

FOUNDED 1789



'Learning for life with God as our guide'

St. Mary's CEP (VA) School, Dover

Child Protection Policy

Based on Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE guidance September 2022

Date: September 2022

Reviewed and Ratified By: Governing body on –

Review Date: Annually – September 2023

Review Date: Annually or following any updates to national and local guidance and procedures

Signed : _____ Elizabeth Fisher, Chair of Governors

Signed : _____ Helen Comfort, Executive Headteacher

St Mary's Church of England Primary School Child Protection Policy

Key Contact Personnel in School

Designated Safeguarding Lead:
Helen Comfort, Executive Headteacher

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s):
Matthew Lamprell, Head of School
Hayley Lamb, Pastoral Support Worker

Named Safeguarding Governors:
Rachel Hindle and Patricia Simmons

This is a core policy that forms part of the induction for all staff. It is a requirement that all members of staff have access to this policy and sign to say they have read and understood its contents.

Date written: September 2022

Date agreed and ratified by Governing Body:

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

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What to do if you have a welfare concern in St. Mary's CEP (VA) School

Why are you concerned?

- For example
 - Something a child has said – e.g. allegation of harm
 - Child's appearance – may include unexplained marks as well as dress
 - Behaviour change
 - Witnessed concerning behaviour

Act immediately and record your concerns. If urgent, speak to a DSL first.

- Follow the school procedure for St. Mary's CEP (VA) School
 - Reassure the child
 - Clarify concerns, using open questions if necessary (**TED: Tell, Explain, Describe**)
 - Use child's own words, record facts not opinions.
 - Sign and date your records
 - Seek support for yourself if required from DSL (Helen Comfort, **Matthew Lamprell & Hayley Lamb**)

Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Helen Comfort, **Matthew Lamprell & Hayley Lamb**)

Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Consider whether the child is at immediate risk of harm: **are they safe** to go home?
- Access the Kent Safeguarding Support Level Guidance document and procedures: www.kscmp.org.uk
- Refer to other agencies as appropriate e.g. Internal or community services, early help open access, LADO, Police or Request for Support **via** integrated children's services
- If unsure then consult with Area Education Safeguarding Advisor or Local Authority Social Worker at the Front Door.

If you are unhappy with the response

Staff:

- Follow local escalation procedures
- Follow Whistleblowing procedures

Learners and Parents:

- Follow school complaints procedures

Record decision making and action taken in the learner's child protection/safeguarding file

Monitor

Be clear about:

- What you are monitoring e.g. behaviour trends, appearance etc.
- How long you will monitor
- Where, how and to whom you will feedback and how you will record

Review and request further support (if necessary)

At all stages, the child's circumstances will be kept under review
The DSL/Staff will request further support if required to ensure the **child's safety is paramount**

1. Child Focused Approach to Safeguarding

1.1 Introduction

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognise our statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and all those directly connected (staff, volunteers, governors, leaders, parents, families, and pupils) are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children and have an essential role to play in making this community safe and secure.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School believe that the best interests of children always come first. All children (defined as those up to the age of 18) have a right to be heard and to have their wishes and feelings taken into account and all children regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity or orientation, have equal rights to protection.
- Staff working with children at St. Mary's CEP (VA) School will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff will always act in the best interests of the child and if any member of our community has a safeguarding concern about any child or adult, they should act and act immediately.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises the importance of providing an ethos and environment within school that will help children to be safe and to feel safe. In our school children are respected and are encouraged to talk openly. We will ensure children's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what safeguarding action to take and what services to provide.
- Our school core safeguarding principles are:
 - **Prevention**
 - positive, supportive, safe culture, curriculum and pastoral opportunities for children, safer recruitment procedures.
 - **Protection**
 - following the agreed procedures, ensuring all staff are trained and supported to recognise and respond appropriately and sensitively to safeguarding concerns.
 - **Support**
 - for all pupils, parents and staff, and where appropriate specific interventions are required for those who may be at risk of harm.
 - **Working with parents and other agencies**
 - to ensure timely, appropriate communications and actions are undertaken when safeguarding concerns arise.
- The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, including governors, temporary or third-party agency staff and volunteers and are consistent with those outlined within KCSIE 2022.

1.2 Policy Context

- This policy is implemented in accordance with our compliance with the statutory guidance from the Department for Education, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2022 (KCSIE) which requires individual schools and colleges to have an effective child protection policy.
- This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and related guidance. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - DfE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 (KCSIE)

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (WTSC)
 - Ofsted: Education Inspection Framework
 - Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000)
 - Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures
 - Early Years and Foundation Stage Framework 2021 (EYFS)
 - The Education Act 2002
 - The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
 - The Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015
 - The Human Rights Act 1998
 - The Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty)
- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires school governing bodies, local education authorities and further education institutions to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children who are pupils at a school, or who are students under 18 years of age. Such arrangements will have to have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
 - St. Mary's CEP (VA) School will continue to follow government guidance in response to the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic; regardless of the action required, our safeguarding principles will always remain the same. We will amend this policy and our approaches, as necessary.
 - St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognise that as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, some members of our community may have been exposed to a range of adversity and trauma including bereavement, anxiety and in some cases experienced increased welfare and/or safeguarding risks. We will work with local services, such as health and the local authority, to ensure necessary support is in place.
 - St. Mary's CEP (VA) School is currently operating in response to coronavirus (Covid-19), however, our safeguarding principles remain the same. We will continue to follow government guidance and will amend this policy, as necessary.
 - As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic some members of our community may have been exposed to a range of adversity and trauma including bereavement, anxiety and in some cases increased welfare and safeguarding risks. We will work with local services (such as health and the local authority) to ensure necessary services and support are in place to support learners.

1.3 Definition of Safeguarding

- In line with KCSIE 2022, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as:
 - protecting children from maltreatment;
 - preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
 - ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
 - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- The school acknowledges that this policy recognises a range of specific safeguarding issues including (but not limited to):
 - Abuse and neglect
 - Bullying including cyberbullying
 - Child-on-child abuse
 - Children with family members in prison
 - Children Missing Education (CME)
 - Child missing from home or care
 - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Contextual Safeguarding (Risks outside the family home)
- County Lines and gangs
- Domestic abuse
- Drugs and alcohol misuse
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Gender based abuse and violence against women and girls
- Hate
- Homelessness
- Human trafficking and modern slavery
- Mental health
- Nude or semi-nude image sharing, aka youth produced/involved sexual imagery or “Sexting”
- Online safety
- Peer on peer abuse
- Preventing radicalisation and extremism
- Private fostering
- Relationship abuse
- Serious Violence
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
- So-Called honour-based abuse including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage
- Upskirting

(Also see Part One and Annex B within ‘Keeping children safe in education’ 2022)

1.4 Related Safeguarding Policies

- This policy is one of a series in the school’s integrated safeguarding portfolio and should be read and actioned in conjunction with the policies as listed below:
 - Behaviour, including behaviour management and use of Physical Intervention
 - Code of Conduct/Behaviour Policy
 - Searching, screening and confiscation (Appendix 4)
 - Online Safety; Social media and Mobile technology
 - Anti-Bullying
 - Data protection and information sharing
 - Image Use
 - Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)
 - Personal and intimate care
 - Health and Safety
 - Attendance
 - Risk Assessments (e.g. school trips, use of technology, school reopening)
 - First Aid and Accidents
 - Managing allegations against staff
 - Policy for procedures for dealing with complaints
 - Staff Conduct Policy (including Acceptable Use of Technology Policies (AUP))
 - Safer Recruitment
 - Whistleblowing

1.5 Policy Compliance, Monitoring and Review

- St. Mary’s CEP (VA) School will review this policy at least annually (as a minimum) and will update it as needed, so that it is kept up to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and

evolve, including lessons learnt. The policy will be revised following any national or local policy updates, any significant national events, local child protection concerns and/or any changes to our procedures.

- All staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) will be provided with a copy of this policy and part one of KCSIE 2022. A copy is kept in the staff room and the teacher shared drive on the network.
- Parents/carers can obtain a copy of the Child Protection Policy and other related policies on request. Additionally, our policies can be viewed via the school website.
- The policy will be reviewed annually by the governing body which has responsibility for oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure regular reporting on safeguarding activity and systems to the governing body. The governing body will not receive details of individual learner situations or identifying features of families as part of their oversight responsibility.

2 Key Responsibilities

2.1 Governance and Leadership

- The governing body and leadership team have a strategic responsibility for our safeguarding arrangements and will comply with their duties under legislation.
- The governing body have regard to the KCSIE 2022 guidance and will ensure our policies, procedures and training is effective and complies with the law at all times.
- The governing body will facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding which involves everyone. They will ensure that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development, so that all systems, processes, and policies operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.
- The governing body are aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements set out by the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership ([KSCMP](#)).
- The governing body and leadership team will ensure that there are policies and procedures in place to ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- The school has a nominated governor for safeguarding. The nominated governor will support the DSL and have an oversight in ensuring that the school has an effective policy which interlinks with other related policies; that locally agreed procedures are in place and being followed; and that the policies are reviewed at least annually and when required.
- The Governing Body and Leadership Team will ensure that the DSL is properly supported in their role and is provided with sufficient time so they can provide appropriate support to staff and children regarding any safeguarding concerns.
- The Executive Headteacher will ensure that our child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the governing body, are understood, and followed by all staff.

2.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- The school has appointed Helen Comfort, a member of the senior leadership team as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- The DSL has overall responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems (including online safety) in school. Whilst the activities of the DSL may be delegated to the deputy, the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with the DSL and this responsibility will not be delegated.
- The school has appointed **Matthew Lamprell (Head of School) and Hayley Lamb (Family Liaison Officer)** as Deputy DSLs who will have delegated responsibilities and act in the DSL's absence.
- **The DSL (and any deputies) will be more likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and will be the most appropriate person to advise staff on the response to any safeguarding concerns.**
- It is the role of the DSL to carry out their functions as identified in Annexe C of KCSIE 2022. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Acting as the central contact point for all staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns
 - Maintaining a confidential recording system for safeguarding and child protection concerns
 - Coordinating safeguarding action for individual children
 - When supporting children with a social worker or looked after children, the DSL should have the details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child, with the DSL liaising closely with the designated teacher.
 - Liaising with other agencies and professionals in line with KCSIE 2022 and WTSC 2018.
 - Ensuring that locally established referral procedures as put in place by the three safeguarding partners as part of the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership procedures (KSCMP), including referrals, are followed, as necessary
 - Representing, or ensuring the school is appropriately represented at multi-agency safeguarding meetings (including Child Protection conferences)
 - Managing and monitoring the school's role in any multi-agency plan for a child.
 - Being available during term time (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns
 - Helping promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and school leadership staff.
 - Ensuring adequate and appropriate DSL cover arrangements in response to any closures and out of hours and/or out of term activities.
 - Ensuring all staff access appropriate safeguarding training and relevant updates in line with the recommendations within KCSIE.
 - **Liaising with** the Head of School of any significant safeguarding issues, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This includes being aware of the requirement for children to have **an Appropriate Adult (PACE Code C 2019)**.
- The DSL will undergo appropriate and specific training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role. Deputy DSLs are trained to the same standard as the DSL. The DSL and any deputy DSL training will be updated formally at least every two years, but their knowledge and skills will be updated through a variety of methods at regular intervals and at least annually.

