

Safeguarding Policy

Review history

Review Date	Reviewer	Approved by	Date approved	Implementation
September 2022	J Barker	Trustees	13 July 2022	1 September 2022
September 2023	J Barker	Trustees	5 July 2023	1 September 2023
September 2024	J Barker	Trustees	17 July 2024	1 September 2024
September 2025	J Barker	Trustees	1 October 2025	1 October 2025
September 2026	A Walshaw	Trustees	Septemebr 2026	Septemebr 2026
September 2027				

Recent revisions

Issue No.	Date	Revisions made
6	September 2022	Updated in line with KCSIE 2022 including links to websites. Changed peer-on-peer abuse to child-on-child abuse. Included Meadowdale Academy. Included training for Trustees and Governors. Included requirement for appropriate adult. Clarified timescales for the transferring of CP files. Updated extra familial harms, domestic abuse, child on child abuse, sexual violence, and sexual harassment. Included reference to the extension of the role of the Virtual Head. Updated Online safety to include informing parents of the apps and websites their child may access. Included a DSL Checklist at Appendix 4.

		Updated sections on children with SEND & Children who are LGBTQ+ Updated DSL and Deputy DSLs.
7	September 2023	Updated in line with KCSIE 2023 including links to websites. Updated roles and responsibilities and staff training to include reference to filtering and monitoring. Updated sections on Forced Marriage, Channel, Children who are Absent from Education, Children Requiring Mental Health Support, Online Safety, Organisations or Individuals using School Premises. Updated DSL and Deputy DSLs.
8	September 2024	Updated in line with KCSIE 2024. Updated Section 6.4.7. Updated Roles and Responsibilities for Trustees. Updated references to GDPR to include UK. Updated Section 10 in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. Updated Section 10.15 in accordance with the updated PREVENT guidance. Updated links in Section 10.18. Updated Section 12.10 to include reference to 'questioning their gender'. Included links to statutory guidance for alternative provision, children with health needs who cannot attend school and NSPCC guidance on safeguarding children with SEND.
9	September 2025	Updated in line with KCSIE 2025: Link to revised guidance on Relationships, Sex, and Health Education published September 2025 Updated Online Safety to clarify misinformation, disinformation, and

		conspiracy theories are safeguarding harms. Filtering and Monitoring: Links added to plan technology for your school & DFE Guidance on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Amended wording in cyber security standards to clarify it was developed to help schools improve their cyber resilience. Updated guidance on use of Alternative Provision (AP). Updated to clarify 'working together to safeguard attendance' is now statutory guidance. Role of Virtual Head in relation to kinship care clarified. Signpost to revised guidance on gender questioning. Updated links to TRA Guidance & Section 128 checks. Links added: Lucy Faithfull Foundation's Shore Space Resources for education settings CSA Centre. Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation The Children's Society
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1. Introduction

This policy is in response to:

- Sections 157 and 175 of the Education Act 2002 (implemented June 2004)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

It is in line with the relevant Safeguarding Partnership's child protection procedures and Department for Education (DfE) guidance. This policy applies to all adults,

including agency and supply staff and volunteers, working in or on behalf of any Academy or the Trust.

Everyone in the education service shares an objective to help keep children and young people safe by:

- Providing a safe environment for children and young people in which to learn.
- Identifying children and young people who may need early help or are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, and taking appropriate action, in order to keep them safe at home and at school.
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who encounters children, young people and their families has a role to play in safeguarding, and must consider at all times what is in the best interests of the child.

2. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education 2026. It is informed by Working together to safeguard children (2026) and complies with our funding agreement and articles of association. The Trust is aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and with local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. We comply with the guidance and procedures published by our relevant local safeguarding partnerships (Appendix 1). This policy is also based on the following legislation and guidance (as amended):

- Part 3 of the schedule to the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
- [The Children Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)), which provide the framework for the care and protection of children.
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the [Serious Crime Act 2015](#), which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.
- [Statutory guidance on FGM](#), which sets out responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM.
- [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#), which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children.

- Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#), which defines what “regulated activity” is in relation to children.
- Statutory [guidance on the Prevent duty](#), which explains schools’ duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.
- The [Childcare \(Disqualification\) Regulations 2018](#) (the “2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations”) and [Childcare Act 2006](#), which set out who is disqualified from working with children.
- Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE) – requirements relating to safeguarding and welfare for childcare and early education provision.
- The Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), *and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025*, which set out data protection duties for organisations and individuals in processing personal information.

3. The North East Learning Trust Commitment

The Trust and each of its academies will facilitate a whole-school and whole-Trust approach to safeguarding. This means ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. All our systems, processes and policies operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its students, and we recognise that the welfare of each student is of paramount importance. We acknowledge that:

- Some children may be especially vulnerable to abuse or exploitation (e.g. those with special educational needs or disabilities, or those living in adverse circumstances).
- Children who are abused, neglected or exploited may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth or to view the world in a positive way.
- The behaviour of children who have experienced abuse, neglect or exploitation may be challenging.
- Some children who have experienced abuse may go on to harm other children.

We will always take a considered and sensitive approach to support all our students. Where there is a safeguarding concern, the Trust and its Academy leaders will ensure that the child’s wishes and feelings are taken into account when deciding on actions

and services. The Trust will ensure there are systems in place that are well promoted, easily understood and accessible for children to report abuse, knowing they will be taken seriously and supported.

Each Academy has a named Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and at least one Deputy DSL. The Trustees and Local Academy Councils will also appoint a named Safeguarding Governor for each Academy (see Appendix 2).

Each Academy will ensure appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place in the DSL's absence.

4. Links with other policies and procedures

This policy should be read alongside relevant Trust and Academy policies and procedures, including:

- Acceptable Use (IT) Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Exclusions Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy (Safer Recruitment)
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy

All policies are available on the Trust and individual Academy websites or on the intranet.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Trustees

The Board of Trustees will ensure that:

- The Trust has a child safeguarding policy and procedures in place that are in accordance with national guidance and informed by local safeguarding partnership guidance and the policy is available to parents/carers upon request.
- The Trust operates safer recruitment and ensures that all appropriate vetting and checks (including Section 128 checks for trustees and governors) are carried out on staff and volunteers who work with children.
- The Trust has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers that comply with guidance from the local authority and locally agreed inter-agency procedures (see Section 13 and Appendix 1).
- A **senior member of each Academy's leadership team is appointed as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**, supported by at least one Deputy DSL. The DSL takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety). This includes understanding and overseeing the Academy's filtering and monitoring systems and processes.
- **All staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training**, including online safety and relevant responsibilities for filtering and monitoring, as part of their induction and with **regular updates** (at least annually). All staff (including those who do not directly work with children) are required to read and follow at least *Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education*.
- **Trustees and governors** receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction and then at regular intervals. This training gives them the knowledge to **provide strategic challenge** and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place are effective and support a robust whole-school approach to safeguarding.
- Any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are *remedied without delay*.

