

Policy: Safeguarding and Child Protection

Potteries Educational Trust

Policy Family	Safeguarding
Reference	PET-07
Responsible Manager	COO/Headteacher/Principal
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Change control

Date	Summary of Change	Signature
09/26	Changes made according to KCSIE 2026	Claire Gaygan

Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the Potteries Educational Trust (PET) are committed to the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of child-on-child abuse across all academies within the PET. This policy adheres to the statutory guidance from the Department for Education issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent Academy Standards) Regulations 2014, the Non-Maintained Special Academy's (England) Regulations 2015, and the Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021.

The Potteries Educational Trust instils the ethos that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is everyone's responsibility. The Trust recognises that effective safeguarding requires a child-centred, coordinated and whole-organisation approach, in which all staff, volunteers, trustees, governors, contractors and professionals understand their responsibilities and act promptly when concerns arise.

All academies within the PET must have regard to it when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. For the purposes of this guidance children and young people include everyone under the age of 18. The purpose of our Safeguarding policy at PET is to ensure that we:

The Trust will:

- Protect children from abuse, neglect, exploitation and other forms of harm;
- Provide a safe, inclusive and respectful environment in which children can learn and thrive;
- Identify concerns at the earliest opportunity and provide appropriate help and support;
- Take immediate action where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm;
- Listen to children and ensure that their wishes, feelings and lived experiences inform safeguarding decisions;
- Work effectively with parents/carers, children's social care, police, health services, safeguarding partners and other agencies;
- Maintain robust safer recruitment and allegations-management arrangements;
- Ensure that safeguarding arrangements apply across all Trust academies while recognising the different age ranges, risks and local contexts of each setting;
- Ensure that safeguarding practice is regularly reviewed, challenged and improved.

The Trust has regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE 2026), which becomes statutory guidance from 1 September 2026, and works in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and other applicable legislation and statutory guidance.

The Trust's safeguarding arrangements are designed to ensure that safeguarding is embedded at both Trust level and individual academy/college level.

Scope

This policy applies to the PET, all employees of our Trust, whether academy based or part of the central/hub team along with any other people working within our academies (whether paid or unpaid), including agency/supply staff, trainee teachers, contractors and volunteers. Governors and Trust Board members are also in scope of this policy. For the purposes of this policy, "child" means a person under the age of 18. The Trust recognises that safeguarding concerns can arise for learners aged 18 or over within the Sixth Form College. Such matters will be managed in accordance with applicable adult safeguarding, welfare, mental health, Prevent, health and safety and other relevant procedures, as appropriate.

Statutory Framework

This policy has been developed with reference to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;

- Education Act 2002;
- Children Act 1989;
- Children Act 2004;
- Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Sexual Offences Act 2003;
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003;
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the Prevent Duty;
- Modern Slavery Act 2015;
- Children and Social Work Act 2017;
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021;
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR;
- Data (Use and Access) Act 2025;
- relevant information-sharing requirements and statutory guidance;
- relevant statutory guidance concerning children missing from education;
- relevant statutory guidance concerning child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, county lines and serious violence;
- statutory guidance concerning relationships, sex and health education;
- the SEND Code of Practice;
- relevant Department for Education guidance on attendance, behaviour, suspension/exclusion, alternative provision and online safety.

KCSIE 2026 states that schools and colleges must have regard to the guidance when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote children's welfare. It applies to academies and to colleges in respect of children receiving education or training.

Policy

1. Policy Statement

This policy is one in a series in the Potteries Educational Trust (PET) integrated safeguarding portfolio these include staff code of conduct, safer recruitment, allegations against staff, complaints and behaviour policies. This policy is available on the PET website along with each Academy website. The PET safeguarding principles are:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- The Trust and academy has responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance
- Policies and procedures will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident or new guidance or legislation suggests the need for an interim review
- Strong governance, leadership and management of safeguarding and child protection

1.1 Child Protection statement

The PET recognises our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children and young people are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children and young people receive effective support, protection and justice.

a] Policy principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children and young people, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity have equal rights to protection.
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child/young person is at risk of harm.
- All staff will reassure child that their concerns and disclosures will be taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- Child and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support

b] Policy aims

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities
- To ensure consistent good practice
- To demonstrate the Trust's commitment regarding child protection to child, parents and other partners.

Terminology

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of child refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that child grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of health or development, ensuring that child grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all child to have the best outcomes.

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect child who have been identified as suffering or being at risk of suffering from significant harm.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the Trust, full/part time, temporary or permanent, in wither a paid or voluntary capacity.

DSL refers to the designated safeguarding lead at the academy.

Child includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example, step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

2. Trust structure and safeguarding responsibility

The Trust operates a **single safeguarding framework** across all four settings.

The structure is:

Trust Board

The Trust Board has ultimate strategic responsibility for ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place throughout the Trust.

The Trust Board will:

- ensure that safeguarding is a strategic priority;
- approve this policy;
- ensure that the Trust complies with KCSIE 2026;
- ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to safeguarding;
- ensure that safeguarding is appropriately monitored and challenged;
- appoint an appropriate Trust safeguarding lead/strategic safeguarding officer;
- ensure that each academy/college has an effective DSL;
- ensure that safeguarding training and safer recruitment arrangements are effective;

- receive regular safeguarding assurance reports;
- ensure that safeguarding concerns relating to senior leaders or trustees are managed appropriately;
- ensure that safeguarding arrangements are independently challenged where necessary.

Trust CEO

The CEO is responsible for ensuring that the Trust's safeguarding strategy is implemented effectively and that appropriate action is taken where safeguarding arrangements require improvement.

Trust Strategic Safeguarding Lead

The Trust Executive Safeguarding Lead will:

- provide strategic leadership for safeguarding across the Trust;
- advise the CEO, Trust Board and academy/college leaders;
- support and challenge academy/college DSLs;
- coordinate Trust-wide safeguarding assurance;
- identify themes, patterns and emerging safeguarding risks;
- ensure consistency of policy and procedure;
- support complex or cross-setting cases;
- coordinate safeguarding audits;
- oversee safeguarding training arrangements;
- liaise with external safeguarding partners where appropriate.

Key personnel

Chair of Potteries Educational Trust – Professor Martin Jones

Chief Executive Officer – Heather McLachlan

To contact either of the above please email – info@potteries.ac.uk

Trust Strategic Safeguarding Lead – Claire Gaygan – cgaygan@potteries.ac.uk

Trust Link Safeguarding Trustee – Charles Freeman – cfreeman@potteries.ac.uk

ACADEMY	DSL	DDSL	CONTACT
Biddulph High School	Laura Burgess	David Scott Gemma Baddeley Emma Casewell	lburgess@bhs.potteries.ac.uk dscott@bhs.potteries.ac.uk gbaddeley@bhs.potteries.ac.uk ecasewell@bhs.potteries.ac.uk
Moorside High School	Lisa Burke	Abi Goodwin Jess Marquis	LBurke@mhs.potteries.ac.uk AGoodwin@mhs.potteries.ac.uk JMarquis@mhs.potteries.ac.uk
Werrington Primary School	Caroline Prince Emma Jones		CPrince@wps.potteries.ac.uk EJones@wps.potteries.ac.uk
6th Form College	Nicola Birch [Claire Gaygan – Interim]	Charlotte Barker Clare Bowker Mal Majid Chantelle Charles	NBirch@sfc.potteries.ac.uk CBarker@sfc.potteries.ac.uk CBowker@sfc.potteries.ac.uk MMajid@sfc.potteries.ac.uk CCharles@sfc.potteries.ac.uk

- For further contact details for specific academies please see their websites.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Each setting will ensure that:

- the DSL has appropriate status, authority and time to undertake the role;
- deputy DSLs are appropriately trained;
- there is appropriate cover during the academy day;
- arrangements are in place for safeguarding concerns to be reported outside normal hours where necessary;
- staff know who the DSL and deputies are;
- the DSL maintains effective safeguarding records;
- referrals are made promptly where required;
- safeguarding information is shared appropriately;
- the DSL contributes to safeguarding training and induction;
- the DSL has sufficient knowledge of local safeguarding arrangements and thresholds.

The DSL will maintain a safeguarding overview of the children for whom the setting has concerns and will ensure that patterns and cumulative concerns are considered.

Are trained to the same level as the DSL and supports the DSL with safeguarding matters as appropriate. In the absence of the DSL, the deputy DSL carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of children. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL, the deputy will assume the functions above.