2.3 Members of Staff

- Our staff play a particularly important role in safeguarding as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children's welfare and prevent concerns from escalating.

All members of staff have a responsibility to:

- Provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
- Be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect so that they can identify cases of children who may need help or protection.
- Know what to do if a child tells them that they are being abused, neglected, or exploited and understand the impact abuse and neglect can have upon a child.
- Be able to identify and act upon indicators that children are, or at risk of, developing mental health issues.
- Be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help.
- Understand the early help process and their role in it.
- Understand our school's safeguarding policies and systems.
- Undertake regular and appropriate training.
- Be aware of the local process of making referrals to children's social care and statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.
- Know how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality.
- Reassure children who report concerns that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- Act in line with Teachers' Standards 2012 which state that teachers (including Headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.
- Staff at St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognise that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as being abusive or harmful. This should not prevent staff from having professional curiosity and speaking to a DSL if they have any concerns about a child.
- Staff at St. Mary's CEP (VA) School will determine how best to build trusted relationships with children, young people and parents/carers which facilitate appropriate professional communication in line with existing and relevant policies.

2.4 Children and Young People

Children and young people (learners) have a right to:

- Feel safe, be listened to, and have their wishes and feelings taken into account.
- Confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.
- Contribute to the development of school safeguarding policies
- Receive help from a trusted adult.
- Learn how to keep themselves safe including online.

2.5 Parents and Carers

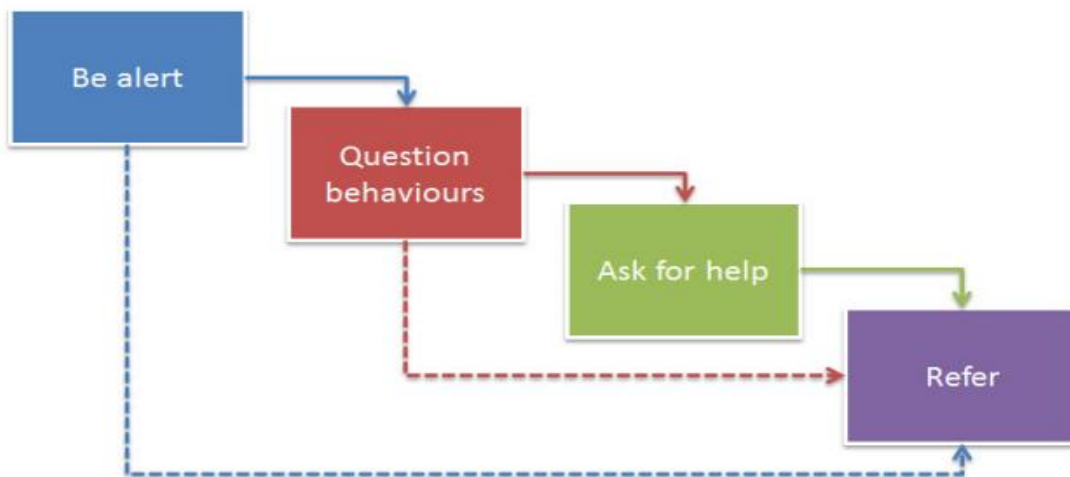
Parents/carers have a responsibility to:

- Understand and adhere the relevant school policies and procedures.
- Talk to their children about safeguarding issues with their children and support the school in their safeguarding approaches.
- Identify behaviours which could indicate that their child is at risk of harm including online.
- Seek help and support from the school, or other agencies.

3 Child Protection Procedures

3.1 Recognising Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

- Staff will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff will always act in the best interests of the child.
- All staff in school should be aware of the definitions and indicators of abuse and neglect as identified by Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022. This is outlined locally within the Kent Support Levels Guidance.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognise that when assessing whether a child may be suffering actual or potential harm there are four categories of abuse (for more information, see appendix 1):
 - Physical abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Emotional abuse
 - Neglect
- By understanding the indicators of abuse and neglect, we can respond to problems as early as possible and provide the right support and services for the child and their family.
- All members of staff are expected to be aware of and follow this approach if they are concerned about a child:



'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' 2015

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises that concerns may arise in many different contexts and can vary greatly in terms of their nature and seriousness. The indicators of child abuse and neglect can vary from child to child. Children develop and mature at different rates, so what appears to be worrying behaviour for a younger child might be normal for an older child. It is important to recognise that indicators of abuse and neglect do not automatically mean a child is being abused however all concerns should be taken seriously and explored by the DSL on a case by case basis.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot always be covered by one definition or one label alone. In

many cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another, therefore staff will always be vigilant and always raise concerns with a DSL.

- Parental behaviours can indicate child abuse or neglect, so staff should also be alert to parent-child interactions or concerning parental behaviours; this could include parents who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol or if there is a sudden change in their mental health.
- Children may report abuse happening to themselves, their peers or their family members. All reports made by children to staff will be taken seriously and will be responded to in line with this policy.
- Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school. Children can be at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual abuse, serious youth offence and county lines.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises that technology can be a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues; children are at risk of abuse online from people they know (including other children) and from people they do not know; in many cases, abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises that some children have additional or complex needs and may require access to intensive or specialist services to support them.
- Following a concern about a child's safety or welfare, the searching and screening of children and confiscation of any items, including electronic devices, will be managed in line with the DfEs 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation' guidance and the school's behaviour policy.
 - The DSL (or deputy) will be informed of any searching incidents where there were reasonable grounds to suspect a pupil was in possession of a prohibited item as listed in our behaviour policy. The DSL (or deputy) will then consider the circumstances of the pupil who has been searched to assess the incident against any potential wider safeguarding concerns.
 - Staff will involve the DSL (or deputy) without delay if they believe that a search has revealed a safeguarding risk.

3.2 Responding to Child Protection Concerns

- If staff are made aware of a child protection concern, they are expected to:
 - listen carefully to child, reflecting back the concern.
 - Use the child's language.
 - Be non-judgemental.
 - Avoid leading questions; only prompting the child where necessary using open questions to clarify information where necessary, e.g. who, what, where, when or Tell, Explain, Describe (TED).
 - not promise confidentiality as concerns will have to be shared further, for example, with the DSL and potentially Integrated Children's Services.
 - be clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed.
 - record the concern using the facts as the child presents them, in line with school record keeping requirements (see section 9).
 - inform the DSL (or deputy), as soon as practically possible.

- The DSL or a deputy should always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns. If in exceptional circumstances, a DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken **by staff**. Staff should speak to a member of the senior leadership team, take advice from Education Safeguarding Service or a consultation with a social worker from the Front Door (**see flowchart on page 3**). In these circumstances, any action taken will be shared with a DSL as soon as is practically possible.
- **All staff are made aware that early information sharing is vital for the effective identification, assessment, and allocation of appropriate service provision, whether this is when problems first emerge, or where a child is already known to other agencies. Staff will not assume a colleague, or another professional will act and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.**
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School will respond to concerns in line with the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership procedures (KSCMP).
 - The full KSCMP procedures and additional guidance relating to reporting concerns and specific safeguarding issues can be found on their website: www.kscmp.org.uk
- **In Kent, Early Help and Preventative Services and Children's Social Work Services are part of Integrated Children's Services (ICS). Specific information and guidance to follow with regards to accessing support and/or making referrals in Kent can be found here:** www.kelsi.org.uk/support-for-children-and-young-people/integrated-childrens-services
- Where it is identified a child may benefit from Early Help support (as provided by ICS), the DSL (or deputy) will generally lead as appropriate and make a request to support via the Front Door.
 - The DSL will keep all early help cases under constant review and consideration will be given to escalating concerns to the Front Door or seeking advice via the Education Safeguarding Service if the situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.
- **All staff are made aware of the process for making referrals to Integrated Children's Services and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.**
- Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger, **(for example, under section 17 or 47 of the Children Act)**, a 'request for support' will be made immediately to Integrated Children's Services (via the 'Front Door') and/or the police, in line with KSCMP procedures.
 - St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognise that in situations where there are immediate child protection concerns for a child as identified in line with Support Level Guidance, it is NOT to investigate as a single agency, but to act in line with KSCMP guidance which may involve multi-agency decision making.
 - The DSL may seek advice or guidance from their Area Education Safeguarding Advisor from the Education Safeguarding Service before deciding next steps.
 - They may also seek advice or guidance from a social worker at the Front Door service who are the first point of contact for Integrated Children's Services (ICS).
- In the event of a request for support to the Front Door being necessary, parents/carers will be informed and consent to this will be sought by the DSL in line with guidance provided by KSCMP and ICS. Parents/carers will be informed of this, unless there is a valid reason not to do so, for example, if to do so would put a child at risk of harm or would undermine a criminal investigation.

- If, after a request for support or any other planned external intervention, a child's situation does not appear to be improving or **concerns regarding receiving a** or the decisions made, **staff or the DSL will re-refer (if appropriate) and/or DSLs will follow the [KSCMP escalation procedures](#)** to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves. DSLs may request support with this via the Education Safeguarding Service.

3.3 Recording Concerns

At St. Mary's CEP (VA) School we use a computerised system of recording and logging all matters linked to safeguarding and child protection.

The system we use is called CPOMS.

CPOMS is a software application for monitoring child protection, safeguarding and a whole range of pastoral and welfare issues. Working alongside our existing safeguarding processes, CPOMS is an intuitive system to help with the management and recording of child protection, behavioural issues, bullying, special educational needs, domestic issues and much more including attendance and punctuality. By using CPOMS, we can ensure that students are safe and fully supported.

Every member of staff across school has an obligation to report any concerns which they have. CPOMS allows them to record information in a central repository and have relevant people alerted immediately. School leaders are able to build a chronology around a student and can produce reports on vulnerable pupil groups for Case Conference Meetings, Governors and Ofsted.

- All safeguarding concerns, discussions and decisions, and reasons for those decisions, will be recorded on the school's safeguarding system and passed without delay to the DSL. **Our records will include a clear and comprehensive summary of any concerns, details of how concerns were followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken, decisions reached and outcomes.**
- The school uses CPOMS; all staff have access to this.
- Additionally, incident/Welfare concern forms are kept in the staff room and school office.
- Records will be completed as soon as possible after the incident/event, using the child's words. Child Protection records will record facts and not personal opinions. A body map will be completed if **visible** injuries have been observed.
- If there is an immediate concern the member of staff should consult with the DSL before completing the form as reporting urgent concerns takes priority.
- If members of staff are in any doubt about recording requirements, they will discuss their concerns with the DSL.
- Child protection records will include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of how the concern was followed up and resolved and details regarding any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.
- Child protection records will be kept confidential and stored securely. Child protection records will be kept for individual children and will be maintained separately from all other records relating to the child in the school. Child protection records are kept in accordance with data protection legislation and are retained centrally and securely by the DSL.