- Where services or activities are provided on an Academy's premises by another body, the Academy ensures that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place for safeguarding and liaises with the Academy as needed.
- Where a school commissions alternative provision for a student/pupil, the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and ensures the placement is suitable. The Trust/Academy will obtain written confirmation from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks (including new staff notifications) have been carried out on individuals working there, and the school will review placements (at least half-termly) to confirm the pupil's continued safety and that their needs are being met.
- **Appropriate online filtering and monitoring is in place** at each Academy and is kept up to date. The effectiveness of filtering and monitoring systems is formally reviewed at least annually (with a record kept of these checks) to ensure they meet the Academy's safeguarding needs and do not over-block valuable online content.
- If an allegation arises outside of term time, and the Academy's DSL, Deputy DSL, Executive Headteacher and Head of School/Headteacher are all unavailable, the Trust has appointed the Executive Board to be responsible for managing the referral process in their absence.

5.2 Local Academy Councils

Each Academy's Local Academy Council will:

- Appoint a Link Governor for Safeguarding who meets with the DSL at least once a term to monitor the effectiveness of this policy and report to the Council.

5.3 Head of School/Headteacher

The Head of School/Headteacher of each Academy will ensure that:

- The safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the Trust are fully implemented and followed by all staff.
- Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the DSL and other staff to discharge their responsibilities.
- All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practices, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a

timely manner in line with the Trust's Low Level Concerns Policy and/or Whistleblowing Policy.

5.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead

Each Academy's DSL (and Deputy DSLs) holds lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection matters (including online safety). This is explicit in their job description and in line with statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

In NELT this includes:



Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026-2027

Our strong culture of safeguarding:

 We maintain a proactive culture of vigilance.
  We embody the understanding that 'it could happen here'.
  We remain 'professionally curious' at all times.

 We are dedicated to children receiving the right help at the right time.
  We know safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility.
  We always wear staff ID and comply with the Code of Conduct.

Definition of safeguarding:

1. Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
2. Protecting children from maltreatment and harm. These can occur within or outside the home (in the community) and online.
3. Preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
4. Making sure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
5. Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Important additions in KCSIE 2026/27 - THINK WIDER:

Mental health Be alert to changes in presentation, behaviour, attendance, self-esteem and emotional wellbeing that may indicate safeguarding needs.	AI, deepfakes and online safety Apply existing safeguarding processes to AI-related incidents and remain vigilant to online safety risks across the curriculum.	Violence against women and girls Challenge inappropriate language/attitudes, recognising that sexist behaviour can form part of the safeguarding continuum.	Children questioning their gender Adopt watchful waiting approach, seek advice from the DSL and ensure appropriate safeguarding processes are followed.	Early help - strengthened expectations around identifying needs early - concerns that do not meet the statutory thresholds should still be shared with DSL.	Attendance Be professionally curious about patterns of absence and support children to attend regularly and feel welcomed back.	Filtering and monitoring Follow school policies on filtering, monitoring and mobile devices, and report online safety concerns immediately.
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Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility - YOUR role is to:

 Always act in the best interests of a child. Never assume that someone else will report or take action.
  Know what to do if a student discloses to you. Do not promise confidentiality - empathise, be present, be curious - but don't investigate. Report to DSL.

 If Female Genital Mutilation is suspected the staff member must call police and inform the DSL who will support.
  All concerns, discussions and decisions made must be made in writing. CPOMS is used as both a strategic and operational tool. DSLs manage this system.

 Always read and understand part one of KCSIE in Education (DFE statutory guidance).
  Know the different types of abuse and neglect and exploitation so that you can identify children who may be in need of help or protection.

 Always know who the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is. Speak to them as soon as you have a concern.
 

Support a culture of transparency

Adult behaviour - All concerns about the behaviour of any staff member or adult must be reported to the Headteacher. If the concern is about the Headteacher, it should be reported to the Executive Headteacher and the Chair of Governors.
 Whistleblowing - If you're worried about wrongdoing within school: unsafe safeguarding practices, potential failures, potentially illegal or unethical activities - you must report to the DSL, Headteacher or Chair of Local Academy Council.

"Every child experiences excellence every day."

6. Safe Recruitment and Selection

The Trust pays full regard to DfE guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. We ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works in a Trust academy and is perceived by students as a safe and trustworthy adult (including volunteers and contractor staff). Safer recruitment practice is encompassed in the Trust's Recruitment and Selection Policy. It includes scrutinising applications, verifying identity and qualifications, obtaining references, checking employment history, conducting online searches and/or social media checks for shortlisted candidates, and ensuring a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes rigorous selection procedures and required vetting checks (including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and compliance with laws on rehabilitating ex-offenders). Each Academy and central services are responsible for maintaining their own single central record (SCR)

6.1 Staff Training

All staff working in the Trust will undertake safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety and awareness of the Academy's filtering and monitoring procedures) as part of their induction. Each Academy's DSL and Deputy DSL(s) receive training on safeguarding and child protection at least every two years (with regular updates and networking in between). All staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) are provided with a copy of this policy and other relevant safeguarding documentation as part of their induction. All staff must read and follow Part One (and Annex B, where relevant to their role) of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. Members, Trustees and local governors also complete safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety and understanding the Academy's filtering and monitoring approach) as part of their initial development, and their Code of Conduct sets clear expectations for safeguarding.

Staff are supported by the DSL and Deputy DSLs, who provide guidance and additional training where appropriate.

6.2 Opportunities to Teach Safeguarding

As part of a strong safeguarding culture, the Trust provides a broad and balanced curriculum in all its academies and ensures that children are taught about safeguarding, wellbeing and managing risk including online safety. This is delivered through the curriculum, including as part of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (mandatory in all state-funded schools). (The Trust is compliant with the Department for Education's statutory guidance on RSE and Health Education.)

7. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The Trust recognises its statutory duty under section 16LA of the Children Act 2004 to share information for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Where staff hold information that they reasonably consider to be relevant to the safeguarding or welfare of a child, and the sharing of that information may assist another relevant agency, professional, or organisation in carrying out its safeguarding functions, that information will be shared lawfully, appropriately, and without unnecessary delay. The Trust acknowledges that consent is not always required for safeguarding information to be shared and that concerns about confidentiality or data protection legislation must not prevent the timely sharing of information where this is necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child. Information sharing decisions will be based on relevance, necessity, proportionality, and the best interests of the child.

There are times when the serious harm test should be applied if there is an associated risk in sharing safeguarding information. Only the DSL and Head of School/Headteacher can make this decision and should seek Trust advice.

When a child transfers from an Academy: The DSL will ensure that any child protection file is transferred securely to the new school or college *as soon as possible*, and in any case within **5 days** for an in-year transfer or within the first **5 days** of the new term. Receipt of the file will be obtained from the new school or college. Each Academy ensures that such records are sent **separately from the main pupil file**, that they are securely delivered and confirmation of receipt is obtained. Upon receiving child protection records for a new pupil, the receiving Academy will ensure that key appropriate staff (e.g. DSL and SENCO) are informed as required. **Where appropriate, important information may also be shared with the new school or college in advance of the child leaving, to help them have the right support in place immediately on their arrival.**

To keep children safe and provide appropriate care, each Academy will maintain accurate and up-to-date information on every student, including:

- Full names (including any previous names used), date of birth and home address of the child.
- The names and contact details of persons with whom the child normally lives, and of all persons with parental responsibility for the child (if different).
- Emergency contact details for at least three separate adults (wherever possible).

- Details of any persons authorised to collect the child from the Academy.
- Any relevant court orders in place, including those that affect any person's access to the child (e.g. child arrangements orders, care orders, injunctions).
- Whether the child is or has been the subject of a child protection plan (formerly known as being on the child protection register).
- The name and contact details of any key professionals, such as the child's allocated social worker, GP or other health and care practitioners.
- Any other relevant factors or contextual information which may impact on the child's safety or welfare.

8. Working together

8.1 Students

The Trust is committed to ensuring that students recognise risk and are taught to keep themselves safe. Not all types of abuse and risk are easily visible or reported by children. All students know that the Academy has senior staff with special responsibility for safeguarding (their identities are promoted to students), and students are told who they can speak to in the Academy (and outside) if they have worries or wish to report abuse. We clearly communicate that students have a right to be listened to and to be taken seriously, and we explain what steps will be taken to protect them if they raise concerns. Information about support services (e.g. Childline, NSPCC) is also made available to students.

8.2 Parents/Carers

The Trust shares a common purpose with parents and carers to keep children safe and to promote their welfare. All academies follow the relevant local safeguarding partnership's procedures for dealing with child protection concerns. We aim to discuss any concerns about a child with their parents or carers. However, if the Academy reasonably believes that doing so may place the child at greater risk, we may share concerns with children's social care and/or the police without parental knowledge or consent, in accordance with local child protection procedures. The Trust's Child Safeguarding Policy is available to all parents/carers upon request and available on Academy and the trust websites.

8.3 Multi-Agency Working

The Trust recognises the pivotal role it must play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, and we contribute to multi-agency work in line with statutory guidance Working together to safeguard children. The Trust follows local arrangements agreed by the safeguarding partners. The Trust and its academies work with social care,

police, health and other services to promote children's welfare and protect them from harm. This includes providing or contributing to a coordinated offer of early help (including targeted Family Help) when additional needs of children are identified, and contributing to inter-agency plans to support children subject to child protection plans.

9. Early Help

Any child may benefit from early help, but all school staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Is disabled, has certain health conditions, or has specified additional needs.
- Has special educational needs (with or without an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan).
- Has a mental health need.
- Is a young carer.
- Is showing early signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour (for example, may be involved with gangs, organised crime or county lines).
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care.
- Has experienced multiple suspensions from school, is at risk of permanent exclusion, or is in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit.
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation.
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
- Has a parent or carer in custody, or is otherwise affected by parental offending.
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges such as parental drug or alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues, or domestic abuse.
- Is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse (e.g. FGM or forced marriage).
- Is a privately fostered child.
- Is pregnant and/or a parent
- Is showing early signs of abusive, violent or harmful behaviour
- Is on a reintegration timetable

10. Identifying Children Who May Be Suffering, or At Risk of Suffering, Significant Harm

Staff and other adults working in our academies are well-placed to observe physical, emotional or behavioural signs indicating that a child may be suffering significant harm. The trusting relationships between staff and students, and between our academies, families and communities, can lead to disclosures of abuse or other safeguarding concerns.

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm. It also relates to broader aspects of school life, including:

- Pupils' health and safety (e.g. environmental hazards, safe use of equipment and premises).
- The use of reasonable force (see the Trust's behaviour and physical intervention policies).
- Meeting the needs of children with medical conditions, including mental health and wellbeing.
- Providing first aid.
- Educational visits.
- Intimate care (see the Trust's Intimate Care Policy).
- Internet or e-safety, including AI.
- Appropriate arrangements for school security, taking into account the local context.

Safeguarding can involve a range of issues such as:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying.
- Racist, homophobic or transphobic abuse.
- Extremist behaviour, including radicalisation.
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE).
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children.
- Sharing nude or sexually explicit images (including those that are AI generated) (including "sexting").
- Substance misuse.
- Local area contextual risks (e.g. harmful recreational behaviour, domestic violence and child and adult mental health).
- Issues affecting children such as serious violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), so-called "honour-based" violence and forced marriage.

Knowing what to look for is vital for early identification of abuse, neglect or exploitation. ***All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, so that they can identify children who may need help or protection. All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation and***

safeguarding issues are rarely isolated events; in most cases, multiple issues will overlap. If any staff member is unsure, they should always speak to the DSL (or Deputy).

All staff need to be aware that *safeguarding incidents or behaviours can occur outside of school*, and outside of the home, and may involve children's peers. All staff (but especially the DSL and Deputies) should consider the context for children's safeguarding issues – children may be at risk of abuse or exploitation by individuals or groups outside their families. These extra-familial harms can take a variety of forms (including sexual abuse, sexual harassment and exploitation, domestic abuse in teenage relationships, criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, or radicalisation).