Local safeguarding arrangements

Each academy/college will maintain an **Annex A** – Local Safeguarding Information containing:

- DSL and deputy DSL names and contact details;
- Trust Executive Safeguarding Lead;
- local authority children's social care referral arrangements;
- local authority designated officer (LADO);
- local safeguarding partnership;
- police safeguarding contact arrangements;
- emergency/out-of-hours children's social care arrangements;
- Prevent referral arrangements;
- local child and adolescent mental health arrangements;
- local domestic abuse services;
- local exploitation/serious violence arrangements;
- procedures for children missing from education;
- local escalation procedures;
- local early help/family help arrangements.

The local information must be reviewed at least annually and whenever external safeguarding arrangements change.

3. Professional Standards

All staff are expected to maintain the highest standards of professional conduct and safeguard children at all times.

Example of best practice includes:

- Adhering to the Trust's Staff Code of Conduct and associated policies.

- Treating all learners with dignity, respect, fairness and kindness.
- Acting as positive role models and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.
- Promoting the voice of the child and involving pupils in decisions that affect them where appropriate.
- Creating a culture of positive, respectful and safe behaviour.
- Remaining vigilant to indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation, mental health concerns, radicalisation and other safeguarding risks.
- Recognising that changes in presentation, attendance, engagement or behaviour, including challenging behaviour, may be indicators that a child is experiencing harm or distress.
- Reading, understanding and complying with the academy's safeguarding and child protection policy, staff behaviour policy, whistleblowing policy and other relevant safeguarding guidance.
- Understanding that some children may be more vulnerable to harm due to their individual circumstances, protected characteristics, family situation, disabilities, special educational needs, mental health needs, care experience or other factors.
- Maintaining a child-centred approach and always acting in the best interests of the child.
- Recording and reporting any safeguarding concern promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL. Where there is a risk of immediate harm, staff must contact children's social care and/or the police directly and inform the DSL as soon as possible thereafter.
- Contributing to a culture of safeguarding where concerns are shared openly, professionally and without delay.

3.1 Abuse of position of trust

All Trust staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people is unacceptable and that their conduct towards children and young people must be beyond reproach. Staff understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to engage in a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18 where that person is in a position of trust, even where the relationship is consensual. This means that sexual activity between a member of academy staff and a child or young person under the age of 18 may constitute a criminal offence.

Any allegation or concern regarding the conduct of a member of staff towards a child or young person will be taken seriously and managed in accordance with the Trust's Safeguarding Policy and relevant statutory guidance. Where appropriate, concerns will be referred to, or discussed with, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in accordance with local safeguarding arrangements and statutory requirements.

Where an allegation or concern relates to an employee's conduct, the Trust will also follow its appropriate disciplinary procedures. Any investigation will be conducted fairly, promptly and in accordance with the Trust's policies and procedures, while ensuring that safeguarding considerations remain paramount.

3.2. Allegations against staff, volunteers and contractors

Any allegation, concern or information indicating that a member of staff, volunteer, contractor, agency worker or any other adult working with children has:

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

will be managed in accordance with Part Four of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 and the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) procedures.

The Trust will:

- act immediately;
- ensure the child's safety;
- avoid undertaking inappropriate internal investigation before consultation with the LADO/police/children's social care where necessary;
- notify the LADO without delay where the threshold is met;
- maintain confidentiality;
- protect the rights of all involved;
- ensure appropriate record keeping;
- follow disciplinary procedures where appropriate.

Where the allegation concerns the Headteacher/Principal, the matter will be reported in accordance with Trust and LADO arrangements.

Where the allegation concerns the CEO or a member of Trust executive leadership, the matter will be referred to the appropriate Trust governance lead and external safeguarding authority as required.

Where the allegation concerns the Chair of Trustees or a trustee, the matter will be escalated in accordance with the Trust's governance and LADO arrangements.

3.3. Communicating with pupils and parents

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, the Data Protection Act 2018 (UK GDPR), the Education Act 2002, and the Trust's Staff Code of Conduct, all communication with pupils, parents and carers must take place through approved Academy or Trust communication systems and official Academy or Trust email accounts. Staff must not use personal email addresses, personal telephone numbers, private messaging services, or personal social media accounts for communication with pupils, parents or carers.

- Staff must not initiate or accept contact with pupils through personal social networking sites, messaging platforms, gaming applications, or other private online communication channels. Any online communication with pupils must be professional, transparent, auditable and conducted only through Academy-approved platforms and systems.
- The Academy and Trust recognise that maintaining clear professional boundaries is an essential safeguarding measure. Staff are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that safeguards both children and adults and protects against actual or perceived improper conduct.
- Any accidental or unavoidable contact outside approved communication channels must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and line manager and recorded in accordance with Academy procedures.
- Breaches of this policy may be investigated under the Academy's disciplinary procedures and, where appropriate, may result in a safeguarding referral, allegations management process, referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA), Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), or other relevant statutory agencies. Staff should be aware that inappropriate electronic communication with pupils may constitute a safeguarding concern and could result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

3.4. Low-level concerns

The Trust is committed to fostering a strong safeguarding culture where all concerns about the behaviour of adults working with children are taken seriously. In line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026*, staff are encouraged to report any low-level concern, however small, where an adult's behaviour may be inconsistent with the staff code of conduct or professional expectations. Low-level concerns must be reported in accordance with the Trust's safeguarding procedures and will be recorded, reviewed and managed appropriately by the Headteacher, Principal or relevant senior leader. Accurate records will be maintained to ensure concerns are monitored, patterns of behaviour are identified and appropriate action is taken where necessary, helping to promote transparency, accountability and the maintenance of professional boundaries.

4. Children potentially at great risk of harm

The Trust recognises that additional vulnerability does not mean that harm will occur, but that some children may require enhanced professional curiosity and support.

KCSIE 2026 identifies a range of children who may benefit from additional support and emphasises the importance of early identification and intervention. This includes children who may be experiencing risks such as exploitation, criminal or sexual exploitation, serious violence, missing episodes and other safeguarding concerns.

Some children and young people may have an increased risk of abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur. To ensure that our children and young people receive equal protection, the PET will give special consideration to children and young people who are:

- living away from home or in temporary accommodation
- have SEND or disabilities
- have mental health needs
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- living transient lifestyles
- have parents in custody
- are looked-after or previously looked-after
- are at risk of radicalisation
- have experienced trauma
- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental health needs
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- do not have English as a first language
- at risk of sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, forced marriage or being drawn into extremism.

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive.

4.2 Children with special educational needs & disabilities

The Trust recognises that children with SEND or disabilities can face additional safeguarding vulnerabilities.

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children, which can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's
- disability without further exploration;
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Staff will consider:

- communication barriers;
- dependence on adults;
- social isolation;
- difficulty recognising abusive behaviour;
- difficulties reporting concerns;
- bullying;
- exploitation;
- inappropriate restraint or physical intervention;
- neglect;
- online risks.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to enable children to communicate concerns safely. Additional training and awareness will be delivered to staff to identify and manage these additional barriers to ensure this group of children are appropriately safeguarded.

4.3. Attendance and children missing from education

Poor attendance, repeated absence and children going missing from education may be safeguarding indicators.

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored and will be reported on at academy local governing body, Trust Audit and Risk Committee and the PET Board. A child or young person being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, and a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, child criminal exploitation or mental health problems. The Academy DSL/DDSL (working with the attendance team) will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children are absent or go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the academy day. Staff must also be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

The Trust will ensure that:

- attendance is monitored daily
- unexplained absence is followed up promptly
- repeated absence triggers safeguarding consideration
- persistent absence is considered alongside other risk factors
- children at risk of exploitation are identified
- children missing from education procedures are followed
- appropriate agencies are informed when required.

Staff must consider whether absence is linked to:

- neglect
- domestic abuse
- bullying
- exploitation
- mental health
- unmet SEND
- family difficulties
- homelessness
- criminal exploitation
- sexual exploitation
- radicalisation
- other safeguarding concerns

4.4. Mental Health

The Trust recognises that academies have an important role to play in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. All staff understand that mental health concerns may be an indicator that a child has experienced, or is at risk of experiencing, abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff are also aware that children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) may be affected in ways that impact on their mental health, behaviour, wellbeing and educational outcomes. Staff understand the importance of recognising changes in a child's presentation, behaviour or emotional wellbeing and responding appropriately.

All staff, including governors and trustees, will receive safeguarding training and relevant updates throughout the academic year to ensure that they remain aware of emerging safeguarding concerns and their responsibilities in relation to children's mental health and wellbeing.

Where a member of staff has concerns about a child's mental health and considers that these concerns may also indicate a safeguarding concern, they will report and discuss the concern promptly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), in accordance with the Trust's safeguarding procedures.