- All child protection records will be transferred in accordance with data protection legislation to the child's subsequent school/setting, under confidential and separate cover **as soon as possible; within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term.** Child protection records will be transferred securely to the new DSL, separately to the child's main file, and a confirmation receipt will be obtained.
- In addition to the child protection file, the DSL will also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the DSL at the new school or college in advance of a child leaving, for example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue to provide support.
- Where the school receives child protection files **from another setting**, the DSL will ensure key staff such as the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), will be made aware of relevant information as required.
- **Where a pupil joins the school and no child protection files are received, the DSL will proactively seek to confirm from the previous setting whether any child protections exist for the pupil, and if so, if the files have been sent.**

3.4 Multi-Agency Working

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School **recognises the pivotal role we have to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and** is committed to its responsibility to work within the KSCMP multi-agency safeguarding arrangements as identified within 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.
- The leadership team and DSL will work to establish strong and co-operative local relationships with professionals in other agencies, **including the safeguarding partners** in line with **local and national** guidance.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises the importance of multi-agency working and is committed to working alongside partner agencies to provide a coordinated response to promote children's welfare and protect them from harm. This includes contributing to KSCMP processes as required. Such as, participation in relevant safeguarding multi-agency plans and meetings, including Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups, Strategy Meetings, Child in Need meetings or other early help multi-agency meetings.
- **The School will allow access for Kent Children's Social Work Service and, where appropriate, from a placing local authority, to conduct, or to consider whether to conduct, a section 17 or a section 47 assessment.**

The Headteacher and DSL are aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult ([PACE Code C 2019](#)) where there is a need for detention, treatment and questioning by police officers and will respond to concerns in line with our school Behaviour policy, which is informed by the DfE '[Searching, screening and confiscation at school](#)' guidance.

3.5 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises our duty and powers to hold, use and to share relevant information with appropriate agencies in matters relating to child protection at the earliest opportunity as per statutory guidance outlined within KCSIE.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School has an appropriately trained Data Protection Officer (DPO) as required by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) to ensure that our school is

compliant with all matters relating to confidentiality and information sharing requirements. Our DPO is Schools' Personnel Service DPO Services.

- Staff will have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow them to share and withhold personal information. The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children (KCSIE 2022). DfE "[Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#)" (2018) guidance provides further details regarding information sharing principles and expectations.
- The DSL will disclose relevant safeguarding information about a pupil with staff on a 'need to know' basis.
- All members of staff must be aware that whilst they have duties to keep any information confidential, in line with our Confidentiality Policy they also have a professional responsibility to 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; this may include sharing information with the DSL and with other agencies as appropriate.
- In regard to confidentiality and information sharing staff will only involve those who need to be involved, such as the DSL (or a deputy) and Kent Integrated Children's Services. All staff are aware they cannot promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may not be in the best interests of the child.

3.6 Complaints

- All members of the school community should feel able to raise or report any concerns about children's safety or potential failures in the school safeguarding regime. The school has a Complaints Procedure available to parents, pupils and members of staff and visitors who wish to report concerns or complaints. This can be found in the staff room/office/ website etc.
- Whilst we encourage members of our community to report concerns and complaints directly to us, we recognise this may not always be possible. Children, young people, and adults who have experienced abuse at school can contact the NSPCC 'Report Abuse in Education' helpline on 0800 136 663 or via email: help@nspcc.org.uk
- Staff can also access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally.
 - Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email help@nspcc.org.uk.
- The leadership team at St. Mary's CEP (VA) School will take all concerns reported to the school seriously and all complaints will be considered and responded to in line with the relevant and appropriate process.
 - Anything that constitutes an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer will be dealt with in line with section 17 of this policy.

4 Specific Safeguarding Issues

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School is aware of the range of specific safeguarding issues and situations that can put children at greater risk of harm. In addition to Part One, DSLs, school leaders and staff who work directly with children read Annex B of the KCSIE 2022 which

contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues.

- Where staff are unsure how to respond to specific safeguarding issues, they should follow the processes as identified in part 3 of this policy and speak to the DSL or a deputy.

4.1 Child-on-child Abuse

- All members of staff at St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognise that children can abuse other children (referred to as child-on-child abuse, previously known as 'peer-on-peer' abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises that child-on-child abuse can take many forms, including but not limited to
 - Bullying including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
 - Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children
 - Physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm
 - Sexual violence and sexual harassment
 - Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
 - 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
 - 'Upskirting', which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
 - Nude or semi-nude image sharing (also known as 'sexting' or youth produced/involved sexual imagery)
 - Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals
- Any allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with in line with this child protection policy and KCSIE 2022 (in particular, part two and five).
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School adopts a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse. We believe that abuse is abuse and it will never be tolerated or dismissed as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys"; this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and can create an unsafe environment for children and a culture that normalises abuse, which can prevent children from coming forward to report it.
- All staff have a role to play in challenging inappropriate behaviours between children. Staff recognise that that some child-on-child abuse issues may be affected by gender, age, ability and culture of those involved, i.e. for gender based abuse, girls are more likely to be victims and boys more likely to be perpetrators.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse is still likely to be taking place and it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such, it is important that staff speak to the DSL (or deputy) about any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse.
- In order to minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse, St. Mary's CEP (VA) School will:
 - implement a robust anti-bullying policy,
 - provide an age/ability appropriate PSHE and RSE curriculum,
 - provide a range of reporting mechanisms e.g. worry boxes

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School want children to feel able to confidently report abuse and know their concerns will be treated seriously. All allegations of **child-on-child** abuse will be report to the DSL and will be record, investigated, and dealt with in line with associated policies, including child protection, anti-bullying and behaviour. Learners who experienced abuse will be offered appropriate support, regardless of where the abuse takes place.
- Concerns about **pupils'** behaviour, including **child-on-child** abuse taking place offsite will be responded to as part of a partnership approach with **pupils'** and parents/carer. Offsite behaviour concerns will be recorded and responded to in line with existing appropriate policies, for example anti-bullying, acceptable use, behaviour and child protection policies.
- Alleged victims, **alleged** perpetrators and any other child affected by **child-on-child** abuse may be supported by:
 - Providing pastoral support, working with parents/carers, and in cases of sexual assault, informing the police and/or Front Door.

4.2 Child on Child Sexual Violence and **Sexual** Harrassment

- When responding to concerns relating to child-on-child sexual violence or harassment, St. Mary's CEP (VA) School will follow the guidance outlined in Part five of KCSIE 2022.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises that sexual violence and sexual abuse can happen anywhere, and all staff will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here.' St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children and can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally). Sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable.
- **All** victims of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, 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 sexual violence or sexual harassment, or ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school will not be dismissed or downplayed and will be treated equally seriously and in line with relevant policies/procedures, for example anti-bullying, behaviour, child protection, online safety.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this will be explained in such a way to pupils that avoids alarming or distressing them.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises that an initial disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported, rather than representative of a singular incident and that trauma can impact memory, so children may not be able to recall all details or timeline of abuse. All staff will be aware certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone, for example because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation.
- The DSL (or deputy) is likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and will be the most appropriate person to advise on the initial response.
 - The DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment which will be considered on a case-by-case basis which explores how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator, and any other children involved/impacted, in line with part five of KCSIE 2022 and relevant local/national guidance and support, for example [KSCMP](#) procedures and support from the [Education Safeguarding Service](#).

- The risk and needs assessment will be recorded and kept under review and will consider the victim (especially their protection and support), the alleged perpetrator, and all other children, adult students and staff and any actions that are required to protect them.
 - Any concerns involving an online element will take place in accordance with relevant local/national guidance and advice.
- Reports will initially be managed internally by the school and where necessary will be referred to [Integrated Children's Services](#) (Early Help and/or Children's Social Work Service) and/or the police. Important considerations which may influence this decision include:
 - the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed.
 - the nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether Harmful Sexual Behavior has been displayed.
 - the ages of the children involved.
 - the developmental stages of the children involved.
 - any power imbalance between the children.
 - if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse - sexual abuse can be accompanied by other forms of abuse and a sustained pattern may not just be of a sexual nature.
 - that sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between children.
 - understanding intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents.
 - whether there are any ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students, or school staff.
 - any other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.
- The school will in most instances engage with both the victim's and alleged perpetrator's parents/carers when there has been a report of sexual violence; this might not be necessary or proportionate in the case of sexual harassment and will depend on a case-by-case basis. The exception to this is if there is a reason to believe informing a parent/carer will put a child at additional risk. Any information shared with parents/carers will be in line with information sharing expectations, our confidentiality policy, and any data protection requirements, and where they are involved, will be subject to discussion with other agencies (for example Children's Social Work Service and/or the police) to ensure a consistent approach is taken.
- If at any stage the DSL is unsure how to proceed, advice will be sought from the Education Safeguarding Service.

4.3 Nude and/or Semi-Nude Image Sharing by Children

The term 'sharing nudes and semi-nudes' is used to mean the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams of/by young people under the age of 18. Creating and sharing nudes and semi-nudes of under-18s (including those created and shared with consent) is illegal which makes responding to incidents complex.

The [UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people guidance](#) outlines how schools and colleges should respond to all incidents of consensual and non-consensual image sharing, and should be read and understood by DSLs working with all age groups, not just older learners.

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises that consensual and non-consensual nude and semi-nude image sharing (also known as youth produced/involved sexual imagery or "sexting") is a safeguarding issue; all concerns will be reported to and dealt with by the DSL (or deputy).

- When made aware of concerns involving nude or semi-nude image taking/sharing involving children, staff are advised to:
 - Report any concerns involving nude or semi-nude image sharing involving children to the DSL immediately.
 - Never view, copy, print, share, **forward**, store or save the imagery, or ask a child to share or download it – this may be illegal. If staff have already **inadvertently** viewed the imagery by accident, **this will be immediately reported to the DSL.**
 - Not delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it.
 - Not say or do anything to blame or shame any children involved.
 - Explain to child(ren) involved that they will report the issue to the DSL and reassure them that they will receive appropriate support and help.
 - Not ask the child or children involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery and not share information about the incident with other members of staff, the child(ren) involved or their, or other, parents and/or carers. This is the responsibility of the DSL.

- DSLs will respond to concerns in line with the non-statutory UKCIS guidance: [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#) and the local [KSCMP](#) guidance. When made aware of a concern involving consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos
 - The DSL will hold an initial review meeting to explore the context and ensure appropriate and proportionate safeguarding action is taken in the best interest of any child involved. This may mean speaking with relevant staff and the children involved if appropriate.
 - parents and carers will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process to best support children, unless there is good reason to believe that involving them would put a child at risk of harm.
 - All decisions and action taken will be recorded in line with our child protection procedures.
 - a referral will be made to ICS and/or the police immediately if:
 - the incident involves an adult (over 18).
 - there is reason to believe that a child has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, age of SEND).
 - the image/videos involve sexual acts and a child under the age of 13, depict sexual acts which are unusual for the child's developmental stage, or are violent.
 - a child is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.
 - The DSL may choose to involve other agencies at any time if further information/concerns are disclosed at a later date.
 - If DSLs are unsure how to proceed, advice will be sought from the Education Safeguarding Service.

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

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises that **both** CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises that children can become trapped in CCE as perpetrators can threaten victims and their families with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. Children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves which can mean their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised (particularly older children) and they are not treated as victims, despite the harm they have experienced. The experience of girls who are criminally exploited can also be very different to that of boys. We also recognise that boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE).
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises that CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge, for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities and includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited, for example they may believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.
- If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of CSE or CCE, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL or a deputy.

4.5 Serious Violence

- All staff are made aware of the indicators which may signal children are at risk from or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include unexplained gifts or new possessions, increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or 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 and may be at risk of CCE.
- Any concerns regarding serious violence will be reported and responded to in line with other child protection concerns by speaking with a DSL or deputy. The initial response to child victims is important and staff will take any allegations seriously and work in ways that support children and keep them safe.