All staff should also appreciate that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected – or they might not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed or unable to express their concerns. This might be due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation or language difference. However, this should not prevent any staff member from exercising professional curiosity and raising concerns – it is essential that staff do everything possible to build trusted relationships to facilitate communication.

All staff will have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to drug or alcohol misuse, chronic absences, serious violence (including involvement in county lines), radicalisation, and the *consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images/videos* are indicators that a child may be at risk. Other specific safeguarding issues all staff will be aware of include (but are not limited to):

11. Safeguarding concerns that could lead to harm

Safeguarding concern	What it is	Required staff actions
Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)	A child is coerced, controlled or manipulated into criminal activity for the benefit of others, often through threats, violence, debt or inducements. Can occur online and may appear consensual.	• Be alert to unexplained gifts, association with exploited peers, substance misuse, missing episodes, emotional changes or poor attendance. • Report concerns to the DSL immediately and follow safeguarding procedures.
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	A form of child sexual abuse where a child is manipulated or coerced into sexual activity in	• Be alert to CCE indicators, older partners, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy or unexplained gifts.

	exchange for something they need or want, or for the perpetrator's gain.	• Refer concerns to the DSL and follow safeguarding procedures.
Child carrying weapons	Any child who is carrying, threatening to carry or using weapons in school	Report to DSL to then carry out a risk assessment relating to the child and to the school.
County Lines	Criminal gangs exploit children to transport, store or sell drugs and money using dedicated drug-dealing networks.	• Be alert to children missing from home, being found far from home, unexplained money, multiple phones, drug debts, serious violence or excessive calls/texts. • Refer immediately to the DSL; consider police and children's social care involvement.
Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking	Exploitation including slavery, servitude, forced labour, sexual exploitation, forced criminality or organ removal.	• Refer concerns to the DSL. • DSL to consider safeguarding action and National Referral Mechanism (NRM) procedures.
Cybercrime	Criminal activity involving computers or the internet, including hacking, malware and denial of service attacks.	• Be alert to unauthorised system access, creation or sharing of malware, or cyber-offending behaviours. • Refer to DSL; consider referrals where appropriate.
Domestic Abuse	Physical, emotional, coercive, controlling or economic abuse between connected individuals. Children are victims if they see, hear or experience its effects.	• Be alert to emotional distress, behavioural changes, disclosures or family incidents. • Refer to DSL; use Operation Encompass notifications and provide support as appropriate.
Homelessness	A child or family experiencing homelessness or being at risk of homelessness.	• Be alert to rent arrears, household debt, eviction risk, domestic abuse or notice to leave accommodation. • Refer to DSL; consider Local Housing Authority and children's social care referrals where required.
So-Called Honour-Based Abuse (HBA)	Abuse committed to protect perceived family or community honour, including FGM, forced marriage and breast ironing.	• Report immediately to the DSL. • DSL to involve police and children's social care as required.
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	Procedures involving removal or injury to female genital organs for non-medical reasons; a form of child abuse and illegal in the UK.	• Teachers must personally report known cases in under-18s directly to police where disclosed or visually identified. • Inform the DSL unless there is a good reason not to do so; suspected cases follow local safeguarding procedures.

Forced Marriage	A marriage conducted without free and full consent, involving coercion, threats or pressure. Causing a child to marry before 18 is a criminal offence.	• Be alert to family pressure, prolonged absence abroad or withdrawal from education. • Refer immediately to the DSL and safeguarding agencies.
Child-on-Child Abuse	Abuse perpetrated by one child against another, including online abuse. This includes bullying, relationship abuse, physical abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, image sharing, upskirting and hazing.	• Maintain a zero-tolerance approach; never dismiss concerns as banter or part of growing up. • Report all concerns to the DSL and support victims to feel safe and listened to.
Sexual Violence Between Children	Sexual offences committed by one child against another, including rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault and causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent.	• Take all reports seriously and reassure victims they are not causing a problem. • Report to the DSL and manage in line with KCSIE and safeguarding procedures.
Consent	Consent means having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent can be withdrawn at any time. A child under 13 can never consent to sexual activity; the age of consent is 16.	• The DSL or Deputy must be involved in any concern or report relating to sexual violence or sexual harassment. • Seek advice from local safeguarding partners or relevant experts if in doubt.
Sexual Harassment	Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, online or offline, inside or outside school, which violates dignity or creates an intimidating, degrading, humiliating or hostile environment.	• Be alert to sexual comments, jokes, unwanted touching, sharing explicit content and online harassment. • Challenge behaviour early and refer to the DSL.
Serious Violence	Involvement in, exposure to or risk from serious violent crime, including gang-related or criminal exploitation contexts.	• Be alert to unexplained injuries, absences, older associates, decline in wellbeing/attainment or unexplained gifts. • Refer concerns to the DSL.
Radicalisation and Extremism / Prevent	The process through which a child is drawn into extremist ideology or terrorism. Protecting children from radicalisation is part of safeguarding.	• Be alert to behavioural changes, extremist views or concerning online activity. • Discuss concerns with the DSL; DSL to consider Prevent or Channel referral.
Channel	A voluntary, confidential early-intervention programme providing tailored support to individuals vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.	• DSL to manage any Prevent referral pathway and liaise with the Channel panel where required. • Consent is required before Channel support is provided.
Private Fostering	A private arrangement for a child under 16, or under 18 if disabled, to live with someone who is not a	• Notify the DSL if this is known or suspected.