The Trust recognises that mental health concerns can be safeguarding concerns.

Staff will consider whether mental health difficulties are:

- a response to abuse or neglect;
- linked to exploitation or bullying;
- associated with self-harm;
- connected with suicidal ideation;
- linked to domestic abuse;
- associated with trauma;
- increasing vulnerability to other forms of harm.

The Trust will ensure that safeguarding and mental health support work together while recognising that safeguarding concerns must still be referred appropriately.

Children who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Gender Questioning

Children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, and children who are gender questioning, may be more vulnerable to bullying, discrimination, prejudice-based incidents, social isolation and associated mental health and wellbeing concerns. The Trust recognises its duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and will ensure that concerns relating to a child's sexual orientation or gender questioning are responded to in a sensitive, respectful and child-centred manner. Staff will remain alert to any associated safeguarding risks, take all concerns seriously and work with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure that support is tailored to the child's individual needs and best interests. The Trust is committed to providing an inclusive, safe and supportive environment in which all pupils are treated with dignity and respect and are able to seek help when needed. The fact that a child may be gender questioning is not, in itself, a safeguarding concern; however, any associated vulnerability, distress, bullying, abuse or risk of harm will be considered and responded to through the Trust's safeguarding procedures.

5. Staff and governor/trustee training

- In accordance with the Children Act 1989 and 2004, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, the Education Act 2002, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, the Prevent Duty Guidance, the Protection of Children Act 1999, the Crime and Policing Act 2026, and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, the Academy and Trust are committed to ensuring that all staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training.
- It is essential that all staff are able to recognise indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and safeguarding risks, including those that occur online. Staff must understand their responsibilities for safeguarding, including online safety, cyber awareness, and the expectations, roles and responsibilities relating to filtering and monitoring systems. All staff must know how to identify concerns and report them in accordance with the Academy's safeguarding procedures.
- All new staff, volunteers, supply staff and regular visitors receive safeguarding and child protection information as part of their induction. This includes the Academy's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Staff Code of Conduct (including acceptable use of technology), reporting and recording procedures, behaviour policy, whistleblowing arrangements, the identity and role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs, and the safeguarding response to children who are absent from education.
- All staff, including the DSL, deputy DSLs, Headteacher (where the Headteacher is not the DSL), governors and trustees, receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction and regular updates thereafter. Training is proportionate to each individual's role and is updated at least annually, with additional safeguarding updates provided throughout the year via staff briefings, bulletins, policy updates, e-learning, and staff meetings to ensure that staff remain aware of emerging safeguarding issues and local and national safeguarding priorities.
- The Trust Strategic Safeguarding Lead provides strategic leadership, guidance and oversight of safeguarding arrangements across all Trust academies. The Strategic Safeguarding Lead works closely with Academy DSLs, Headteachers, governors and trustees to support compliance with statutory safeguarding duties, monitor safeguarding effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, facilitate training and professional development, and promote a culture of continuous vigilance and safeguarding excellence across the Trust.
- Governors and trustees receive safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety and an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities for filtering and monitoring. This training equips them with the knowledge and skills necessary to provide effective strategic challenge, oversight and assurance that safeguarding arrangements are compliant, effective and embedded consistently across the Trust. Training is reviewed and updated at least annually in line with statutory guidance.
- The nominated Safeguarding Governor and Trust Safeguarding Lead Trustee receive additional role-specific training to enable them to effectively support and challenge the DSL, monitor safeguarding practice, scrutinise safeguarding data and outcomes, and provide assurance to the governing body and Trust Board that safeguarding arrangements are robust, effective and compliant with statutory requirements. The Safeguarding Governor and Trust Safeguarding Lead Trustee work closely with the Trust Strategic Safeguarding Lead to support the continuous development of high-quality safeguarding practice across the Trust.

6. Safer recruitment

The Potteries Educational Trust complies with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2026) and the local safeguarding partner arrangements by carrying out the required checks and verifying the applicant's identity, qualifications and work history.

- At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.
- All relevant staff (involved in early years settings and/or before or after academy care for children under eight) are made aware of the disqualification from childcare legislation and their obligations to disclose relevant information to the academy.
- The academy obtains written confirmation from supply agencies or third-party organisations that supply staff or other individuals who may work in the academy have been appropriately checked and are suitable to work with children.
- Trainee teachers will be checked either by the academy or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained confirming their suitability to work with children.
- The Trust and academy maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken and in addition the trust maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken in each of our academies.

- As part of the Trust safeguarding and safer recruitment procedures, online and social media checks are conducted on all shortlisted applicants
- The Trust will ensure that recruitment decisions take account of safeguarding considerations and that relevant staff involved in recruitment are appropriately trained.
- The Trust will also comply with changes to regulated activity requirements taking effect from 1 September 2026. The Department for Education has confirmed changes concerning the supervision exemption for regulated activity with children.

6.1. Volunteers

- Volunteers, including governors and trustees, will undergo safeguarding and pre-employment checks appropriate to their role, responsibilities, frequency of contact with children, and whether they are undertaking regulated activity.
- In line with KCSIE 2026 and the Crime and Policing Act 2026, volunteers engaged in regulated activity will be required to obtain an Enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information, regardless of whether they are supervised.
- The academy and Trust will ensure that all required checks are completed before individuals commence their role, and under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately vetted be permitted to undertake regulated activity with children.

6.2. Contractors

The academy checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS with barred list checks where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised during the academy day.

7. Site Security

- All visitors to academies, including contractors, agency staff and other third parties, are required to report to reception on arrival, sign in, and wear an appropriate identification badge while on site.
- Parents and carers who are solely collecting or dropping off children are not required to sign in unless they enter beyond designated reception or public areas.
- All visitors must comply with the academy's safeguarding, child protection, security and health and safety procedures.
- The academy will ensure that visitors are appropriately supervised and that any person who has not been subject to the necessary vetting checks is not left unsupervised with children.
- The Headteacher, or a designated member of staff, will exercise professional judgement in determining the level of supervision required, taking into account the purpose of the visit, the visitor's access to pupils, and any safeguarding considerations.

8. Extended academy and off-site arrangements

- In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and relevant safeguarding legislation, all extended, extracurricular, educational, and off-site activities are subject to appropriate risk assessment processes that consider both health and safety and safeguarding risks, including online safety, supervision arrangements, transport, accommodation and the suitability of adults working with children. These will be recorded on the relevant systems and approved by the Headteacher/Principal.
- Where extended academy activities are provided and managed directly by the Academy or Trust, all safeguarding, child protection, behaviour, staff conduct and reporting procedures will apply throughout the activity.
- Where services or activities are delivered by external organisations, contractors, community groups, alternative providers or third-party agencies on behalf of the Academy or Trust, appropriate safeguarding due diligence will be undertaken. This will include seeking assurance that providers have effective safeguarding and child protection arrangements, safer recruitment procedures, staff training, appropriate vetting checks, and clear reporting processes for safeguarding concerns in line with statutory guidance.

- When learners participate in off-site activities, including educational visits, residential visits, work experience, alternative provision, sporting events and other enrichment activities, the Academy will seek assurance that effective safeguarding and child protection arrangements are in place, that responsibilities for safeguarding are clearly understood by all parties, and that appropriate information sharing arrangements exist where necessary to safeguard children.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), supported where appropriate by the Trust Strategic Safeguarding Lead, will provide advice regarding safeguarding arrangements and risk management for off-site provision.
- The Trust Strategic Safeguarding Lead will support academies in monitoring compliance with statutory safeguarding requirements, promoting best practice and providing strategic oversight and assurance of safeguarding arrangements across Trust-wide activities and external provisions.

9. Child protection procedures

9.1. Recognising abuse

To ensure that children are protected from harm, all staff must understand what constitutes abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding risk. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, the Children Act 1989 and 2004, and the Crime and Policing Act 2026, abuse, neglect and exploitation are forms of maltreatment that may occur within or outside the home, in person or online, and may be perpetrated by adults, children or groups of individuals. Children may be harmed by acts of commission or omission.

All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside the Academy and Trust and that technology can be a significant factor in many safeguarding and wellbeing concerns. Staff should be alert to the risks of child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, serious violence, online abuse, child-on-child abuse, coercive control, domestic abuse, radicalisation, AI-generated abuse and exploitation materials, and other emerging safeguarding threats.

KCSIE 2026 identifies four main categories of abuse, although staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding concerns can take many forms and often overlap:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

Staff should also be aware of specific safeguarding issues which may present alongside these categories of abuse, including child-on-child abuse, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, serious violence, domestic abuse, online abuse, radicalisation, mental health concerns, and children missing education

Further information regarding these categories, indicators of abuse, exploitation and safeguarding concerns is contained within **Appendix One** of this policy.