4.6 So-called honour based abuse

- So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.
- All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and concerns should be responded to in line with section 3 of this policy. Staff will report any concerns about HBA to the DSL (or a deputy). If there is an immediate threat, the police will be contacted.
- Whilst all staff will speak to the DSL (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific legal duty on teachers.
 - If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.

4.7 Preventing radicalisation

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School is aware of our duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism", also known as the Prevent duty and the [specific obligations](#) placed

upon us as an education provider regarding risk assessments, working in partnership, staff training, and IT policies.

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises that children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation and staff will be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection.
- Staff will report any concerns to the DSL (or a deputy), who is aware of the [local procedures](#) to follow.

4.8 Cybercrime

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises that children with particular skill and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen offline but are enabled at scale and at speed online) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer/internet enabled device) cybercrime.
- If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of becoming involved in cyber-dependent cybercrime, the DSL **or a deputy** will be informed, and consideration will be given to accessing local support and/or referring into the [Cyber Choices](#) programme, which aims to intervene when young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.
- Where there are concerns about 'cyber-enabled' crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs online, child sexual abuse and exploitation, or other areas of concern such as online bullying or general online safety, they will be responded to in line with the Child Protection and other appropriate policies.

4.9 Domestic abuse

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises that domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional abuse. Children can be victims of domestic abuse and may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). Domestic abuse can have a detrimental and long-term impact on children's health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School is an [Operation Encompass School](#). This means we work in partnership with Kent Police to provide support to children experiencing domestic abuse.
- If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of seeing, hearing, or experiencing domestic abuse in their home or in their own intimate relationships, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL or a deputy.

4.10 Mental health

- All staff recognise 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.
- Staff are aware that children's experiences, for example where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

- Staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.
- If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL or a deputy.

5 Supporting Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm

- Whilst all children should be protected, St. Mary's CEP (VA) School acknowledge that some groups of children are potentially at greater risk of harm. This can include the following groups:

5.1 Safeguarding Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School acknowledges that children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and barriers for recognising abuse and neglect.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises that children with SEND may face additional communication barriers and experience difficulties in managing or reporting abuse or challenges. Children with SEND will be appropriately supported to communicate and ensure that their voice is heard and acted upon.
- All members of staff will be encouraged to appropriately explore possible indicators of abuse such as behaviour, mood changes or injuries and not to assume that they are related to the child's disability. Staff will be mindful that children with SEND or certain medical conditions may be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
- Members of staff are encouraged to be aware that children with SEND can be disproportionately impacted by safeguarding concerns, such as exploitation, peer group isolation or bullying including prejudice-based bullying.
- To address these additional challenges, our school will always consider implementing extra pastoral support and attention for children with SEND. The DSL will work closely with the SENCo to plan support as required.
- Our school has robust intimate/personal care policies which ensure that the health, safety, independence, and welfare of children is promoted, and their dignity and privacy are respected. Arrangements for intimate and personal care are open and transparent and accompanied by robust recording systems. Further information can be found in our Personal and Intimate Care Policy.

5.2 Children requiring Mental Health Support

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School has an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils. 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.
- Where there are concerns regarding possible mental health problems for pupils, staff should raise an immediate concern by speaking with the DSL or a deputy.

- Age/ability appropriate education will be provided to our pupils to help promote positive health, wellbeing, and resilience.

5.3 Children Missing from Education

- Children missing from education, particularly persistently, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse, and child sexual and criminal exploitation – particularly county lines. A robust response to children missing from education will support the identification of such abuse and may help prevent the risk of children going missing in the future.
- Where possible, the school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil so that we have additional options to make contact with a responsible adult if a child missing education is also identified as being a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.
- Where the school/college have concerns that a child is missing from education, we will respond in line with our statutory duties (DfE: [Children missing education](#)) and local policies. Local support is available via the [PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service \(PIAS\)](#).

5.4 Elective Home Education

- Where a parent/carer expresses their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, we will respond in line with [national Elective Home Education guidance](#) and local [Kent guidance](#) and will work together with parents/carers and other key professionals and organisations to ensure decisions are made in the best interest of the child.

5.5 Children who need a Social Worker (child in need and child protection plans)

- The DSL will hold details of social workers working with children in the school so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare, and educational outcomes.
- Where children have a social worker, this will inform school decisions about their safety and promoting their welfare, for example, responding to unauthorised absence and provision of pastoral and/or academic support.

5.6 Looked after children, previously looked after children and care leavers

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises the common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect and a previously looked after child also potentially remains vulnerable.
- The school has appointed a 'designated teacher' who works with local authorities, including the [Virtual School Kent \(including the virtual school head\)](#), to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked after or who have been previously looked after.
- The designated teacher will work with the DSL to ensure appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after them.
- Where a child is looked after, the DSL will hold details of the social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child.

- Where the school believe a child is being cared for as part of a private fostering arrangement (occurs when a child under 16 or 18 if the child is disabled is cared for and lives with an adult who is not a relative for 28 days or more) there is a duty to recognise these arrangements and inform the Local Authority via the front door.
- Where a child is leaving care, the DSL will hold details of the local authority Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support them and will liaise with them as necessary regarding any issues of concern.

5.7 Children who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi, or Trans (LGBT)

- The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises that children who are LGBT or are perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be targeted by other children or others within the wider community.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. LGBT is included within our Relationships Education/ Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum and our staff will endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for children to speak out or share any concerns.

6 Online Safety

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School has a separate online safety policy, please refer to this policy for further details.
- It is recognised by St. Mary's CEP (VA) School that the use of technology presents challenges and risks to children and adults both inside and outside of school.
- It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate material or behaviours online. St. Mary's CEP (VA) School will adopt a whole school approach to online safety which will empower, protect and educate the community in their use of technology and establish mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incident where appropriate.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School identifies that the breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be broadly categorised into four areas of risk:
 - **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content; for example, pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, ant-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism;
 - **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example, peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
 - **conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying.
 - **commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises that technology, and the risks and harms related to it, evolve and change rapidly. The school will carry out an annual review of our approaches

to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment which consider and reflects the risks our children face.

- The Executive Headteacher/DSL will be informed of online safety concerns as appropriate. The named governor for safeguarding will report on online safety practice and incidents, including outcomes, on a regular basis to the wider governing body.

6.1 Policies and Procedures

- The DSL has overall responsibility for online safeguarding within the school, but will liaise as necessary with other members of staff, for example IT technicians, curriculum leads, etc. as necessary.
- The DSL will respond to online safety concerns reported in line with our child protection and other associated policies such as anti-bullying and behaviour.
 - Internal sanctions and/or support will be implemented as appropriate.
 - Where necessary, concerns will be escalated and reported to relevant partner agencies in line with local policies and procedures.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School uses a wide range of technology. This includes (computers, laptops, tablets and other digital devices, the internet, learning platforms and email systems.)
 - All school owned devices and systems will be used in accordance with our acceptable use policies and with appropriate safety and security measures in place.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises the specific risks that can be posed by mobile technology, including mobile phones and cameras. In accordance with KCSIE 2022 and EYFS 2021 our school has appropriate policies in place that are shared and understood by all members of the community.

6.2 Appropriate Filtering and Monitoring

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School will do all we reasonably can to limit children's exposure to online risks through our school IT systems and will ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place.
 - All users will be informed that use of our systems can be monitored, and that monitoring will be in line with data protection, human rights and privacy legislation.
 - Filtering breaches or concerns identified through our monitoring approaches will be recorded and reported to the DSL and technical staff, as appropriate.
 - If pupils or staff discover unsuitable sites or material, they are required to inform the School Business Manager immediately making a note of the Site Name and URL.
 - Our leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the filtering and monitoring provisions in place, manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified.
 - Any access to material believed to be illegal will be reported immediately to the appropriate agencies, such as the [Internet Watch Foundation](#) and the police.
 - When implementing appropriate filtering and monitoring, St. Mary's CEP (VA) School will ensure that "over blocking" does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught with regards to online teaching and safeguarding.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School acknowledges that whilst filtering and monitoring is an important part of schools online safety responsibilities, it is only one part of our approach to

online safety. Pupils and adults may have access to systems external to the school control such as mobile phones and other internet enabled devices and technology and where concerns are identified appropriate action will be taken.

- Internet use will be supervised by staff as appropriate to pupils' age and ability.
- Pupils will be directed to use age/ability appropriate online resources and tools by staff.

6.3 Information Security and Access Management

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School is responsible for ensuring an appropriate level of security protection procedures are in place, in order to safeguard our systems as well as staff and pupils.
- We will review the effectiveness of these procedures periodically to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies.

6.4 Remote/Online learning

Where children are asked to learn online at home in response to a full or partial closure:

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School will ensure any remote sharing of information, communication and use of online learning tools and systems will be in line with privacy and data protection requirements.
- All communication with learners and parents/carers will take place using school provided or approved communication channels; for example, school provided email accounts and phone numbers.
 - Any pre-existing relationships or situations which mean this cannot be complied with will be discussed with the DSL.
- Staff and learners will engage with remote teaching and learning in line with existing behaviour principles as set out in our school Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Policies.
- Staff and learners will be encouraged to report issues experienced at home and concerns will be responded to in line with our child protection and other relevant policies.
- When delivering remote learning, staff will follow our Remote Learning Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) - See Appendix 3
- Parents/carers will be made aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access.
- Parents/carers will be encouraged to ensure children are appropriately supervised online and that appropriate parent controls are implemented at home.

6.5 Staff Training

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School will ensure that online safety training for all staff is integrated, aligned and considered as part of our overarching safeguarding approach.

6.6 Educating Pupils

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School will ensure a comprehensive whole school curriculum response is in place to enable all pupils to learn about and manage online risks effectively as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

6.7 Working with Parents/Carers

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School will build a partnership approach to online safety and will support parents/carers to become aware and alert of the potential benefits and risks and to reinforce the importance of children being safe online by:
 - Providing information on our school website and through existing communication channels (such as official social media, newsletters etc.),
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School will ensure parents and carers understand what systems are used to filter and monitor their children's online use at school, what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. This is achieved by:
 - Providing information on our school website through relevant policies such as acceptable use, home/school agreements and through existing communication channels.
- Where the School/College is made aware of any potentially harmful risks, challenges and/or hoaxes circulating online, national or locally, we will respond in line with the DfE '[Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes](#)' guidance to ensure we adopt a proportional and helpful response. Additional local advice and support is available for DSLs and SLT via the Education Safeguarding Service: '[Think before you scare](#)'.

7 Staff Engagement and Expectations

7.1 Induction, Awareness and Training

- All members of staff have been provided with a copy of Part One of "*Keeping Children Safe in Education*" (2022) which covers Safeguarding information for all staff.
 - School leaders, including the DSL, will read KCSIE in its entirety
 - School leaders and all members of staff who work directly with children will read Annex B.
 - All members of staff have signed confirm that they have read and understood the guidance shared with them. This information will be logged on the single central record and the signed copy kept on individual staff files.
- All new staff and volunteers (including agency and third-party staff) receive safeguarding and child protection training and information to ensure they are aware of the school's internal safeguarding processes as part of their induction. This training is regularly updated and is in line with advice from the safeguarding partners.
- All governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) training at induction. This training equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure that our safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. This training is regularly updated.
- All staff members (including agency and third-party staff) will receive appropriate child protection training (including online safety) to ensure they are aware of a range of safeguarding issues. This training will be updated at least annually.
- Online safety training for staff will be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole school safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning.
- In addition to specific child protection training, all staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (through staff meetings, bulletins, email) at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and from managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis and staff are encouraged to contribute to and shape school safeguarding arrangements and child protection policies
- The DSL will provide an annual report to the Governing Body detailing safeguarding training undertaken by all staff and will maintain up to date record of who has been trained.