	parent or close relative for more than 28 days.	The academy must inform the local authority as soon as possible and within 48 hours of becoming aware.
Child Abduction and Community Safety Incidents	Unauthorised removal or retention of a child from lawful care, or community safety concerns such as unfamiliar adults attempting to engage children near school.	- Report concerns immediately to the DSL and police where appropriate. - Provide age-appropriate safety guidance for children.
Children and the Court System	Children may be involved in criminal or family court proceedings as victims, witnesses or because of child arrangements disputes.	- Ensure appropriate support is provided. - Signpost families or children to age-appropriate guidance and relevant agencies where appropriate.
Children Absent from Education	Extended or repeated absence can be a warning sign of safeguarding issues, including neglect, CSE, CCE and county lines.	- Follow attendance and safeguarding procedures promptly. - Work with local authority children's services where absence is linked to safeguarding concerns.
Children Missing Education	Children not receiving suitable education, or going missing from education, may be at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, forced marriage, FGM, CCE or other harm.	- Act early to identify underlying risk. - Follow CME procedures and notify the local authority where required.
Children with Family Members in Prison	Children affected by imprisonment of a parent or family member may experience poverty, stigma, isolation, underachievement or mental health difficulties.	- Provide appropriate pastoral support and intervention. - Consider signposting to specialist support resources where appropriate.
Children at Potentially Greater Risk of Harm	Children with a social worker, history of trauma, abuse, neglect or complex family circumstances may be more vulnerable to further harm.	- Use information about social worker involvement to inform safeguarding and welfare decisions. - Provide additional pastoral or academic support alongside statutory services.
Children Requiring Mental Health Support	Mental health difficulties may indicate that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect or exploitation.	- Staff should observe and report concerns; only trained professionals should diagnose mental health problems. - Any mental health concern that is also a safeguarding concern must be referred immediately to the DSL or Deputy.
Looked After and Previously Looked After Children	Children currently or previously in local authority care are a particularly vulnerable group; the most common reason for being	Ensure relevant staff understand the child's legal status, care arrangements, contact arrangements and delegated authority.

	looked after is abuse and/or neglect.	• DSL to maintain details of the social worker and Virtual School Head and ensure prompt multi-agency action.
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12. Other Relevant Safeguarding Arrangements

12.1 Online Safety

An effective whole-school approach to online safety empowers the Academy to protect and educate the school community in the use of technology, and to intervene and escalate concerns when needed.

Online safety is an ongoing priority. The Trust ensures that online safety is a running and interrelated theme in our whole-school approach to safeguarding – reflected in our policies, curriculum planning, staff training, DSL responsibilities and parental engagement strategies.

All Academies in the North East Learning Trust operate as phone-free environments.

Online safety risks are broad but are typically grouped into four categories:

Risk category	Summary	Examples of risk
Content	Exposure to illegal, inappropriate or harmful online material.	• Extreme or violent material • Pro-harm material • Hateful, discriminatory or misogynistic content • Radicalising or extremist material • Misinformation, disinformation or conspiracy theories
Contact	Harmful interaction with other online users, including peers or adults who may misrepresent themselves to exploit children.	• Peer pressure or coercive contact • Online grooming or manipulation • Attempts to exploit children criminally, financially or in other harmful ways
Conduct	Personal online behaviour that increases risk to self or others, or causes harm to another person.	• Harmful messaging or online bullying

		• Sharing inappropriate images or content • Risk-taking behaviour online • Behaviour that breaches the acceptable use policy
Commerce	Risks linked to online transactions, advertising, scams or financial exploitation.	• Online gambling or age-inappropriate marketing • Phishing attempts • Financial scams or requests for money/personal details • Suspicious links, messages or adverts

The Trust and its academies take all reasonable and proportionate measures to limit children's exposure to these online risks from Academy IT systems.

Filtering and monitoring systems are age-appropriate and include measures required under the Prevent duty (e.g. filtering of extremist content). The Trust has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place across its Academies.

The Trust acknowledges that while filtering and monitoring are important parts of the online safety picture, they are only one part. We are mindful that filtering and monitoring should not "over-block" so as to unduly restrict what children can be taught about online safety and digital resilience. Across the Trust, we use Smoothwall filtering which provides robust safety while generating prompt alerts for the DSL when inappropriate use or content is detected.

Whenever children are asked to learn online at home (e.g. during periods of remote education), the Trust will follow relevant DfE guidance on safeguarding during remote education.

12.2 Transporting Students in an Emergency

In exceptional circumstances, a member of staff may need to drive a student home (or to another safe place). Staff must first seek approval from a member of the senior leadership team, and must have business (Class 1) insurance on their vehicle.

Parents/carers should be informed by phone. The child should travel in the rear seat.

12.3 Photography and Images

To protect pupils, we will:

- Seek parental consent for photographs or videos to be taken or published (for example, on our websites or in media).
- Use only the pupil's first name with any published image.
- Ensure pupils are appropriately dressed in images.
- Encourage pupils to tell us if they are worried about any photographs or videos taken of them.
- Make clear to all visitors (via our safeguarding information on arrival) that they must not take photos of students on site, and must not discuss their visit on social media without prior consent.

12.4 Alternative Provision

The Trust will only commission alternative provision at an Ofsted registered school. We continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of the pupil. We will satisfy ourselves through onsite quality assurance that the provider meets the pupil's needs and has appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place prior to the placement commencing. The Trust (or commissioning Academy) will review alternative provision placements frequently (at least half-termly) to be confident that the child is attending regularly, that the placement continues to be safe, and that it remains effective in meeting the child's needs.

12.5 Work Experience

Each Academy has procedures to safeguard pupils on work experience placements, including ensuring that appropriate risk assessments are completed and necessary checks are carried out on placement providers in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education. Where the Trust or its academies offer work experience placements to young people aged 16 or 17, we will consider whether their role will involve regulated activity (or substantial contact with children) and, if so, ensure that an enhanced DBS check (including children's barred list) is obtained prior to their placement.

12.6 Elective Home Education (EHE)

All Academies will comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended) which require schools to inform their local authority of all

deletions from the admission register, including when a parent or carer has chosen to home-educate their child. Where a parent or carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school to educate them at home, the Academy will work together with the local authority and other key professionals to arrange a meeting with the family (if feasible) to discuss that decision.

12.7 Early Help

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through the teenage years. Staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child. In the first instance, staff should discuss early help requirements with the DSL. Each Academy has a defined Early Help offer.

12.8 Statutory Assessments

If a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care (and, if appropriate, the police) is made immediately. Referrals should follow the local authority's referral process and multi-agency thresholds for Section 17 (child in need) or Section 47 (significant harm) assessments.

Local authorities (with help from other organisations as needed) have a duty to investigate (under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989) whenever they have reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. These enquiries are to decide whether any action should be taken to safeguard or promote the child's welfare, and must be initiated in cases of suspected maltreatment (including all forms of abuse or neglect, FGM or other honour-based violence, or extra-familial threats such as radicalisation, sexual exploitation or county lines).

13. Taking Action for Safeguard Children (Academy Procedures)

All concerns about a child's welfare must be recorded and reported and where there are significant and urgent concerns they must also be discussed with the DSL (or another senior staff member in their absence) on the same day. The conversation with the DSL must happen in the first instance before any contact is made with the child's parents or carers and to determine next steps.

