective use of time.

All supervision sessions will be recorded including areas covered, discussion points (including reflection on practice), agreed action points, timescales, by whom action will be taken (Appendix 2). The record will be available to both the supervisor and the supervisee.

Where recording relates to a management decision on a case or a casework discussion this will be recorded as a discussion/decision on the child's file. This should be agreed and recorded on the supervision notes,

This is an agreement we have entered into in order to ensure effective, reflective and supportive supervision. It demonstrates a joint commitment to the supervision process and serves as a reminder of the professional responsibilities we have towards each other and the organisation we work in. Either of us may seek to re-negotiate the agreement if we feel it is necessary. The agreement will be reviewed by the supervisor and the supervisee on an annual basis.

Supervision sessions will cover:

- The quality of services to children, families and carers to achieve better outcomes for children
- Ensure supervisee is clear about roles and responsibilities
- Offer guidance and support regarding individual cases
- Provide space for case discussions
- Encourage critical reflection
- Identify gaps in learning
- Contribute to worker's emotional resilience by their feeling valued, supported and motivated

Signed

Supervisee _____ Date: _____

Supervisor _____ Date: _____

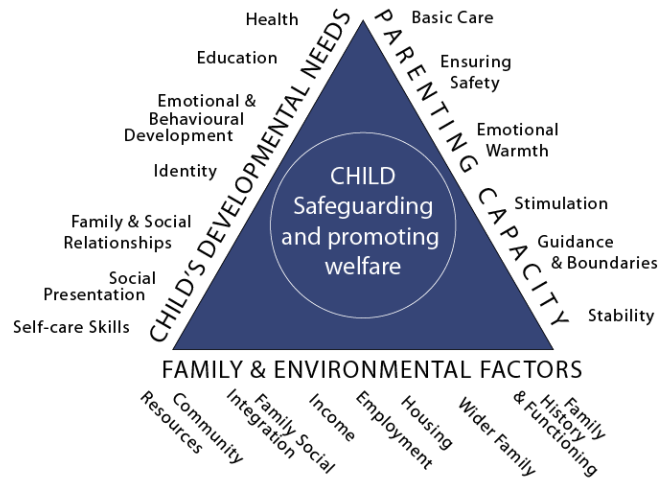


Westfield Nursery School Safeguarding Supervision Log

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of supervisor: | |
| Name of supervisee: | |
| Date: | |
| Case Management: Focusing on the quality of practice (What are we worried about? What are the risks? What actions do we need to take?) | Personal Support: Focussing on the emotional impact of the work and any resulting stress or support needs (What are you worried about? What actions do you need to take?) |
| | Development: Self-evaluation and building professional capability (Is there any training needed? Who for?) |
| | Mediation: Ensuring role clarity and effective multi-agency working (Who do we need to contact? Why?) |



Westfield Nursery School Evaluating Risk



| | |
|---|--|
| Child's name: | |
| Date: | |
| What are the risks to the child's developmental needs? | |
| What are the risks in terms of parenting capacity? | |
| What family & environmental factors could pose a risk? | |
| What actions do we need to take? | |



**Westfield Nursery School
Case File Discussion**

Child's Name:

Date of Birth:

Class:

Supervisor:

Member of Staff:

Date:

Notes

Risk areas:

Other agencies involved:

Changes in risk/vulnerability:

Protective factors:

Grey areas:

Comments:

Decisions:

Each entry to be signed by both parties.

| | |
|------|-----------|
| Name | Signature |
| Name | Signature |



Westfield Nursery School Prompts for Individual/ Group Supervision

1. Is there anything that has happened recently/ since the last supervision which needs to be shared?
2. What are you worried about? What is fact? What do you think is going on? What needs to happen? What is your professional judgement and why? Are all cases being treated fairly/ in the same way?
3. What actions need to be discussed from the previous meeting?
4. What are the numbers of cases & at what level? (Update Safeguarding Log)
5. Has the supervisee paid due regard to the guidance about the cases which have been brought to supervision for discussion?
6. Are there any cases that have not been brought to supervision that the supervisor should be aware of, if so, these should be added to the individual case list?
7. Individual case discussion
8. Which cases have been identified by the supervisor for discussion?
9. What is working well, what is working less well and what is needed from the supervisor?
10. Do time management / resources issues need to be discussed?
11. How is well-being of the supervisee?
12. Have you prioritised actions?