7.2 Safer Working Practice

- All members of staff are required to work within clear guidelines on Safer Working Practice as outlined in the school's Code of Conduct.
- The DSL will ensure that all staff and volunteers have read our child protection policy and are aware of the school's expectations regarding safe and professional practice via the staff Code of Conduct.
- Staff will be made aware of the school's Behaviour Management Policy, and physical intervention / use of reasonable force must be in line with agreed policy and procedures and national guidance.
- All staff will be made aware of the professional risks associated with the use of social media and electronic communication (such as email, mobile phones, texting, social networking). Staff will adhere to relevant school policies including staff Code of Conduct, Acceptable Use Policies (AUPS) which refer to use of mobile and smart technology and social media.

7.3 Supervision and support

- The induction process will include familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if members of staff have any concerns about a child's safety or welfare.
- The school will ensure that members of staff who are working within the foundation stage are provided with appropriate supervision in accordance with the statutory requirements of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2021.
- The school will provide appropriate supervision and support for all members of staff to ensure that:
 - All staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
 - All staff are supported by the DSL in their safeguarding role.
 - All members of staff have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they improve over time.
- Any member of staff affected by issues arising from concerns for children's welfare or safety can seek support from the DSL.
- The DSL will also put staff in touch with outside agencies for professional support if they so wish. Staff can also approach organisations such as their Union, the Education Support Partnership or other similar organisations directly.

8 Safer Recruitment and Allegations

8.1 Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding Checks

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School is committed to ensure that we develop a safe culture and that all steps are taken to recruit staff and volunteers who are safe to work with our **pupils** and staff.
 - St. Mary's CEP (VA) School will follow relevant guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 (Part Three: 'Safer Recruitment') and from The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
 - The governing body and leadership team are responsible for ensuring that the school follows safe recruitment processes outlined within guidance.
 - The leadership will ensure that there is at least one person who conducts an interview has completed safer recruitment training.
- The school maintains an accurate Single Central Record (SCR) in line with statutory guidance.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School is committed to supporting the statutory guidance from the Department for Education on the application of the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 and related obligations under the Childcare Act 2006 in schools.
- We advise all staff to disclose any reason that may affect their suitability to work with children including convictions, court orders, cautions, reprimands and warnings.
- Where the school places a **pupil** with an alternative provision provider, the school will continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that child.
- The school will undertake appropriate checks to ensure the provider meets the needs of the pupil, including written confirmation that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment.

8.2 Allegations/concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers and contractors

- Any concerns or allegations about staff **will be recorded** and dealt with appropriately in line with national (Part Four of KCSIE 2022) and the [local Kent allegations arrangements](#) In depth information can be found within our 'Managing Allegations against Staff' policy.
- Any concerns or allegations about staff will be recorded and dealt with appropriately in line with national (Part Four of KCSIE 2022) and local guidance. Ensuring concerns are dealt with effectively will protect those working in or on behalf of the school from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.
- Where headteachers are unsure how to respond, for example if the school is unsure if a concern meets the harm 'thresholds', advice will be sought via the [Local Authority Designated Officer](#) (LADO) Enquiry Line and/or the [Education Safeguarding Service](#).
- **In all cases where allegations are made against staff or low-level concerns are reported, once proceedings have been concluded, the Headteacher (and if they have been involved the LADO) will consider the facts and determine whether any lessons can be learned and if any improvements can be made.**

8.2.1 Concerns that meet the 'harm threshold'

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises that it is possible for any member of staff, including volunteers, governors, contractors, agency and third party staff (including supply teachers) and visitors to behave in a way that indicates a person would pose a risk of harm if they

continue to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children in a school or college. This includes when someone has

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or
 - behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
 - behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
- Allegations against staff which meet this threshold will be responded to and managed in line with part four of KCSIE. Allegations that meet the harm threshold will be referred immediately to the Headteacher who will contact the LADO to agree further action to be taken in respect of the child and staff member. In the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Headteacher, staff are advised that allegations should be reported to the Chair of Governors who will contact the LADO.

8.2.2 Concerns that do not meet the 'harm threshold'

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School may also need to take action in response to 'low-level' concerns about staff which typically would be behaviours which are inconsistent with our staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and concerns that do not meet the allegations threshold.

Examples of circumstances in which staff should make a low-level concern are as follows:

- any incident where s/he feels that his/her actions or behaviour towards a child could be misinterpreted;
- any incident which a member of staff is aware of actions of a colleague towards a child which could be misinterpreted;
- any incident of which a staff member is aware where the interactions of a colleague with a child are not appropriate to the child's age or developmental need at that time;
 - inadvertent email, messaging, use of social media sites or other communication between staff and children outside agreed protocols;
- any unsupervised contact with a child other than in the context of a one-to-one lesson or discussion about academic, extracurricular or pastoral issues or other situations which fall within expected boundaries of professional conduct;
- any incident where a member of staff has been alone with a child or transporting children in a vehicle where this has not been authorised in advance;
- any inadvertent and potentially inappropriate social contact with children outside of school (such as restaurants or pubs);
- if a child uses a staff member's home address, mobile or home phone number, or private e-mail address;
- one-to-one contact with a child on school trip [residential / non-residential] which falls outside expected boundaries of professional conduct;

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but representative. Anything which causes staff to have a 'nagging doubt' about the way in which other adults behave or interact with children, or how their own actions could be viewed should be notified. This is in order to protect both children and the members of staff involved.

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School has an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school are dealt with promptly and appropriately; this enables us to identify inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour early, minimise the risk of abuse and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school are clear about and act within appropriate professional boundaries, and in accordance with our ethos and values.

- A 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant; 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 our code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and does not meet the 'harm threshold' or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.
- Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example, suspicion, complaints, or allegations made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation, or as a result of vetting checks.
- It is crucial that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly, recorded and dealt with appropriately to protect staff from becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings.
- Low-level concerns should be shared confidentially in line with our low-levels concerns policy/code of conduct to the Headteacher.
 - Where low-level concerns are reported to the school, the Headteacher will be informed of all low level concerns and is the ultimate decision maker in respect of the response to all low-level concerns.
 - The Headteacher will share concerns and liaise with the LADO enquiries officer via the [LADO Enquiry Line](#).
 - Low-level concerns shared about supply staff and contractors will be shared with their employers so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.
 - If the school is in any doubt as to whether the information which has been shared about a member of staff as a low-level concern in fact meets the harm threshold, we will consult with the LADO.
- Low-level concerns will be recorded in writing and reviewed so potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.
 - Records will be kept confidential and will be held securely and retained and in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and other relevant policies and procedures (for example data retention policies).
 - Where a pattern is identified, the school will implement appropriate action, for example consulting with [the LADO enquiry line](#) and following our disciplinary procedures.

8.2.3 Safe Culture

- As part of our approach to safeguarding, the school has created and embedded a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour as set out in our code of conduct are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) and where all concerns are dealt with promptly and appropriately.
- Staff are encouraged and should feel confident to self-refer, if they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards. This includes where concerns may be felt to be deliberately invented or malicious; such allegations are extremely rare and as such all concerns should be reported and recorded.
- All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise any concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school safeguarding regime. The leadership team at St. Mary's CEP (VA) School will take all concerns or allegations received seriously.

- All members of staff are made aware of the school's Whistleblowing procedure and that it is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk.
- Staff can also access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally.
 - Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person.
 - If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our school, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the LADO and/or Schools Personnel Service.

9 Opportunities to Teach Safeguarding

- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School will ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. This will include covering relevant issues through Relationships and Sex Education.
- We recognise that schools play an essential role in helping children to understand and identify the parameters of what is appropriate child and adult behaviour; what is 'safe'; to recognise when they and others close to them are not safe; and how to seek advice and support when they are concerned. Our curriculum provides opportunities for increasing self-awareness, self-esteem, social and emotional understanding, assertiveness and decision making so that pupils have a range of age appropriate contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and that of others.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognises the crucial role we have to play in preventative education. Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school approach which prepares pupils for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School has a clear set of values and standards, upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life which are underpinned by our behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as by a planned programme of evidence-based RSHE delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum. Our programme is fully inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate.
- St. Mary's CEP (VA) School recognise that a one size fits all approach will not be appropriate for all children, and a more personalised or contextualised approach, tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children might be needed, for example children who are victims of abuse and children with SEND.
- Our school systems support children to talk to a range of staff. All children will be listened to and heard, and their concerns will always be taken seriously and acted upon as appropriate.

10 Physical Safety

10.1 Use of 'reasonable force'

- There may be circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force in order to safeguard children from harm. Further information regarding our approach and expectations can be found in our behaviour policy and is in line with the DfE 'Use of reasonable force in schools' guidance.

10.2 Use of School Premises by Other Organisations

- Where services or activities are provided separately by another body using the school premises, the Executive Head Teacher and Governing Body will seek written assurance that the organisation concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place regarding safeguarding children and child protection and that relevant safeguarding checks have been made in respect of staff and volunteers. If this assurance is not achieved, then an application to use premises will be refused.
- Safeguarding requirements will be included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises. Failure to comply with this will lead to termination of the agreement.

10.3 Site Security

- All members of staff have a responsibility for maintaining awareness of buildings and grounds security and for reporting concerns that may come to light. Staff will be expected to adhere to any safety arrangements implemented because of Covid-19 restrictions.
- Appropriate checks will be undertaken in respect of visitors and volunteers coming into school as outlined within guidance. Visitors will be expected to sign in and out via the office visitors log and to display a visitor's badge whilst on school site. Visitors will be expected to adhere to any safety arrangements implemented because of Covid-19 restrictions.
- Staff and visitors will be expected to adhere to any safely arrangements implemented in response to any Covid-19 restrictions.
- Any individual who is not known or identifiable on site should be challenged for clarification and reassurance.
- The school will not accept the behaviour of any individual (parent or other) that threatens school security or leads others (child or adult) to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse access for that individual to the school site.