13.1 Responding to Disclosures

Disclosures or information may be received from a student, a parent/carers, or a member of the public. The Academy recognises that those reporting such information

may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully whom to speak to. Staff will handle disclosures with sensitivity and care. No one should be promised confidentiality – the information will be treated with care, and shared with only those who need to know, but cannot remain secret.

13.2 Principles for Staff

Staff should not investigate but should (as far as possible) gather sufficient information to report to the DSL so that an informed decision can be made about next steps. Staff receiving a disclosure will:

- Listen to the child, take them seriously and reassure them.
- If possible, avoid the need for the child to repeat their account to multiple people.
- Keep questions to a minimum, using open questions (“Tell me what happened” rather than “Did X hit you?”).
- Remain calm and not show shock or disbelief.
- Not express feelings or judgements about any person alleged to have harmed the child.
- Explain sensitively that they have a responsibility to refer the information to the DSL (and what may happen next, including that only those who need to know will be told).
- Emphasise that the child is doing the right thing by speaking up, and reassure them that they will be supported and kept safe. The child must never be given the impression they are causing a problem by reporting abuse (e.g. sexual violence or harassment), nor should they be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

13.3. Contextual Safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of school or college, including within peer groups or in the wider community (extra-familial risks). Children may experience threats or harm from gangs or crime groups (e.g. county lines), trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation, or extremist influences – often at locations outside the home and school. All staff (especially the DSL/Deputies) must consider the context of any safeguarding concerns – assessments should consider all available evidence and the wider context of any abuse.

13.4. Supporting the Child and Partnership with Parents/Carers

The Trust recognises that a child's welfare is paramount. Good child protection outcomes rely on a constructive, open working partnership with parents/carers. In most cases, we will engage with parents/carers in a positive, transparent way to support and protect their child. However, in a small number of cases, consultation with parents/carers may be deemed unsafe or inappropriate (e.g. if it could put the child at greater risk). We will provide secure, supportive and protective relationships for the child, and give proper age-appropriate explanations of actions being taken on their behalf and why. We will strive to preserve the privacy and dignity of the child and their family as much as possible, only involving those staff who need to know in order to support and protect the child.

13.5 Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND or certain medical/physical needs will require close liaison with the DSL (or Deputy) and the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). Academies will consider extra pastoral support for these children to minimise potential vulnerabilities.

All staff are aware that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect or exploitation in children with SEND, for example: communication difficulties; assumptions that indicators of abuse (e.g. behaviour, mood, injury) are related to the child's disability; children with SEND being more prone to peer group isolation; or the potential for them to be disproportionately impacted by bullying without outwardly showing signs. To address these, academies might assign a key worker or implement added pastoral support. Staff remain alert to the fact that children with SEND may struggle to communicate concerns. Through training and induction, staff are taught to guard against these assumptions and to recognise and remove any additional challenges, so that children with SEND receive equal protection.

13.6 Children Who Are LGBTQ+

A child or young person being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBTQ+) in itself is not a risk factor for harm or abuse. However, we recognise that LGBTQ+ children can sometimes be targeted by others or subjected to bullying or exclusion. (Furthermore, children who are perceived by others to be LGBTQ+ – whether they are or not – can be just as vulnerable.) It is therefore vital that staff create a safe, supportive environment and reduce any additional barriers faced by these children. Inclusive, protective cultures and open trusted relationships with adults help ensure that LGBTQ+ children feel confident to speak out or share their concerns.

13.7 Gender Questioning

We note the conclusions of the Cass Review (2022) that caution is needed in supporting children who are questioning their gender identity, as there are many uncertainties about the impact of social transition, and because these children may have broader vulnerabilities (including complex mental health or psychosocial needs,

and sometimes neurodiversity). The Trust and its academies will take a cautious, case-by-case approach when supporting a gender-questioning child. Working in partnership with the child's parents/carers (unless there is a significant risk of harm in doing so), we will consider the broad range of the child's individual needs – including any relevant clinical advice and any wider vulnerabilities. Where decisions need to be made about single-sex spaces or activities (for example, toilets and changing facilities, PE, sports, residential trips), we will follow the guidance in KCSIE. We will document our decision-making and the reasons for any decisions in this regard.

Implications for Sport

KCSIE notes that some sports need to be played in single-sex groups to ensure the safety of the participating pupils and fair competition. When there are no issues concerning the safety of pupils or competitive integrity academies will consider this on a case-by-case basis.

14. Allegations against staff or volunteers (Who may pose a risk to children)

If an allegation is made about a person who works with children (in any role, including supply staff, volunteers and contractors, whether paid or unpaid) having:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child;
- Behaved in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children; or
- Behaved (or may have behaved) in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (including behaviour outside their role that presents a risk “transferable” to children),

The Trust will act in accordance with Part Four of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and local safeguarding arrangements. Detailed records will be made of all decisions, actions and reasoning, and retained securely. The Trust recognises that some allegations may be false, malicious or unfounded; but equally some may be genuine. All allegations will be investigated properly and in line with agreed procedures.

14.1 Initial Action

If someone receives an allegation or witnesses an incident involving a member of staff (including supply or contractor staff, or volunteers):

- They must immediately inform the Head of School/Headteacher (or Executive Headteacher if the Head of School is absent).
- If the allegation is against the Head of School/Headteacher (or Executive Headteacher), they must inform the Deputy CEO or CEO, who will then inform the Chair of the Local Academy Council.

- If the allegation is against the CEO or Deputy CEO, it must be reported to the Chair of Trustees.

The Head of School/Headteacher (or other designated person as above) will:

- Secure the immediate safety of the child(ren) and meet any urgent medical needs (this may involve including the DSL to assess risk).
- Not approach the staff member concerned at this stage, unless it's necessary to address immediate student safety.
- Inform the Trust's Director of HR, who will provide guidance and support. (However, no internal investigation or interviews will be initiated at this stage.)
- Consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to determine whether the allegation should be handled by the Academy or requires referral to children's social care and/or the police for investigation.

Throughout the process, consideration will be given to the information and support needs of students, parents and staff. If a staff member feels unable to raise an allegation-related concern with the Head of School/Headteacher (or they feel their concern isn't being addressed), they should approach the Executive Headteacher or Deputy CEO. If they feel unable to approach the Deputy/CEO about an allegation against the Executive Headteacher, they should contact the Chair of Trustees.