9.2. Bullying, Child-on-Child Abuse and Harmful Behaviour

The Academy and Trust recognise that bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based bullying and discriminatory behaviour, can have a serious and long-lasting impact on a child's welfare and mental health.

In accordance with **KCSIE 2026**, all staff should recognise that bullying can be a form of **child-on-child abuse** and may occur online or offline. Child-on-child abuse may include, but is not limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying)
- Physical abuse
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Harmful sexual behaviour

- Abuse within intimate personal relationships
- Upskirting
- Initiation or hazing-type violence
- Misogyny, misandry and gender-based abuse
- Sharing of nude, semi-nude or sexually explicit images or videos, including AI-generated content

All incidents will be taken seriously, recorded appropriately, and managed in accordance with the Academy's Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Child-on-Child Abuse Procedures and safeguarding procedures.

9.3 Child-on-child abuse

Children can be harmed by other children, and all staff should recognise that child-on-child abuse is a significant safeguarding issue which can occur both inside and outside of school, including online. In line with KCSIE 2026, staff will maintain a culture of vigilance and an attitude that **'it could happen here'**, recognising that child-on-child abuse can occur in any setting and between children of any age or gender. All concerns will be taken seriously, recorded, investigated appropriately, and responded to in a proportionate and child-centred manner.

While some incidents may initially appear similar to bullying, staff recognise that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding concern and may require a child protection response. All staff will be familiar with the academy's procedures for identifying, reporting and responding to child-on-child abuse.

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

- **Bullying**, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based bullying and discriminatory behaviour.
- **Physical abuse**, including hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or other forms of physical harm.
- **Sexual violence**, including rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault.
- **Sexual harassment**, including unwanted sexual comments, remarks, jokes, online sexual harassment or inappropriate sexualised behaviour.
- **Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent**, including coercion, pressure or manipulation.
- **The consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos**, including the creation, possession or distribution of such material and pressuring others to share it.
- **Abuse within intimate personal relationships between children (teenage relationship abuse)**, including controlling, coercive, threatening, physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse.
- **Upskirting**, which is a criminal offence involving taking an image beneath a person's clothing without their knowledge or consent.
- **Initiation, hazing or inappropriate group-based activities** that involve harassment, humiliation, intimidation, degradation or abuse.
- **Prejudice-based and discriminatory abuse**, including behaviour related to race, religion or belief, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, special educational needs or any other protected characteristic.

The Trust and academy recognises that abuse is abuse and must never be dismissed, tolerated or minimised as:

- "banter";
- "just having a laugh";
- "part of growing up";
- "boys being boys"; or
- an accepted aspect of friendship groups, relationships or youth culture.

Such attitudes can create an unsafe environment, normalise harmful behaviours and discourage children from reporting concerns.

Staff understand that any child can be a victim of child-on-child abuse and any child can display harmful behaviours towards others. However, KCSIE recognises that girls are more likely to be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment, and that these behaviours can be influenced by harmful attitudes, stereotypes and unequal power dynamics. Staff will avoid making assumptions based on gender and will ensure that all children involved receive appropriate support and safeguarding intervention.

The academy also recognises that child-on-child abuse is frequently underreported. The absence of reported incidents should not be taken as evidence that it is not occurring. Through education, staff training, effective supervision, robust reporting systems and a strong safeguarding culture, the academy will seek to prevent child-on-child abuse and ensure that all pupils feel safe, listened to and supported.

9.4 Serious Violence

All staff should be aware of the indicators, associated risks and warning signs that may suggest a child is at risk of, or involved in, serious violence. In line with KCSIE 2026, these indicators may include:

- increased absence, persistent absence or children missing education;
- a decline in attendance, engagement or academic performance;
- changes in peer groups, friendships or associations, particularly with older individuals or groups;
- signs of self-harm, poor emotional wellbeing, trauma or mental health difficulties;
- becoming withdrawn, fearful, anxious or secretive;
- signs of assault, unexplained injuries or repeated incidents of violence;
- possession of unexplained gifts, money, clothing, mobile phones or other items;
- carrying weapons or expressing an interest in weapons;
- involvement in anti-social behaviour, offending or criminal exploitation.

Staff recognise that these indicators do not necessarily mean that a child is involved in serious violence; however, they may be evidence of abuse, exploitation, criminal activity or other safeguarding concerns and should be shared promptly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Staff should also be aware that a range of factors can increase a child's vulnerability to serious violence and exploitation. These may include, but are not limited to:

- previous experiences of abuse, neglect, domestic abuse or trauma;
- child criminal exploitation, county lines activity or association with gangs;
- social isolation or a lack of protective relationships;
- frequent absence from education or exclusion from school;
- involvement in offending behaviour, including theft, robbery or violence;
- substance misuse;
- special educational needs and disabilities (SEND);
- adverse childhood experiences and unmet emotional or mental health needs.

The academy recognises that serious violence is often linked to other safeguarding concerns, including child criminal exploitation, county lines, gang affiliation and contextual safeguarding risks. Staff will maintain professional curiosity, adopt a child-centred approach and ensure that concerns are reported, recorded and acted upon in accordance with the academy's safeguarding procedures.

9.5. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is a form of abuse that occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity. The child may be exploited in exchange for something they need or want, for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator, or through violence, threats, intimidation or coercion.

CCE can include, but is not limited to, children being exploited through county lines activity, transporting drugs or money, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting, pickpocketing, vehicle crime, fraud, carrying weapons, or threatening or committing serious violence on behalf of others.

Children can become trapped in exploitation through violence, intimidation, debt bondage, grooming and coercive control. They may be threatened with violence against themselves or their families, and may be instructed or pressured to carry weapons, including knives.

Children who are criminally exploited often commit crimes themselves. Staff should recognise that a child may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. A child involved in criminal exploitation should always be viewed as a victim of abuse and exploitation first.

The experience of criminal exploitation can be different for boys and girls. Staff should be aware that girls may be criminally exploited through different methods and that both boys and girls who are criminally exploited may also be at risk of child sexual exploitation.

Staff should be alert to indicators that a child may be at risk of or experiencing criminal exploitation. These may include:

- unexplained gifts, money or new possessions;
- associating with other young people involved in exploitation or criminal activity;
- changes in emotional wellbeing, presentation or behaviour;
- misuse of drugs or alcohol;
- going missing from home, care or education;
- regular absence from school or a reduction in engagement with education;
- unexplained injuries or signs of assault;
- carrying weapons or becoming involved in violence; and
- travelling to locations with which they have no obvious connection.

Any concerns that a child may be at risk of or experiencing criminal exploitation will be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and managed in accordance with the academy's safeguarding procedures.

9.6 County Lines

County lines is a form of child criminal exploitation (CCE) in which organised crime groups and gangs use dedicated mobile phone lines to facilitate the movement and supply of illegal drugs. Children and vulnerable adults may be exploited to transport, store or sell drugs and money, with offenders often using coercion, control, intimidation, threats, violence, debt bondage and other forms of exploitation to maintain control. KCSIE 2026 recognises county lines as a significant safeguarding issue and a form of child criminal exploitation.

County lines exploitation occurs when an individual or group exploits an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate, control or deceive a child into criminal activity. The power imbalance may arise from factors such as age, gender, intellect, physical strength, status, economic circumstances, emotional vulnerability or access to resources.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines activity in a range of settings, including schools, online environments, communities and peer groups. Staff should be aware that any child may be at risk, regardless of background or circumstances.

Indicators of county lines involvement may include those associated with child criminal exploitation and may be particularly evident where a child:

- goes missing from home, education or care, or is frequently absent;
- is found in areas away from home where they have no known connection;
- associates with older individuals, gangs or criminal groups;
- has unexplained money, gifts, clothing, mobile phones or other possessions;
- experiences a decline in attendance, behaviour, wellbeing or educational performance;
- is suspected of transporting, storing or supplying drugs or handling money connected to criminal activity;
- is exposed to violence, threats, intimidation or weapon carrying;
- has been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence, including knife-enabled crime;
- is found in accommodation, addresses or hotel rooms linked to drug activity;
- owes money or appears to be under pressure to repay a debt to others;
- has their bank account, financial accounts or personal details used by others (sometimes referred to as "money muling");
- becomes secretive about their activities, movements or friendships;
- is subjected to exploitative practices such as concealing drugs internally or externally to avoid detection.