11 Local Support

- All members of staff in St. Mary's CEP (VA) School are made aware of local support available
 - **Education Safeguarding Service**
 - **Area Safeguarding Advisor (South East)**
 - **03000 415797**
 - **Online Safety in the Education Safeguarding Service**
 - **033301 651500**

- onlinesafety@theeducationpeople.org (non-urgent issues only)

- **LADO Service**
 - Telephone: 03000 410888
 - Email: kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk

- **Integrated Children's Services**
 - Front door: 03000 411111
 - Out of Hours Number: 03000 419191

- **Early Help**
www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/integrated-childrens-services/early-help-and-preventative-services and www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/integrated-childrens-services/early-help-contacts

- **Kent Police**
 - 101 or 999 if there is an immediate risk of harm

- **Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP)**
 - kscmp@kent.gov.uk
 - www.kcsmp.org.uk
 - 03000 421126

- **Adult Safeguarding**
 - Adult Social Care via 03000 41 61 61 (text relay 18001 03000 41 61 61) or email social.services@kent.gov.uk

Dover Early help team

Louise Fisher

County Role: 5 - 11 years

Louise.Fisher@kent.gov.uk

03000 41 47 91

0-25 Area Head of Service

Jo Hook

Joanna.Hook@kent.gov.uk

03000 41 62 66

0-25 District Manager

Leanne Watson

Leanne.Watson@kent.gov.uk

03000 41 45 21

Children's Centre Delivery Manager

Kelaiah Gayle

Kelaiah.Gayle@kent.gov.uk

03000 42 19 79

Children's Centre Delivery Manager

Erin Bell

Erin.Bell@kent.gov.uk

03000 41 80 19

Youth Hub Delivery Manager

Andrea Whittall

Andrea.Whittall@kent.gov.uk

03000 41 39 60

Youth Justice Unit Lead

Heidi McGee

Heidi.McGee@kent.gov.uk

03000 41 86 89

Area Inclusion and Attendance Lead

Rebecca Roche

Rebecca.Roche@kent.gov.uk

03000 41 95 01

Practice Development Leader

Appendix 1: Categories of Abuse

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. It should be noted that abuse can be carried out both on and offline and be perpetrated by men, women and children.

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 acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Signs that MAY INDICATE Sexual Abuse

- Sudden changes in behaviour and performance
- Displays of affection which are sexual and age inappropriate
- Self-harm, self-mutilation or attempts at suicide
- Alluding to secrets which they cannot reveal
- Tendency to cling or need constant reassurance
- Regression to younger behaviour for example thumb sucking, playing with discarded toys, acting like a baby
- Distrust of familiar adults e.g. anxiety of being left with relatives, a childminder or lodger
- Unexplained gifts or money
- Depression and withdrawal
- Fear of undressing for PE
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Fire setting

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which 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.

Signs that MAY INDICATE physical abuse

- Bruises and abrasions around the face
- Damage or injury around the mouth
- Bi-lateral injuries such as two bruised eyes
- Bruising to soft area of the face such as the cheeks
- Fingertip bruising to the front or back of torso
- Bite marks
- Burns or scalds (unusual patterns and spread of injuries)
- Deep contact burns such as cigarette burns
- Injuries suggesting beatings (strap marks, welts)
- Covering arms and legs even when hot
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts.
- Injuries need to be accounted for. Inadequate, inconsistent or excessively plausible explanations or a delay in seeking treatment should signal concern.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child 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 a 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 involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Signs that MAY INDICATE emotional abuse

- Over reaction to mistakes
- Lack of self-confidence/esteem
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self-harming
- Eating Disorders
- Extremes of passivity and/or aggression
- Compulsive stealing
- Drug, alcohol, solvent abuse
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Unwillingness or inability to play
- Excessive need for approval, attention and affection

Neglect: 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 of 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 care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs that MAY INDICATE neglect.

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Inadequate clothing
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance
- Untreated medical problems
- Poor relationship with peers
- Compulsive stealing and scavenging
- Rocking, hair twisting and thumb sucking
- Running away
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- Low self esteem

Appendix 2: Support Organisations

The following links may help DSLs provide further advice and support to their learners, staff and parent/carers. Additional links can be found in KCSIE 2021 in Annex A and C

NSPCC 'Report Abuse in Education' Helpline

- [0800 136 663](tel:0800136663) or help@nspcc.org.uk

National Organisations

- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- Barnardo's: www.barnardos.org.uk
- Action for Children: www.actionforchildren.org.uk
- Children's Society: www.childrensociety.org.uk
- Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse: www.csacentre.org.uk

Support for Staff

- Education Support Partnership: www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk
- Professional Online Safety Helpline: www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Service: <https://swgfl.org.uk/harmful-sexual-behaviour-support-service>

Support for pupils/students

- ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk
- Papyrus: www.papyrus-uk.org
- The Mix: www.themix.org.uk
- Shout: www.giveusashout.org
- Fearless: www.fearless.org
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Support for Adults

- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Crime Stoppers: www.crimestoppers-uk.org
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- The Samaritans: www.samaritans.org
- NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood): www.napac.org.uk
- MOSAC: www.mosac.org.uk
- Action Fraud: www.actionfraud.police.uk
- Shout: www.giveusashout.org
- Advice now: www.advicenow.org.uk

Support for Learning Disabilities

- Respond: www.respond.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- Council for Disabled Children: <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk>

Contextual Safeguarding Network

- <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/>

Kent Resilience Hub

- <https://kentresiliencehub.org.uk/>

Substance Misuse

- We are with you (formerly Addaction): www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/kent-for-young-people/

- Talk to Frank: www.talktofrank.com

Domestic Abuse

- Domestic abuse services: www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk
- Refuge: www.refuge.org.uk
- Women's Aid: www.womensaid.org.uk
- Men's Advice Line: www.mensadvice.org.uk
- Mankind: www.mankindcounselling.org.uk
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline: www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
- Respect Phonenumber: <https://respectphonenumber.org.uk>

Criminal and Sexual Exploitation

- National Crime Agency: www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are
- It's not okay: www.itsnotokay.co.uk
- NWG Network: www.nwgnetwork.org
- County Lines Toolkit for Professionals: www.childrenssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/county-lines-toolkit

Honour Based Abuse

- Karma Nirvana: <https://karmanirvana.org.uk>
- Forced Marriage Unit: www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage
- FGM Factsheet: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/496415/6_1639_HO_SP_FGM_mandatory_reporting_Fact_sheet_Web.pdf
- Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information: www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information
- The right to choose - government guidance on forced marriage: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-right-to-choose-government-guidance-on-forced-marriage

Child-on-Child abuse, including bullying, sexual violence and harassment

- Rape Crisis: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk>
- Brook: www.brook.org.uk
- Disrespect Nobody: www.disrespectnobody.co.uk
- Upskirting – know your rights: www.gov.uk/government/news/upskirting-know-your-rights
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation: www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk
- Stop it Now! www.stopitnow.org.uk
- Parents Protect: www.parentsprotect.co.uk
- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Diana Award: www.antibullyingpro.com/
- Bullying UK: www.bullying.co.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk

Online Safety

- NCA-CEOP: www.ceop.police.uk and www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- Internet Watch Foundation (IWF): www.iwf.org.uk
- Childnet: www.childnet.com
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
- Report Harmful Content: <https://reportharmfulcontent.com>
- Marie Collins Foundation: www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk
- Internet Matters: www.internetmatters.org
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety
- Get Safe Online: www.getsafeonline.org

- Parents Protect: www.parentsprotect.co.uk
- Cyber Choices: <https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/cyber-crime/cyberchoices>
- National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC): www.ncsc.gov.uk

Mental Health

- Mind: www.mind.org.uk
- Moodspark: <https://moodspark.org.uk>
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- We are with you: www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/kent-for-young-people/
- Anna Freud: www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/

Radicalisation and hate

- Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com
- Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit: www.gov.uk/report-terrorism
- True Vision: www.report-it.org.uk

Children with Family Members in Prison

- National information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO): <https://www.nicco.org.uk/>

Appendix 3: **Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for Remote Learning and Online Communication**

St. Mary's CEP (VA) School Staff Remote Learning AUP

The Remote Learning Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is in place to safeguard all members of St. Mary's CEP (VA) School community when taking part in remote learning following any full or partial school closures.

Leadership Oversight and Approval

1. The School will publish weekly curriculum planning on the school website. The school will make use of the National Oaks Academy and BBC Bitesize recorded lessons.
2. Staff will only use school managed professional email accounts with learners and/or parents/carers
 - Use of any personal emails accounts to communicate with learners and/or parents/carers is not permitted.
 - Any pre-existing relationships or situations which mean this cannot be complied with will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
 - Staff will use work provided equipment e.g. a school/setting laptop, tablet, or other mobile device.
3. Online contact with learners and/or parents/carers will not take place outside of the operating times as defined by SLT:
 - Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm term-time only

Data Protection and Security

4. Any personal data used by staff and captured by email when delivering remote learning will be processed and stored with appropriate consent and in accordance with our data protection policy.
 - Email to multiple users (e.g. whole year groups) will be achieved using bcc to email.
5. All remote learning and any other online communication will take place in line with current school confidentiality expectations as outlined in the staff Code of Conduct.
6. Staff will not record lessons or meetings using personal equipment.
7. Only members of school office will be given administrator rights to access the school website.
8. Access to the school website and emails will be managed in line with current IT security expectations as outlined in the Online Safety Policy.
9. Any safeguarding concerns will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, in line with our child protection policy.

I have read and understood the St. Mary's CEP (VA) School Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for remote learning.

Staff Member Name:

Date.....



Searching, screening and confiscation

Advice for headteachers, school staff
and governing bodies

July 2022

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Summary

About this guidance

This publication is intended to explain the screening, searching and confiscating powers a school has, ensuring that headteachers and members of staff have the confidence to use these powers and schools are a calm, safe and supportive environment to learn and work. This publication also provides advice to headteachers and staff on their related legal duties when it comes to these powers. It also includes statutory guidance which schools must have regard to.

Where the text uses the word ‘must’, the person in question is legally required to do something.

Where the text uses the word ‘parent’, it should be read as inclusive of carers and any other person with parental responsibility.

Expiry or review date

This advice will be kept under review and updated as necessary.

What legislation does this guidance refer to?

- Coroners and Justice Act 2009
- Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Education Act 1996
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Schools (Specification and Disposal of Articles) Regulations 2012

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for:

- school leaders, school staff, governing bodies, proprietors and trust boards in all maintained schools, academies, free schools and independent schools in England; and
- local authorities.

For the purposes of this advice, references to “maintained school” mean a community, foundation or voluntary school, community or foundation special school. It also means pupil referral units and non-maintained special schools.

References to “academy” mean academy schools (including mainstream and special free schools) and alternative provision academies (including alternative provision free schools).

Introduction

Ensuring school staff and pupils feel safe and secure is vital to establishing calm and supportive environments conducive to learning. Using searching, screening and confiscation powers appropriately is an important way to ensure pupil and staff welfare is protected and helps schools establish an environment where everyone is safe. This advice is intended to explain schools' screening, searching and confiscation powers so that headteachers and other staff have the confidence to use them if necessary.

Schools and their staff are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This system is described in the statutory guidance [Working together to safeguard children](#). [Keeping children safe in education](#) makes clear that all school staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which pupils can learn.

Before screening or conducting a search of a pupil, it is vital that schools consider their obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights. Under Article 8, pupils have a right to respect for their private life. In the context of these rights and obligations, this means that pupils have the right to expect a reasonable level of personal privacy.

The right under Article 8 is not absolute; it can be interfered with, but any interference with this right by a school (or any public body) must be justified and proportionate.

The powers to search in the Education Act 1996 are compatible with Article 8. A school exercising those powers lawfully should have no difficulty in demonstrating that it has also acted in accordance with Article 8. This advice will assist schools in deciding how to exercise their searching powers in a lawful way.