Appendix 1: Local Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements and Key Contacts

Academy	Safeguarding Partner	Local Safeguarding Partnership Links	Local Area Designated Officer (LADO)	Contact details
Ashington Bedlington Meadowdale	Northumberland	https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Safeguarding/Safeguarding-children-information-for-children-and.aspx Northumberland Children and Adults Safeguarding Partnership (NCASP) Northumberland County Council	Louise Prudhoe	Call: 07500 606174 (Monday to Thursday 08:30-17:00, Friday 08:30-16:30) or 01670 536400 (Out of hours) Email: LADO@northumberland.gov.uk
Browney, Easington, Hermitage Middleton-in-Teesdale Sacriston, Teesdale, Shotton Hall	Durham	www.durham-scp.org.uk/professionals	Sharon Lewis/Louise Brooks	Telephone No: 03000 268835 Contact is via telephone only.
Diamond Hall Biddick	Sunderland	www.safeguardingchildrensunderland.com	Danielle Rose	Telephone No: 0191 561 3901 Email: Lado@togetherforchildren.org.uk

Rye Hills	Redcar	https://stscp.co.uk/ /	Joanne Dickson	Telephone: 01642 130700 RedcarLADO@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk
Carville Academy Churchill Academy	North Tyneside	North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Partnership	Hayley Muir	0345 2000 109 or via LADO@northtyneside.gov.uk

Appendix 2: Designated Safeguarding Leads and Safeguarding Governors

Academy	Designated Safeguarding Lead	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Safeguarding Governor
Trustees	N/A	N/A	M Saxton
Ashington	C McLaughlin	D Carter	S Scott
Bedlington	A Bullen	S Collins A Pears	E Milne
Biddick	S Scott	J Chapman	A Moon
Browney	C Harris	C Middlemas P Vasey	J Ward
Carville	R Harker	A Qualters H Thomsen	D Redshaw
Churchill	L Richardson	C Stephens	E Milne
Diamond Hall	F Hoare	N Kendrick H Laydon A Herron S Avilez C Milne	K Whelan
Easington	L McManus	H Whyman	L Wood
Hermitage	L O'Carroll	R Hutchinson	L Parks
Meadowdale	R Morgan	L Gair,	K Bennett
Middleton-in-Teesdale	C Harris	K Garnett	D Pilling
Rye Hills	V Watson	M Carney	M Saxton

Sacriston	L Parks	J Smith	T Pizl
Teesdale	D Pilling	D Kirtley	L Haggis
Shotton Hall	S Heseltine	R Bridgewater	L Willis

Appendix 3: Handling 'Sexting' Incidents (Sharing Nudes, and Semi-Nudes, including Ai generated)

Definition: *Sexting* is broadly defined as the sharing of nude or semi-nude images or videos by children under 18, or of children under 18, that are sexual or indecent in nature. These images may be shared between young people and/or adults, via mobile devices, messaging apps or websites, including sometimes with people the children do not know. Each case of sexting can be unique – it's crucial to consider circumstances individually and respond consistently but proportionately, always ensuring the child's protection. *All staff should be familiar with this policy and these procedures.*

Dealing with Incidents of Sexting:

Step 1: Disclosure by a Child – Any sexting disclosure should be managed under normal safeguarding protocols. A child disclosing such an incident is likely to be very distressed (especially if an image has been widely shared and they don't know who has seen it or where it has ended up). They will need support during the disclosure and afterwards and may even need immediate protection or a referral to Children's Social Care.

Some key questions to consider (to determine the best course of action):

- Is the child disclosing about themselves receiving an image, sending an image, or sharing an image?
- What type of image is it (nude, semi-nude, sexual, indecent)?
- Could it be illegal, or is it just inappropriate?
- Have you adhered to Academy safeguarding policies and practices?
- How widely has the image been shared, and is the device still in the child's possession?
- Was a school device or a personal device involved?
- Does the child need immediate support or protection?
- Are other children or young people involved?
- Does the child know where the image has ended up?

The situation must be handled sensitively to ensure the Academy's safeguarding and online safety policies are followed.

Appendix 4: Allegations of Abuse Against Staff – Summary

(This Appendix summarises the two levels of cases as per statutory guidance:)

- **Section One: Allegations that meet the harm threshold** (as defined in KCSIE Part Four). The procedures for managing cases where it is alleged a person may pose a risk of harm in their work with children, including the required referral to the LADO and involvement of other agencies. It emphasises that historical allegations or those regarding people no longer teaching must be referred to police, and outlines the importance of a quick, fair and consistent approach to protect the child and support the person facing an allegation. It sets out initial actions for the case manager, including basic fact-finding, and considerations for informing the person of the allegation in consultation with LADO/police/children's social care. The section notes that a strategy discussion may be needed if a child is at risk of immediate harm or a criminal offence might have been committed, and reminds that teachers and staff are entitled to use reasonable force (per DfE guidance) in some circumstances, which should be considered when evaluating allegations of physical contact in context.

(It then covers considerations such as the welfare of other children or the accused person's own family (including potential need for social care referrals). It explains that if the initial LADO consultation finds no further action needed, how the decision is recorded and communicated. It outlines how further enquiries and investigations will be planned (including how the Trust will engage a suitably qualified investigator, if needed, with oversight by the Director of HR). It suggests setting regular review timelines e.g. 4 weeks from initial assessment and then fortnightly, to ensure swift and thorough progression of cases.)

- **Supply teachers and contracted staff:** *This section explains that allegations concerning individuals not directly employed by the Academy (e.g. supply teachers) must still be dealt with properly. The Academy will not cease to use a supply teacher due to a safeguarding concern without finding out the*

facts and liaising with the LADO to determine an outcome. The school will usually lead on the investigation (as agencies may not have access to relevant information). Supply staff will be treated as under the school's supervision when on site and are advised to contact their union or colleagues for support. The Academy will invite the supply agency's HR to relevant meetings and keep them updated on policies.