Staff should recognise that children involved in county lines are victims of exploitation, even where they appear to be engaging willingly in criminal activity. The academy will respond to concerns through a safeguarding and child-centred approach, recognising the risks posed by criminal exploitation, serious violence, gangs and organised crime. Any concerns regarding potential county lines involvement will be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will consider appropriate referrals to children's social care, the police and other relevant safeguarding agencies.

9.7 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity. The child may be sexually exploited in exchange for something they need or want, for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator, or through violence, threats or intimidation. A child may have been sexually exploited even where the activity appears consensual.

CSE can involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (such as rape or oral sex) and non-penetrative acts, such as kissing, touching, rubbing or masturbation. It may also involve non-contact activities, including the production or sharing of sexual images, grooming, encouraging children to engage in sexualised behaviour, or causing children to witness sexual activity.

CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge, including through others sharing sexual images or videos of them online. It can be perpetrated by individuals or groups and can occur both in person and through the use of technology.

Any child can be a victim of sexual exploitation, regardless of age, sex, ethnicity, culture, disability, sexual orientation or family background. This includes 16 and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to sexual activity. Some children may not recognise that they are being exploited and may believe they are in a genuine friendship or consensual romantic relationship.

Children and young people may be drawn into sexual exploitation through grooming, manipulation, affection, friendship, gifts, money, accommodation, drugs, alcohol or other forms of coercion. CSE is a serious form of abuse that can have a profound and long-lasting impact on a child's physical health, emotional wellbeing and development, and may be linked to trafficking and other forms of exploitation.

Staff should be alert to the indicators of child sexual exploitation which may include, but are not limited to:

- unexplained gifts, money or possessions;
- relationships with older or controlling individuals;
- going missing from home, care or education;
- changes in behaviour, emotional wellbeing or presentation;
- misuse of drugs or alcohol;
- sexualised behaviour inappropriate for age;
- sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy;
- sharing or receiving sexual images; and
- indicators associated with child criminal exploitation.

All concerns relating to actual or suspected child sexual exploitation will be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and managed in accordance with the academy's safeguarding procedures.

10. Online Safety

The academy recognises that technology is an integral part of children's lives and learning. Whilst the internet provides significant educational and social benefits, it can also expose children to a range of safeguarding risks. In line with KCSIE 2026, the academy takes a whole-school approach to online safety, recognising that many safeguarding concerns, including child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, child-on-child abuse, radicalisation, bullying and grooming, can take place online as well as offline.

The academy has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place to safeguard pupils when using academy devices, networks and digital services. These systems are designed to:

- protect children from accessing harmful, inappropriate or illegal content;
- identify potential safeguarding concerns and risks;
- support the detection of unsafe or concerning online behaviour;
- help prevent children from accessing extremist, violent, abusive or sexually explicit material; and
- support the academy in meeting its safeguarding responsibilities.

Filtering and monitoring arrangements are risk-based, effective and proportionate, and are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain appropriate to the age range of pupils, the academy's safeguarding needs and emerging online risks. The academy ensures that filtering and monitoring systems support teaching and learning and do not place unreasonable restrictions on educational use.

The governing body, senior leaders and designated safeguarding lead (DSL) work together with IT and technical staff to ensure that filtering and monitoring standards are met and that clear roles and responsibilities are in place for the oversight, management and review of these systems.

The academy provides information to parents and carers regarding the measures in place to keep children safe online and seeks to promote a shared approach to online safety between home and school. Where appropriate, parents and carers will be informed about the online platforms, websites, applications and digital resources being used by pupils as part of their education.

The academy also maintains appropriate cyber security and information security arrangements to protect pupils, staff, systems and data. Security controls and procedures are reviewed regularly in response to evolving cyber threats and technological developments. Staff receive appropriate training and guidance to help identify and respond to cyber security risks, phishing attempts, data breaches and other online threats.

Online safety education is embedded throughout the curriculum and wider safeguarding programme. Pupils are taught how to use technology safely, responsibly, respectfully and securely, how to recognise and respond to online risks, and how to seek support if they encounter harmful content, inappropriate behaviour or safeguarding concerns online.

In accordance with KCSIE 2026, online risks can broadly be categorised into four areas:

- **Content** – exposure to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, including misinformation, disinformation, extremism, violence, pornography and harmful online material.
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with others, including grooming, exploitation, coercion, radicalisation and online abuse.
- **Conduct** – personal online behaviour that may increase risk, including bullying, image sharing, harassment, abuse or other harmful behaviours.
- **Commerce** – risks associated with online commercial activity, including scams, fraud, gambling, financial exploitation and inappropriate advertising.

The academy will respond to all online safety concerns in accordance with its safeguarding procedures and will work with pupils, parents, carers and external agencies where required to promote a safe and supportive online environment.

10.1. Sharing nudes and semi nudes (Youth Produced Sexual Imagery)

The sharing of photos, videos and live streams online is a normal part of life for many children and young people. However, the sharing of nude or semi-nude images, videos, or live streams can present significant safeguarding risks. The term *sharing nudes and semi-nudes* refers to the creation, possession, sending, receiving or sharing of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams by children and young people under the age of 18. This may take place through social media platforms, messaging services, gaming platforms, websites, forums, or through offline sharing between devices, including the use of technologies such as Apple AirDrop.

The term *nudes* is used because it is widely understood by children and young people and reflects current national guidance. Other terms may include *sexting*, *youth-produced sexual imagery*, *youth-involved sexual imagery*, *dick pics* or *pics*.

The motivations for creating or sharing nudes and semi-nudes are varied and are not always sexually motivated or intended to cause harm. Images may be shared consensually within relationships, under pressure or coercion, as part of exploitation, bullying, abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, or as a result of online grooming. Incidents may also involve:

- children and young people sharing images found online and falsely claiming they belong to a peer;
- digitally altering or using artificial intelligence (AI) tools to create nude or semi-nude images of a child without their knowledge or consent;
- images being shared without consent to threaten, shame, exploit, blackmail or humiliate another child;
- the sale, distribution or wider circulation of images online;
- child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence or criminal exploitation.

The Trust recognises that incidents involving the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes should be treated primarily as a safeguarding concern and responded to proportionately, sensitively and in accordance with statutory guidance, including *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* and the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) guidance *Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people*.

Academy Response

All incidents involving the sharing of nude or semi-nude images will be managed in accordance with safeguarding procedures and will be responded to as follows:

- The incident will be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL.
- The DSL will undertake an initial risk and needs assessment and determine the appropriate response, considering the age of the children involved, consent, coercion, exploitation, online safety concerns, harmful sexual behaviour and any potential criminal offences.
- The DSL will hold an initial review meeting with relevant staff and, where appropriate, speak with the children involved.
- Parents or carers will normally be informed and involved at an early stage unless there is a compelling safeguarding reason to believe that doing so would place a child at increased risk of harm.
- The academy will not view, copy, print, share or save images unless there is no other reasonable option and doing so is necessary to safeguard a child. Any decision to view images will be made by the DSL and recorded in accordance with national guidance.
- Appropriate support will be provided to all children involved, recognising that both the child who shared the image and the child depicted may be vulnerable and in need of support.
- Where there are concerns that a child has suffered harm, is at risk of harm, or may be a victim of abuse, exploitation, coercion or harmful sexual behaviour, an immediate referral will be made to Children's Social Care and/or the Police in line with local safeguarding procedures.

In some circumstances, it will be necessary to involve the Police. Where a report is made, the academy will record the rationale and actions taken and cooperate fully with any investigation. Staff will be aware that Police involvement may result in devices being examined or seized where necessary as part of a criminal investigation.

The Academy will maintain a preventative approach through an effective curriculum, including Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE), online safety education, education regarding consent and healthy relationships, awareness of image-based abuse, and understanding the risks associated with emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI). This approach reflects the expectations set out within *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*.

11. Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduces a legal definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse, between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. It includes people who have been or are married, are or have been civil partners, have agreed to marry one another or each have or have had a parental relationship in relation to the same child. It can include psychological, physical, sexual, financial, economic and emotional abuse.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. This means children can also be victims of domestic abuse.

Any child can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in their home life. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious emotional and psychological impact on children, and in some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Where police have been called to a domestic violence incident where children are in the household and experienced that incident, the police will inform the DSL. This ensures that the academy has up to date safeguarding information about the child. (Operation Encompass)

All staff are aware of the impact domestic violence can have on a child. If any of our staff are concerned that a child has witnessed domestic abuse, they will report their concerns immediately to the DSL.