Searching

1. Searching can play a critical role in ensuring that schools are safe environments for all pupils and staff. It is a vital measure to safeguard and promote staff and pupil welfare, and to maintain high standards of behaviour through which pupils can learn and thrive.
2. Headteachers and staff they authorise have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item listed in paragraph 3¹ or any other item that the school rules² identify as an item which may be searched for.
3. The list of prohibited items is:
 - knives and weapons;
 - alcohol;
 - illegal drugs;
 - stolen items;
 - any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be used:
 - to commit an offence, or
 - to cause personal injury to, or damage to property of; any person (including the pupil).
 - an article specified in regulations:³
 - tobacco and cigarette papers;⁴
 - fireworks; and
 - pornographic images.
4. Under common law, school staff have the power to search a pupil for any item if the pupil agrees. The member of staff should ensure the pupil understands the reason for the search and how it will be conducted so that their agreement is informed.

¹ A 'prohibited item' is defined in subsection (3) of [Section 550ZA of the Education Act 1996](#).

² For maintained schools, see [Section 89, Education and Inspections Act 2006](#). For independent schools and academies, see [Schedule 1, Paragraph 9 of the Education \(Independent School Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2014](#). For more information on what should be included in a school's behaviour policy, see the [Behaviour in Schools guidance](#).

³ [The Schools \(Specification and Disposal of Articles\) Regulations 2012](#).

⁴ This does not include e-cigarettes or vapes. Schools who wish to search for these items should ensure they are listed as items for which a search can be made in the school rules.

5. Being in possession of a prohibited item – especially knives, weapons, illegal drugs or stolen items – may mean that the pupil is involved, or at risk of being involved, in anti social or criminal behaviour including gang involvement, and in some cases may be involved in child criminal exploitation. A search may play a vital role in identifying pupils who may benefit from early help or a referral to the local authority children’s social care services. See [Keeping children safe in education](#) and [Working together to safeguard children](#).
6. The school’s behaviour policy should outline the banned items for which a search can be made. This must include the list of prohibited items in paragraph 3, and may include other items which a headteacher has decided are detrimental to maintaining high standards of behaviour and a safe environment. See [Behaviour in Schools](#).
7. The school’s behaviour policy should be communicated to all members of the school community⁵ to ensure expectations are transparent to all pupils, parents and staff, and provide reassurance that any searching of a pupil will be implemented consistently, proportionately and fairly, in line with the school’s policy.
8. When exercising their powers, schools must consider the age and needs of pupils being searched or screened. This includes the individual needs or learning difficulties of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and making reasonable adjustments that may be required where a pupil has a disability.
9. School staff may wish to consider using CCTV footage to decide whether to conduct a search for an item.

The role of the headteacher, the designated safeguarding lead and authorised members of staff

10. Only the headteacher, or a member of staff authorised by the headteacher, can carry out a search. The headteacher can authorise individual members of staff to search for specific items, or all items set out in the school's behaviour policy. For example, a member of staff may be authorised to search for stolen property and alcohol but not for weapons or drugs.
11. The headteacher can require a member of the security staff to undertake a search. If a security guard, who is not a member of the school staff, searches a pupil, this guidance should be followed and the person witnessing the search should be a

⁵ This is a duty for headteachers of maintained schools. See [Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#).

permanent member of the school staff. The headteacher may not require any other member of staff to undertake a search if they refuse.⁶

12. The headteacher should oversee the school's practice of searching to ensure that a culture of safe, proportionate and appropriate searching is maintained, which safeguards the welfare of all pupils and staff with support from the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

13. The headteacher should ensure that a sufficient number of staff are appropriately trained in how to lawfully and safely search a pupil who is not co-operating, so that these trained staff can support and advise other members of staff if this situation arises. However, it is vital that all staff understand their rights and the rights of the pupil who is being searched.

14. The designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) should be informed of any searching incidents where the member of staff had reasonable grounds to suspect a pupil was in possession of a prohibited item as listed in paragraph 3. The staff member should also involve the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) without delay if they believe that a search has revealed a safeguarding risk.

15. If the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) finds evidence that any child is at risk of harm, they should make a referral to children's social care services immediately (as set out in part 1 of [Keeping children safe in education](#)). The designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) should then consider the circumstances of the pupil who has been searched to assess the incident against potential wider safeguarding concerns. See paragraphs 44-46 on recording searches.

Before searching

16. A search can be considered if the member of staff has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item or any item identified in the school rules for which a search can be made, or if the pupil has agreed. See paragraphs 2-4 on powers to search.

17. The authorised member of staff should make an assessment of how urgent the need for a search is and should consider the risk to other pupils and staff.

⁶ [Section 550ZB of the Education Act 1996](#).

18. Before any search takes place, the member of staff conducting the search should explain to the pupil why they are being searched, how and where the search is going to take place and give them the opportunity to ask any questions.

19. The authorised member of staff should always seek the co-operation of the pupil before conducting a search. If the pupil is not willing to co-operate with the search, the member of staff should consider why this is. Reasons might include that they:

- are in possession of a prohibited item;
- do not understand the instruction;
- are unaware of what a search may involve; or
- have had a previous distressing experience of being searched.

20. If a pupil continues to refuse to co-operate, the member of staff may sanction the pupil in line with the school's behaviour policy, ensuring that they are responding to misbehaviour consistently and fairly. See [Behaviour in Schools](#) for more information on lawful sanctions.

21. If the member of staff still considers a search to be necessary, but is not required urgently, they should seek the advice of the headteacher, designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) or pastoral member of staff who may have more information about the pupil. During this time the pupil should be supervised and kept away from other pupils.

22. If the pupil still refuses to co-operate, the member of staff should assess whether it is appropriate to use reasonable force to conduct the search. A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for any prohibited items identified in paragraph 3, but not to search for items which are identified only in the school rules.⁷ See guidance on the [Use of reasonable force in schools](#). The decision to use reasonable force should be made on a case-by-case basis. The member of staff should consider whether conducting the search will prevent the pupil harming themselves or others, damaging property or from causing disorder.⁸

23. It should be noted that the use of reasonable force will differ depending on whether the member of staff is searching possessions or the pupil themselves.

⁷ [Section 550ZB\(5\) of the Education Act 1996.](#)

⁸ [Section 93\(1\) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.](#)

During a search

Where

24. An appropriate location for the search should be found. Where possible, this should be away from other pupils. The search must only take place on the school premises or where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the pupil, for example on a school trip.⁹

Who

25. The law states the member of staff conducting the search must be of the same sex as the pupil being searched. There must be another member of staff present as a witness to the search.

26. There is a limited exception to this rule. This is that a member of staff can search a pupil of the opposite sex and/or without a witness present **only**:

- if the member of staff carrying out the search reasonably believes there is risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if the search is not carried out as a matter of urgency; **and**
- in the time available, it is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out by a member of staff who is same sex as the pupil **or** it is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out in the presence of another member of staff.¹⁰

27. When a member of staff conducts a search without a witness they should immediately report this to another member of staff, and ensure a record of the search is kept. See paragraphs 44-46 on recording searches.

The extent of the search

28. A member of staff may search a pupil's outer clothing, pockets, possessions, desks or lockers.

29. The person conducting the search must not require the pupil to remove any clothing other than outer clothing. 'Outer clothing' means any item of clothing that is not

⁹ The powers to search outlined in this guidance only apply in England. When on a trip outside England, the law of that country should be followed.

¹⁰ [Section 550ZB of the Education Act 1996](#).

worn wholly next to the skin or immediately over a garment that is being worn as underwear, as well as hats, shoes, boots or scarves.¹¹

30. 'Possessions' means any goods over which the pupil has or appears to have control - this includes desks, lockers and bags.

31. A member of staff is able to search lockers and desks or other personal spaces at the school for any item provided the pupil agrees. Schools can make it a condition of having the locker or space that the pupil agrees to have these searched. If the pupil withdraws their agreement to search, a search may be conducted both for the prohibited items listed in paragraph 3 and any items identified in the school rules for which a search can be made.

32. A pupil's possessions can only be searched in the presence of the pupil and another member of staff, except where there is a risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if the search is not conducted immediately and where it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff. See paragraphs 25-27 on who can conduct a search.

33. The member of staff may use a metal detector to assist with the search.

34. The member of staff's power to search outlined above does not enable them to conduct a strip search.

Strip searching

35. A strip search is a search involving the removal of more than outer clothing (see paragraph 29). Strip searches on school premises can only be carried out by police officers under the [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 \(PACE\) Code A](#) and in accordance with the [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 \(PACE\) Code C](#).¹² While the decision to undertake the strip search itself and its conduct are police matters, school staff retain a duty of care to the pupil(s) involved and should advocate for pupil wellbeing at all times.

36. Before calling police into school, staff should assess and balance the risk of a potential strip search on the pupil's mental and physical wellbeing and the risk of not recovering the suspected item. Staff should consider whether introducing the potential for a strip search through police involvement is absolutely necessary, and should always

¹¹ Staff members should be sensitive to whether such outer clothing is worn for religious reasons when conducting a search.

¹² Searches may entail different levels of invasiveness and exposure. A search under [PACE Code A](#) that involves removing more than outer clothing but does not expose intimate parts of the body would not require the presence of an appropriate adult. However, from a pupil wellbeing perspective, schools may wish to involve an appropriate adult as a matter of course during all searches conducted by police.

ensure that other appropriate, less invasive approaches have been exhausted. Once the police are on school premises, the decision on whether to conduct a strip search lies solely with them, and the role of the school is to advocate for the safety and wellbeing of the pupil(s) involved.

37. Unless there is an immediate risk of harm and where reasonably possible, staff should inform a parent of the pupil suspected of concealing an item in advance of the search, even if the parent is not acting as the appropriate adult. Parents should always be informed by a staff member once a strip search has taken place. Schools should keep records of strip searches that have been conducted on school premises and monitor them for any trends that emerge.

The process the police must follow during a strip search

38. Except in cases of urgency where there is risk of serious harm to the pupil or others, whenever a strip search involves exposure of intimate body parts there must be at least two people present other than the pupil, one of which must be the appropriate adult.¹³ If the pupil's parent would like to be the appropriate adult, the school should facilitate this where possible. Police officers carrying out the search must be of the same sex as the pupil being searched. An appropriate adult not of the same sex as the pupil being searched may be present if specifically requested by the pupil. Otherwise, no-one of a different sex to the pupil being searched is permitted to be present, and the search must not be carried out in a location where the pupil could be seen by anyone else.

39. Except in urgent cases as above, a search of a pupil may take place without an appropriate adult only if the pupil explicitly states in the presence of an appropriate adult that they do not want an appropriate adult to be present during the search and the appropriate adult agrees. A record should be made of the pupil's decision and signed by the appropriate adult. The presence of more than two people, other than an appropriate adult, shall be permitted only in the most exceptional circumstances.

40. Strip searching can be highly distressing for the pupil involved, as well as for staff and other pupils affected, especially if undertaken on school premises. [PACE Code C](#) states that a strip search may take place only if it is considered necessary to remove an item related to a criminal offence, and the officer reasonably considers the pupil might

¹³ The role of the appropriate adult is to safeguard the rights, entitlements and welfare of children and vulnerable adults in police custody. This adult must not be a police officer or otherwise associated with the police. Examples of an appropriate adult include, but are not limited to, a parent, relative, social worker, teacher or, if the person is in the care of a local authority or voluntary organisation, a person representing that authority or organisation. Note that an appropriate adult is not required when a pupil is eighteen or above.

have concealed such an item. Strip searches should not be routinely carried out if there is no reason to consider that such items are concealed.