12. Sexual harassment and sexual violence

The Trust recognises that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between children of any age and sex, including through online behaviours, and that such behaviour is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. The Trust will maintain a culture of vigilance, respect and zero tolerance where concerns are recognised, reported and addressed promptly, effectively and in a child-centred manner. In accordance with Part Five of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026*, all staff will understand that child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment are safeguarding issues and may occur both inside and outside of school, including online. Alleged victims will be taken seriously, supported and protected, whilst appropriate action will be taken in respect of any alleged perpetrator. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will manage all concerns and allegations in line with statutory guidance, working with children's social care, the police and other agencies where appropriate. The Trust will ensure that pupils are educated about healthy relationships, consent, respect, boundaries and appropriate behaviour through an effective curriculum, and will maintain clear procedures for reporting, recording, risk assessing and responding to incidents. Trustees, governors and leaders will provide oversight and assurance that sexual violence and sexual harassment are effectively prevented, identified and addressed across all Trust academies

13. Honour-based abuse (HBA) and Honour-based violence (HBV)

Honour-based abuse (HBA) encompasses 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 HBV are abuse.

Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. Staff and the DSL are aware of this dynamic and will consider it when deciding what safeguarding action to take.

FGM is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is a criminal offence under the *Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003*. The practice can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

Forced marriage is a form of abuse and occurs when a person is pressured, coerced, threatened, deceived or forced into marriage without their free and full consent. Coercion may be physical, emotional, psychological, sexual or financial in nature. Forced marriage is illegal and includes any action intended to cause a child under 18 to marry, whether or not violence, threats or coercion are used. This applies to both legally recognised marriages and non-binding or unofficial ceremonies.

Forced marriage is both a safeguarding and criminal matter. Staff should be alert to indicators that a child may be at risk and must report any concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The Trust will respond in accordance with *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*, local safeguarding procedures, and the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Victims and those at risk may be protected through a Forced Marriage Protection Order (FMPO), which can place restrictions on individuals to prevent a forced marriage from taking place.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

The Trust recognises the safeguarding risks associated with:

- honour-based abuse;
- female genital mutilation;
- forced marriage;
- coercive control;
- threats or violence associated with family or community expectations.

Staff must report concerns immediately to the DSL. Where mandatory reporting duties apply, the Trust will comply with them. Staff must not:

- contact family members where doing so could increase risk;
- attempt to mediate;
- investigate independently;
- promise confidentiality.

14. Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism (The Prevent Duty)

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and recognises that protecting pupils from radicalisation and exposure to extremist ideologies is an integral part of this responsibility. Radicalisation refers to the process by which an individual comes to support terrorism or extremist views associated with terrorist groups. In accordance with the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the Prevent Duty, and *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026*, the Trust will take a proactive approach to identifying, assessing and managing the risk of pupils being drawn into terrorism or extremist activity.

All staff will receive appropriate safeguarding and Prevent training and will understand that children can be vulnerable to radicalisation regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or background. Staff will remain vigilant to signs of radicalisation and will report any concerns promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL, who will consider appropriate action, seek advice where necessary, and make referrals in line with local safeguarding and Prevent procedures, including referral to Channel where appropriate.

The Trust will promote a culture of inclusion, respect and tolerance through its curriculum, pastoral support and wider safeguarding arrangements. Pupils will be supported to develop the knowledge, skills and resilience needed to recognise and challenge extremist narratives, misinformation and online harms, while promoting fundamental British values, critical thinking, respectful discussion and active citizenship. The Trust will ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place to help protect pupils from accessing harmful or extremist content online.

The Board of Trustees, Local Governing Bodies and Trust leaders will provide strategic oversight and assurance that the requirements of the Prevent Duty are effectively implemented across all Trust academies as part of the Trust's wider safeguarding framework.

15. Taking Action

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. In accordance with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026*, all staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn and to take action when they have concerns about a child's welfare. Abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding concerns can occur in any family, community or educational setting, and staff should always maintain an attitude of **"it could happen here."** Where staff have concerns about a child, they should always act in the child's best interests.

All staff must:

1. Take immediate action to protect a child where there is an immediate risk of harm, including contacting emergency services (999) where necessary.
2. Report any safeguarding concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL and not delay action where a child may be at risk.
3. Never assume that someone else has taken responsibility for reporting or responding to a concern.
4. Not investigate concerns, seek proof, or question a child beyond clarification necessary to establish whether a concern exists.
5. Listen carefully to children, take their concerns seriously, and reassure them appropriately without promising confidentiality.
6. Share relevant information promptly with appropriate professionals on a need-to-know basis to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.
7. Record concerns, disclosures and actions taken promptly, accurately, factually and in accordance with the Trust's safeguarding procedures.
8. Seek advice and support from the DSL, line manager or appropriate services where required.

KCSIE 2026 emphasises the importance of early help, information sharing, professional curiosity and effective multi-agency working. Staff should remain alert to indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and other safeguarding concerns, be professionally curious where something does not appear right, and share concerns at the earliest opportunity to ensure children receive the right support at the right time.

15.1 If you are concerned about a Child or Young Person's Welfare

There may be occasions when staff have concerns about a child's welfare arising from changes in their behaviour, presentation, attendance, appearance, emotional wellbeing, relationships, online activity, communication, or other indicators that may suggest abuse, neglect, exploitation or other safeguarding concerns.

In such circumstances, staff should:

1. Remain vigilant, observant and professionally curious, particularly where a child's presentation or circumstances appear unusual or inconsistent.
2. Provide the child with an opportunity to speak, where appropriate, and create a safe environment in which they feel listened to and valued.
3. Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by sharing their concerns.
4. Listen carefully and avoid asking leading questions, investigating the matter, or seeking evidence.
5. Make a clear, factual and timely record of any concerns in accordance with the Trust's safeguarding procedures.
6. Report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL and not delay sharing information where a child may be at risk of harm.

In line with KCSIE 2026, staff should recognise that children may not feel ready, able or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, neglected or exploited. Children may not recognise that their experiences are harmful and may be inhibited from seeking help due to fear, embarrassment, shame, coercion, loyalty to the perpetrator, cultural factors, communication difficulties, disability, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), or other vulnerabilities.

The absence of a disclosure should not be taken to mean that a child is safe. Staff must not assume that someone else will act and should not wait for evidence before sharing concerns. Where there are indicators that a child may be at risk, staff should maintain professional curiosity, consider the child's lived experience and wider circumstances, and discuss concerns with the DSL without delay.

All safeguarding concerns, regardless of how minor they may appear in isolation, should be recorded and considered as part of the Trust's wider safeguarding and child protection arrangements. Effective safeguarding relies upon timely information sharing, early identification of need, professional curiosity, and appropriate early help and intervention to ensure that children receive the right support at the earliest opportunity.

15.2 Disclosures

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, all staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help and to respond appropriately where there are concerns that a child may be experiencing abuse, neglect, exploitation or other safeguarding risks. Staff should recognise that children may not feel ready, able or know how to tell someone about their experiences, and that barriers to disclosure may exist.

If a child chooses to share information about their safety, welfare or wellbeing, the member of staff must listen carefully, take the disclosure seriously and respond in a supportive, calm and child-centred manner. Staff should explain, at an appropriate point and in a way that is suitable for the child's age, understanding and needs, that they cannot promise confidentiality and that the information may need to be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and other relevant professionals in order to help keep the child safe. The timing of this explanation will be a matter of professional judgement.

Children may delay disclosing abuse, neglect or exploitation for many reasons, including fear, embarrassment, shame, coercion, loyalty to the person causing harm, concerns about the consequences of reporting, communication difficulties, or because they do not recognise that what they are experiencing is abuse. Staff should be mindful of these barriers and respond with sensitivity and understanding.

When receiving a disclosure, staff will:

1. Allow the child to speak freely and at their own pace.
2. Listen actively, carefully and without judgement.
3. Remain calm, supportive and reassuring throughout the conversation.
4. Take the child seriously and acknowledge the courage it has taken for them to speak out.
5. Reassure the child with appropriate statements such as:
 - a. "You have done the right thing by telling me."
 - b. "I am glad you told me."
 - c. "This is not your fault."
 - d. "We will do our best to help keep you safe."
6. Avoid making promises of confidentiality.
7. Allow silences and give the child time to think and respond.
8. Avoid interrupting, pressuring the child for information, or seeking additional details unnecessarily.
9. Not ask leading, probing, investigative or suggestive questions.
10. Not express shock, disbelief, anger or surprise.
11. Explain what will happen next and who the information may need to be shared with.
12. Report the concern to the DSL or a Deputy DSL immediately, and always on the same day.
13. Make a clear, accurate, factual and contemporaneous record of the disclosure in accordance with the Trust's safeguarding procedures and recording systems.
14. Seek advice and support from the DSL or senior leaders if they are affected by the disclosure.

No member of staff should investigate a concern, examine evidence, or attempt to determine whether abuse has occurred. The role of staff is to **listen, reassure, record and report** in line with the Trust's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Staff should recognise that the absence of a disclosure does not mean that a child is safe. In line with KCSIE 2026, a child-centred approach, professional curiosity, effective information sharing and timely action are fundamental to safeguarding practice. Where concerns remain, staff must continue to share information with the DSL and take appropriate action to ensure the child receives the right help at the right time.

15.3 Notifying parents

The Trust recognises the importance of working in partnership with parents and carers to promote the welfare and safety of children. In most circumstances, and in line with the principles of Working Together to Safeguard Children and KCSIE 2026, safeguarding concerns will be discussed with parents or carers at the earliest appropriate opportunity. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or an appropriately trained Deputy DSL, will normally lead discussions with parents where safeguarding concerns have been identified, a disclosure has been made, or support and intervention are required.

The child's welfare is paramount and must be the primary consideration in all decision-making. In accordance with KCSIE 2026, there may be circumstances where informing parents or carers is not appropriate. This includes situations where doing so could place the child or another person at increased risk of harm, compromise a police or Children's Social Care investigation, lead to the loss of evidence, or otherwise prejudice the safeguarding of the child.

Where there are concerns that contacting parents may not be in the child's best interests, the DSL will seek advice from Children's Social Care, the police and/or other relevant safeguarding agencies before any contact is made. The Trust will follow the advice of safeguarding professionals and make decisions on a case-by-case basis, always taking account of the child's wishes, feelings, safety and welfare.

All decisions regarding the involvement of parents or carers, including the rationale for delaying or withholding contact, will be clearly recorded in accordance with the Trust's safeguarding procedures and record-keeping requirements.

15.4. Confidentiality, Information Sharing and Child Protection Records

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, all staff must understand that safeguarding and child protection information is highly sensitive and must be handled appropriately, securely and on a need-to-know basis. The welfare of the child is paramount, and information should be shared where necessary to safeguard and promote their welfare.

Safeguarding concerns should normally be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL. Depending on the nature of the concern, information may also need to be shared with the Headteacher/Principal, Trust Strategic Safeguarding Lead, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Chair of Governors or Trustees, or other relevant agencies. The DSL will determine who needs to be informed and ensure information is shared lawfully, proportionately and only with those who require it to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

In line with KCSIE 2026, all staff should be aware that they may make a direct referral to Children's Social Care if they believe a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Staff should do so immediately if they consider that appropriate action has not been taken, their concerns are not being addressed, or a child remains at risk. Any member of staff who makes a referral directly must inform the DSL as soon as possible, unless doing so would place the child or another person at increased risk of harm. Within the Trust, the Trust Strategic Safeguarding Lead should also be notified at the earliest opportunity.

The Trust recognises that effective, timely and proportionate information sharing is essential to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Information will be shared where it is:

- necessary, proportionate and relevant to the safeguarding concern;
- accurate, up-to-date and sufficient for purpose;
- shared only with those who have a legitimate need to know; and
- shared in accordance with data protection legislation, statutory safeguarding guidance and local safeguarding procedures.

Staff should be aware that concerns about data protection must **never** prevent the sharing of information where a child may be at risk of harm. The UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 permit the sharing of information for safeguarding purposes where it is lawful, necessary and proportionate to do so.

All decisions relating to the sharing, withholding or requesting of information, together with the rationale for those decisions, will be appropriately recorded.

Child protection records will be created, maintained, stored and retained in accordance with the Trust's Records Management, Data Protection and Retention Policies. Records will be kept securely, whether in paper or electronic format, and access will be restricted to authorised personnel with safeguarding responsibilities.

In accordance with KCSIE 2026, child protection records will be held separately from the pupil's main educational record. The main pupil file will indicate that a separate safeguarding record exists, but will not contain detailed child protection information.

The DSL will seek, wherever appropriate, to work openly and collaboratively with children, parents and carers and to obtain consent for information sharing where this is safe and appropriate. However, consent is not required where

seeking consent could place a child at increased risk of harm, prejudice the prevention or detection of a crime, compromise a safeguarding enquiry, delay necessary intervention, or where there is another lawful basis to share information. Any decision to share information without consent will be clearly recorded together with the reasons for doing so.

Requests from parents, carers, pupils or former pupils to access safeguarding information, including Subject Access Requests (SARs), must be referred immediately to the Trust's Data Protection Officer and Trust Strategic Safeguarding Lead. Requests will be considered and responded to in accordance with the UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018, relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance, taking account of the need to protect children and any third-party information.

When a pupil transfers to another school, college or educational setting, the DSL will ensure that the child protection file is transferred securely, promptly and separately from the main pupil record. Receipt of the file will be obtained and recorded, and the transfer will be completed in accordance with the requirements of KCSIE 2026 and local safeguarding procedures to ensure continuity of support and protection for the child.

16. Professional curiosity and cumulative harm

The Trust recognises that safeguarding concerns may not always be evident from a single incident and that harm can be cumulative over time. In line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026*, all staff are expected to exercise professional curiosity, remain alert to patterns of concern, and seek further information where a child's welfare may be at risk. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will consider:

- the child's views
- presenting needs
- vulnerabilities
- attendance
- behaviour
- family circumstances
- online behaviour
- safeguarding history and
- any emerging patterns of concern when assessing risk.

The DSL will determine and coordinate the appropriate response, including monitoring, early help, multi-agency working, referral to children's social care, and immediate safeguarding action where required.

17. Managing safeguarding records

The Trust recognises that effective safeguarding relies upon accurate, timely and secure record keeping. In accordance with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026*, safeguarding records will be:

- factual
- objective
- contemporaneous
- securely stored
- appropriately access-controlled, and
- retained in line with the Trust's records retention arrangements.

Records will clearly distinguish between fact, observation, professional opinion and information provided by another person. Safeguarding information will be processed, stored and shared in accordance with data protection legislation, UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and information-sharing guidance. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis where it is necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child, and concerns about sharing information must not prevent the timely sharing of information where a child may be at risk of harm.

Safeguarding records will be maintained separately from a child's educational record where appropriate and will provide a clear chronology of concerns, actions taken, decisions made and outcomes. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will oversee the management, quality and security of safeguarding records and ensure they support effective risk assessment, decision-making and multi-agency working. When a child transfers to another setting, safeguarding records will be transferred securely, promptly and separately from the main pupil file, with receipt confirmed by the receiving setting.

18.Safeguarding across the Trust

The Trust will maintain mechanisms to identify risks that may affect more than one setting. These may include:

- Common peer groups
- Online groups
- Transport
- Shared activities
- Sporting activities
- Trust-wide events
- Staff working across settings
- Contractors
- Safeguarding themes
- Exploitation affecting multiple communities

The Trust Strategic lead for Safeguarding will co-ordinate cross-Trust safeguarding responses where appropriate.

18.1 Sixth Form College arrangements

The Sixth Form College will operate under the same Trust safeguarding principles while recognising its post-16 context:

The College will have particular regard to:

- Students under 18
- Students who are care leavers
- Exploitation
- County Lines
- Serious violence
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual violence
- Online harm
- Radicalisation
- Homelessness
- Substance misuse
- Financial exploitation

19.Safeguarding and behaviour

Behaviour policies across the Trust will support and promote safeguarding. The Trust recognises that a child's behaviour may be a response to trauma, abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, domestic abuse, mental health needs, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), or other unmet needs. Staff will consider whether concerning, challenging or

withdrawn behaviour may be an indicator of vulnerability or safeguarding risk and will respond in a child-centred manner.

When considering sanctions, including suspension, exclusion, part-time timetables, internal suspension or repeated removal from lessons, academies will take account of the wider safeguarding context, the child's individual circumstances, any known vulnerabilities, and whether additional assessment or support is required. Safeguarding concerns identified through behaviour incidents will be recorded and referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in accordance with Trust procedures.

20. Reasonable Force and Physical Intervention

Staff may use reasonable force where legally permitted and where necessary to prevent a pupil from harming themselves or others, causing serious damage to property, or seriously disrupting good order and discipline. The Trust will ensure that:

- Staff understand the legal framework and relevant guidance relating to the use of reasonable force.
- Incidents are recorded promptly and reviewed to identify any safeguarding concerns, patterns of behaviour, or lessons learned.
- Parents/carers are informed as appropriate.
- The safeguarding implications of any physical intervention are considered.
- Allegations or concerns regarding inappropriate physical intervention are managed in accordance with Trust safeguarding, disciplinary and allegations procedures.