After-care following a strip search

41. Pupils should be given appropriate support, irrespective of whether the suspected item is found. If an item is found, this may be a police matter, but should always be accompanied by a safeguarding process handled by the school which gives attention to the pupil's wellbeing and involves relevant staff, such as the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).¹⁴ Safeguarding should also be at the centre of support following a strip search in which the item is not found, both in the sense of supporting the pupil to deal with the experience of being searched, and regarding wider issues that may have informed the decision to conduct a strip search in the first place. In both cases, pupils should feel that they have an opportunity to express their views regarding the strip search and the events surrounding it. School staff should give particular consideration to any pupils who have been strip searched more than once and/or groups of pupils who are more likely to be subjected to strip searching with unusual frequency, and consider preventative approaches.

After a search

42. Whether or not any items have been found as a result of any search, schools should consider whether the reasons for the search, the search itself, or the outcome of the search give cause to suspect that the pupil is suffering, or is likely to suffer harm, and/or whether any specific support is needed. Where this may be the case, school staff should follow the school's child protection policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as set out in [Part 1 of Keeping children safe in education](#). They will consider if pastoral support, an early help intervention or a referral to children's social care is appropriate. If any prohibited items are found during the search, the member of staff should follow the guidance set out below in paragraphs 57-81 on confiscation.

43. If a pupil is found to be in possession of a prohibited item listed in paragraph 3, then the staff member should alert the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) and the pupil should be sanctioned in line with the school's behaviour policy to ensure consistency of approach.

¹⁴ Further information on safeguarding can be found in [Keeping children safe in education](#) and [Working together to safeguard children](#).

Recording searches

44. Any search by a member of staff for a **prohibited item** listed in paragraph 3 and all searches conducted by police officers should be recorded in the school's safeguarding reporting system, including whether or not an item is found. This will allow the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) to identify possible risks and initiate a safeguarding response if required. Headteachers may also decide that all searches for items banned by the school rules should be recorded. Staff members should follow the school policy in these cases.

45. Schools are encouraged to include in the record of each search:

- the date, time and location of the search;
- which pupil was searched;
- who conducted the search and any other adults or pupils present;
- what was being searched for;
- the reason for searching;
- what items, if any, were found; and
- what follow-up action was taken as a consequence of the search.

46. Schools who conduct a high number of searches should consider whether the searches fall disproportionately on any particular groups of pupils by analysing the recorded data. In such cases where searching is falling disproportionately on any group or groups, they should consider whether any actions should be taken to prevent this. See also paragraphs 108-110 of [Behaviour in Schools](#).

Informing parents

47. Schools should reinforce the whole-school approach by building and maintaining positive relationships with parents. Parents should **always** be informed of any search for a **prohibited item** listed in paragraph 3 that has taken place, and the outcome of the search as soon as is practicable. A member of staff should inform the parents of what, if anything, has been confiscated and the resulting action the school has taken, including any sanctions applied.

48. Schools should consider that in some circumstances it might also be necessary to inform parents of a search for an item banned by the school policy.

49. Any complaints about searching, screening or confiscation should be dealt with through the normal school complaints procedure.

Screening

50. Screening can help provide reassurance to pupils, staff and parents that the school is taking measures to create a calm, safe and supportive environment.
51. Schools' statutory power to make rules on pupil behaviour¹⁵ and their duties as employers in relation to the safety of staff, pupils and visitors¹⁶ enables them to impose a requirement that pupils undergo screening.
52. Screening is the use of a walk-through or hand-held metal detector (arch or wand) to scan all pupils for weapons before they enter the school premises.
53. Before considering the installation and use of any technology for screening, the headteacher is encouraged to consult with the local police who may be able to provide advice about whether installation of these devices is appropriate.¹⁷
54. If a headteacher decides to introduce a screening arrangement, they should inform pupils and parents in advance to explain what the screening will involve and why it will be introduced.
55. Where a pupil has a disability, schools should make any reasonable adjustments to the screening process that may be required.¹⁸
56. If a pupil refuses to be screened, the member of staff should consider why the pupil is not co-operating, and make an assessment of whether it is necessary to carry out a search. See paragraphs 18-23 for more information on when a pupil refuses a search, including sanctioning.

¹⁵ [Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#) for all maintained schools, PRUs and NMSS and the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2010](#) for independent schools, academy schools and alternative provision academies.

¹⁶ [Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#).

¹⁷ [School and college security](#).

¹⁸ See [Equality Act 2010 and schools](#) for further guidance on the duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability.

Confiscation

Items found as a result of a search

57. An authorised staff member carrying out a search can confiscate any item that they have reasonable grounds for suspecting:

- poses a risk to staff or pupils;
- is prohibited, or identified in the school rules for which a search can be made (see paragraphs 2-3); or
- is evidence in relation to an offence.

Prohibited or illegal items

58. **Controlled drugs** must be delivered to the police as soon as possible unless there is a good reason not to do so.¹⁹ In these cases, the member of staff must safely dispose of the drugs. In determining whether there is a good reason to dispose of controlled drugs, the member of staff must have regard to the following guidance in paragraph 59 below issued by the Secretary of State.

59. The member of staff should take into account all relevant circumstances and use their professional judgement to determine whether they can safely dispose of the controlled drug. When staff are unsure as to the legal status of a substance and have reason to believe it may be a controlled drug, they should treat it as such. If the member of staff is in doubt about the safe disposal of controlled drugs, they should deliver them to the police.

60. **Other substances** which are not believed to be controlled should also be delivered to the police, or disposed of as above, if the member of staff believes they could be harmful.

61. Where a person conducting a search finds **alcohol, tobacco, cigarette papers or fireworks**, they may retain or dispose of them as they think appropriate but should not return them to the pupil.

62. If a member of staff finds a **pornographic image**, they may dispose of the image unless they have reasonable grounds to suspect that its possession constitutes a specified offence (i.e. it is extreme or an indecent image of a child) in which case it must

¹⁹ Legally, schools do not have to give the name of the pupil from whom drugs have been taken to the police. Schools should consider this on a case-by-case basis. Please see the [DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools](#) for more information on the relevant powers and duties in relation to powers to search for and confiscate drugs, liaison with the police and with parents.

be delivered to the police as soon as reasonably practicable.²⁰ Members of staff should never intentionally view any indecent image of a child (also sometimes known as nude or semi-nude images). Staff must never copy, print, share, store or save such images. See paragraphs 72-79 for further advice on searching electronic devices.

63. Where a member of staff finds **stolen items**, these must be delivered to the police as soon as reasonably practicable. However, if there is good reason to do so, the member of staff may also return the item to the owner, or retain or dispose of it if returning them to their owner is not practicable. In determining whether there is a good reason to return the stolen item to its owner or retain or dispose of the item, the member of staff must have regard to the following guidance issued by the Secretary of State in paragraph 64 below.

64. The member of staff should take into account all relevant circumstances and use their professional judgement to determine whether they can safely dispose of the seized article. In taking into account the relevant circumstances, the member of staff should consider the following:

- the value of the item - it would not be reasonable or desirable to involve the police in dealing with low value items such as pencil cases, though school staff may judge it appropriate to contact the police if the items are valuable;
- whether the item is banned by the school;
- whether retaining or returning the item to the owner may place any person at risk of harm; and
- whether the item can be disposed of safely.

65. Any **weapons or items which are evidence of a suspected offence** must be passed to the police as soon as possible.

66. Items that **have been (or are likely to be) used to commit an offence or to cause personal injury or damage to property** should be delivered to the police as soon as reasonably practicable, returned to the owner, retained or disposed of. In deciding what to do with such an item, the member of staff must have regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State in paragraphs 67-68.

67. The member of staff should take into account all relevant circumstances and use their professional judgement to determine whether the item should be delivered to the police, retained, returned to the owner or disposed of. In taking into account all relevant circumstances the member of staff should consider:

- whether it is safe to dispose of the item; and
- whether and when it is safe to return the item.

²⁰ [Section 62 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009](#) defines prohibited images of children. [Section 63 of the Criminal Justice and Immigrations Act 2008](#) defines extreme pornographic images.

68. If a member staff suspects a confiscated item has been used to commit an offence or is evidence in relation to an offence, the item should be delivered to the police.
69. Members of staff should use their judgement to decide to return, retain or dispose of any other **items banned under the school rules**. In deciding what to do with such an item, the member of staff must have regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State in paragraph 70.
70. The member of staff should take into account all relevant circumstances and use their professional judgement to determine whether they can safely dispose of the seized item. In taking into account all relevant circumstances, the member of staff should consider:
- the value of the item;
 - whether it is appropriate to return the item to the pupil or parent; and
 - whether the item is likely to continue to disrupt learning or the calm, safe and supportive environment of the school.
71. Members of staff should follow any additional guidance and procedures on the retention and disposal of items put in place by the school.

Electronic devices

72. Electronic devices, including mobile phones, can contain files or data which relate to an offence, or which may cause harm to another person. This includes, but is not limited to, indecent images of children, pornography, abusive messages, images or videos, or evidence relating to suspected criminal behaviour.
73. As with all prohibited items, staff should first consider the appropriate safeguarding response if they find images, data or files on an electronic device that they reasonably suspect are likely to put a person at risk.
74. Staff may examine any data or files on an electronic device they have confiscated as a result of a search, as defined in paragraph 57, if there is good reason to do so.
75. If the the member of staff conducting the search suspects they may find an indecent image of a child (sometimes known as nude or semi-nude images), the member of staff should never intentionally view the image, and must never copy, print, share, store or save such images. When an incident might involve an indecent image of a child and/or video, the member of staff should confiscate the device, avoid looking at the device and refer the incident to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as the most appropriate person to advise on the school's response. Handling such reports or concerns can be especially complicated and schools should follow the principles as set out in [Keeping children safe in education](#). The UK Council for Internet Safety also provides the following guidance to support school staff and designated safeguarding leads: [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#).

76. If a member of staff finds any image, data or file that they suspect might constitute a specified offence, then they must be delivered to the police as soon as is reasonably practicable.

77. In exceptional circumstances members of staff may dispose of the image or data if there is a good reason to do so. In determining a ‘good reason’ to examine or erase the data or files, the member of staff must have regard to the following guidance issued by the Secretary of State in paragraphs 78 and 79 below.

78. In determining whether there is a **‘good reason’ to examine** the data or files, the member of staff should reasonably suspect that the data or file on the device has been, or could be used, to cause harm, undermine the safe environment of the school and disrupt teaching, or be used to commit an offence.

79. In determining whether there is a **‘good reason’ to erase** any data or files from the device, the member of staff should consider whether the material found may constitute evidence relating to a suspected offence. In those instances, the data or files should not be deleted, and the device must be handed to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. If the data or files are not suspected to be evidence in relation to an offence, a member of staff may delete the data or files if the continued existence of the data or file is likely to continue to cause harm to any person and the pupil and/or the parent refuses to delete the data or files themselves.

Confiscation as a disciplinary penalty

80. Schools’ general power to discipline enables a member of staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a pupil’s property as a disciplinary penalty, where reasonable to do so.²¹

81. The law protects members of staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss of, or damage to, any item they have confiscated, provided they acted lawfully.

²¹ [Section 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#).

Further information

Other relevant departmental advice and statutory guidance

- [Behaviour in Schools guidance](#)
- [Schools and College security guidance](#)
- [Equality Act 2010 and schools guidance](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education guidance](#)
- [Use of reasonable force in schools guidance](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children guidance](#)
- [DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools](#)

Other advice

- [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)
- [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 \(PACE\) codes of practice](#)



Department
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