Any incident resulting in injury, distress, or concern that physical intervention may have caused harm, or indicates a safeguarding need, must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or a senior leader in accordance with Trust procedures. Relevant records will be maintained and reviewed to ensure appropriate follow-up action is taken.

21. Educational visits, residentials and off-site activities

The Trust recognises that safeguarding responsibilities apply to all activities undertaken on behalf of the Trust, whether on or off site. This includes educational visits, residential visits, sporting events, work experience, placements, overseas visits, extracurricular activities, and alternative provision. The Trust will ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements, supervision, safer working practices and reporting procedures are in place for all off-site activities.

Risk assessments will consider safeguarding risks, health and safety requirements, the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual pupils, and any additional measures required to keep children safe. Appropriate information will be shared with relevant staff and providers, and safeguarding concerns arising during off-site activities will be managed in accordance with Trust safeguarding procedures.

22. Equality, inclusion and anti-discriminatory safeguarding

Safeguarding practice across the Trust will be inclusive, equitable and anti-discriminatory. The Trust recognises that discrimination, racism, prejudice, bias and inequality can impact children's experiences, increase vulnerability and affect safeguarding outcomes. All staff are expected to promote a culture of respect and inclusion and to challenge appropriately any racist, discriminatory, sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, disability-related or faith-based prejudice and behaviour. The Trust will consider the impact of protected characteristics, diversity, individual needs and lived experiences when assessing risk and responding to safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding data, trends and outcomes will be analysed to identify any disproportionality or barriers to support, in line with the principles of *Working Together to Safeguard Children* and *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026*.

23. Safeguarding monitoring and quality assurance

Safeguarding arrangements will be subject to regular quality assurance, monitoring and review at both Trust and academy level to ensure compliance, effectiveness and continuous improvement. Monitoring activities may include safeguarding audits, review of case files, referral quality and timeliness, attendance and absence data, child-on-child abuse incidents, allegations against adults, low-level concerns, staff safeguarding training compliance, filtering and

monitoring arrangements, safeguarding record keeping, Single Central Record compliance, safer recruitment practices, outcomes for vulnerable groups, pupil voice, parent/carer feedback and feedback from external agencies. Findings will be used to identify strengths, address areas for development, capture lessons learned and inform safeguarding practice across the Trust. The Trust Board and Local Governing Boards will receive termly safeguarding assurance information and an annual safeguarding report to provide effective scrutiny, challenge and oversight of safeguarding arrangements.

Implementation

All staff have a responsibility for safeguarding children in their academy and the Trust as a whole.

The implementation of this Policy will be the responsibility of individual Academy Headteachers/Principals, Designated Safeguarding Leads with support from the Safeguarding Strategic Lead for the Trust.

Communication

This Policy will be circulated to all staff within the Potteries Educational Trust and can also be obtained from the Potteries Educational Trust website.

Annex A: Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Local Safeguarding Information

[to be read alongside the Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy]

1. Designated Safeguarding Lead [DSL] and Deputy DSLs

Trust Strategic Safeguarding Lead – Claire Gaygan – cgaygan@potteries.ac.uk

ACADEMY	DSL	DDSL	CONTACT
Biddulph High School	Laura Burgess	David Scott Gemma Baddeley Emma Casewell	lburgess@bhs.potteries.ac.uk dscott@bhs.potteries.ac.uk gbaddeley@bhs.potteries.ac.uk ecasewell@bhs.potteries.ac.uk
Moorside High School	Lisa Burke	Abi Goodwin Jess Marquis	LBurke@mhs.potteries.ac.uk AGoodwin@mhs.potteries.ac.uk JMarquis@mhs.potteries.ac.uk
Werrington Primary School	Caroline Prince Emma Jones		CPrince@wps.potteries.ac.uk EJones@wps.potteries.ac.uk
6th Form College	Nicola Birch [Claire Gaygan – Interim]	Charlotte Barker Clare Bowker Mal Majid Chantelle Charles	NBirch@sfc.potteries.ac.uk CBarker@sfc.potteries.ac.uk CBowker@sfc.potteries.ac.uk MMajid@sfc.potteries.ac.uk CCharles@sfc.potteries.ac.uk

2. Trust Contacts

Role	Name	CONTACT
CEO	Heather McLachlan	hmclachlan@potteries.ac.uk
Chair of Trust Board	Professor Martin Jones	mjones@potteries.ac.uk
Safeguarding Trustee	Dr. Charles Freeman	cfreeman@potteries.ac.uk
COO/Strategic Lead for Safeguarding	Claire Gaygan	cgaygan@potteries.ac.uk

3. Children's Social Care Referral Arrangements

Stoke-on-Trent

- Children's Advice and Duty Service (Integrated Front Door)
- Telephone: **01782 235100**
- Online Referral: Stoke-on-Trent Early Help/Children's Social Care Referral Portal.

Staffordshire

- Staffordshire Families Integrated Front Door (SFIFD)
- Telephone: **0300 111 8033**
- Online Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF).

4. Local Authority Designated Officer [LADO]

Allegations or concerns regarding adults working with children must be referred to the relevant LADO service within one working day and prior to any internal investigation where appropriate.

Stoke-on-Trent LADO

- Refer via Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Procedures and Children's Services, **Staffordshire LADO**

- Staffordshire LADO Referral Service.
- Referral form available via Staffordshire County Council.

5. Local Safeguarding Partnerships

Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership [SOTSCP] <https://safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk/>

Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership [SSCP]

<https://www.staffsscp.org.uk/>

6. Police Safeguarding Contact Arrangements

Emergency

- Dial 999 where a child is at immediate risk of harm

Non-Emergency

Staffordshire Police: 101

- Child Protection, Exploitation and Vulnerability concerns should also be referred through Children's Social Care pathways where appropriate.

7. Emergency/Out-of-Hours Children's Social Care

Stoke-on-Trent

- Emergency Duty Team: **01782 234234**

Staffordshire

- Emergency Duty Service: **0345 604 2886**

8. Prevent Referral Arrangements

Concerns relating to radicalisation or extremism should be discussed with the DSL immediately.

- Refer through Staffordshire Police Prevent Team and local Channel Panel arrangements.
- National Prevent Referral Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/make-a-prevent-referral>

9. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service [CAMHS]

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Combined CAMHS Services

- North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust
- Referrals via GP, Mental Health Support Teams, Early Help, Social Care or safeguarding processes as appropriate.

10. Domestic Abuse Services

New Era Domestic Abuse Service

- Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent domestic abuse support service.
- Helpline: **0300 303 3778**
- Website: <https://www.new-era.uk>
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline - 0808 2000 247

11. Child Exploitation and Serious Violence Arrangements

The following concerns must be referred via Children's Social Care and discussed with the DSL immediately.

- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Serious Violence
- County Lines

- Missing Children

Stoke-on-Trent

- Child Exploitation Screening Tool (Risk Factor Matrix)
- Email: ChildExploitation@stoke.gov.uk

Staffordshire

- Follow SSCP Exploitation Procedures and local MACE arrangements – staffsscp.org.uk

12. Children Missing Education

All concerns relating to children missing education must be reported promptly in accordance with statutory guidance and local authority procedures.

Stoke-on-Trent CME Team

- Report via local authority attendance and inclusion services.

Staffordshire CME Team

- Report via Staffordshire County Council CME procedures.

13. Escalation Procedures

Where professionals disagree regarding risk, thresholds or safeguarding decisions:

- Follow the Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership Escalation Policy.
- Follow the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Professional Resolution and Escalation Procedures.
- Notify the DSL of all escalations.

14. Early Help/Family Help Arrangements

Stoke-on-Trent

- Families First and Early Help Services.
- Referrals through the Integrated Front Door and Early Help pathways.

Staffordshire

- Family Help and Early Help Services.
- Access via Staffordshire Family Hubs and SFIFD.

Key Emergency Contacts

Service	Contact Number
Emergency Services	999
Police [Non-Emergency]	101
Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Front Door	01782 235100
Stoke Emergency Duty Team	01782 234234
Staffordshire Families Integrated Front Door	0345 604 2886

This annex should be reviewed annually and updated whenever local safeguarding arrangements or contact details change.

Appendix A

Physical abuse: Physical abuse is 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 (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

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

Sexual abuse: Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect: Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result 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);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Indicators of abuse

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons, it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead.

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused, neglected or exploited may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- frequently miss academy, arrive late or leave the academy for part of the day
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority

- become disinterested in their academy work
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.



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