- **Suspension:** *This section emphasises that suspension is not automatic and all alternatives should be considered first. It outlines possible alternatives (e.g. redeployment, additional supervision, moving the child instead if in their best interests) to avoid suspension if safe to do so. It advises that the reason for any suspension should be recorded, including why other options were not viable. It states that suspended staff should not be left without support or communication, and must be given a named contact. It clarifies that the police or social care cannot direct an employer to suspend, though their views should be considered.*
- **Supporting Those Involved – Duty of Care:** *This section notes that while children's welfare is paramount, investigating an allegation is likely to be stressful for the adult under investigation (and their family). Employers have a duty of care to their employees and should manage the situation to minimise stress – informing them as soon as possible (with guidance from LADO/police on what info to share), advising them to seek union or colleague support, appointing a named point of contact, offering counseling or medical advice if appropriate, and not preventing social contact with colleagues unless evidence suggests this would compromise evidence gathering.*
- **Supporting Parents and Carers:** *Parents/carers of the child or children involved will be told about the allegation as soon as possible (after consulting LADO and other agencies where involved, to determine what information can be shared). They will be kept informed of case progress (only in relation to their child, not details about staff) and reminded of their legal obligations regarding confidentiality and publicity (Education Act 2002).*
- **Confidentiality and Information Sharing:** *All agencies at a strategy meeting or initial case assessment should share relevant information about the person subject to the allegation and the alleged child victim(s). Where police are involved, the Academy should ask them (wherever possible) to obtain consent from individuals to share their statements for the employer's disciplinary purposes. Children's social care should also share relevant*

information. The Academy must make every effort to maintain confidentiality and prevent unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. The Education Act 2011 (section 141F) imposes reporting restrictions prohibiting the publication of any material that would identify a teacher subject to a student's allegation (until charged or a regulatory body publishes a decision). Schools must inform parents and others of this legal restriction. The police will not normally name a suspect until charged (unless they seek a court order for an exception). The case manager should take advice from LADO, police and social care regarding who needs to know what information, how to contain speculation and gossip, what information (if any) can be disclosed to the wider community, and how to manage any media interest.

- **Outcomes:** The section defines the possible outcomes of an allegation investigation (substantiated, malicious, false, unsubstantiated, unfounded). It emphasises that an unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegation might indicate that a child or other person needs help or has been abused by someone else – a referral to social care may be appropriate in such cases. If a report is found to be deliberately invented or malicious, the Academy will consider whether disciplinary action is appropriate for the individual who made the false allegation (in line with the behaviour policy).
- **Following a Criminal Investigation/Prosecution:** The police will inform the LADO and employer if a case is closed, not progressed, or if they decide not to prosecute after charging. The LADO, case manager and Director of HR will then discuss whether any further action is necessary (potentially disciplinary), guided by the information from the police and social care. The approach will depend on the circumstances, taking into account the outcome of any criminal process and the differing standards of proof in criminal vs disciplinary proceedings.
- **Unsubstantiated, Unfounded, False or Malicious Allegations:** If an allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO, case manager, Executive Headteacher or Headteacher (and DSL) will consider whether the child or person who made the allegation needs further support or may have been abused by someone else (if so, a referral to social care might be appropriate). If a report is found to be deliberately invented or malicious, the Academy will consider possible consequences for the person who made it (per the behaviour policy).

- **Returning to Work:** *If an accused person who was suspended is to return to work after the case is resolved, the case manager (with Director of HR support) will plan how to best facilitate this – e.g. a phased return, or providing a mentor for short-term support. The case manager, Executive Headteacher and Director of HR will also consider how to manage any contact between the staff member and the child(ren) who made the allegation, if those children are still in the Academy.*
- **Resignations and ‘Settlement Agreements’:** *If a person under investigation resigns or ceases to provide services (including as a volunteer), the Academy will continue its investigation to reach and record a conclusion, where possible, even if the person will not engage. The aim is to resolve any matters concerning the safety or welfare of children, even if the person’s employment ends, in order to have a clear record and to ensure appropriate follow-up (e.g. referrals). “Settlement agreements” (where an employee resigns and an agreed reference is provided) will not be used in cases involving risk or harm to children.*

(Notifying DBS/TRA: *If an allegation is substantiated and the staff member is dismissed or resigns (or the school no longer uses a supply staff member) because they pose a risk of harm to children, the Academy/Trust must make a referral to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) to consider barring them from further work with children. If a teacher is involved, advice from the Director of HR must be sought on referring to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) for potential prohibition. Legal duties require employers to refer to the DBS any person who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child.)*

Following a Criminal Investigation or Prosecution:

The police should inform the LADO and the employer immediately when a criminal investigation and any subsequent trial is complete, or if it is decided to close an investigation without charge, or not to continue to prosecute after charging. At that point, the LADO and case manager (with the Director of HR) will consider next steps (including any further action by the employer). They will base these decisions on the facts established by the investigation and the outcome of any trial, recognising the different standards of proof between criminal and disciplinary proceedings.

Unsubstantiated, Unfounded, False or Malicious Allegations:

If an allegation is found to be without foundation or to be false, the Academy (with LADO consultation) will consider if the child or person who made the allegation is in need of support or may have been abused by someone else (e.g.

another child or adult) – as this could be a warning sign. In such cases, the DSL should consider a referral of the student to children's social care if appropriate. If a report is found to be deliberately invented or malicious, the Academy will consider applying appropriate sanctions to the student who raised the malicious allegation, in line with the behaviour policy.

Returning to Work:

When an allegation is determined to be unfounded or unsubstantiated and a suspended person can return to work, the case manager (with advice/guidance from the Director of HR) will consider how best to facilitate their return. Support (such as a phased return or a temporary mentor) may be offered, as appropriate. The school will also consider how best to manage any contact between the staff member and the child(ren) who made the allegation (if they remain at the school).

Managing the Situation and Exiting the School

Resignations and 'Settlement Agreements': If a person subject to investigation resigns or ceases to provide their services (or if a supply teacher's contract is terminated) before the case is concluded, the Academy will still reach and record a conclusion wherever possible. We will not use "settlement agreements" (by which a person agrees to resign in exchange for not pursuing disciplinary action and/or an agreed reference) where there are safeguarding allegations – such an agreement will not prevent a thorough police and/or social care investigation.

The Academy will make every effort to complete all investigations in these cases, even if the person will not cooperate or has left the school. The individual will be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations if possible. All allegations will be recorded with a clear outcome (whether substantiated or not), based on all available evidence, even if a person has left the Academy.

Reporting to the DBS and TRA: If an allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or resigns (or the school stops using a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor) because they posed a risk of harm to children, the Trust/Academy **will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person from further work with children. In the case of a teacher, the Trust will also consider referring the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching. (There is a **legal duty** to refer to the DBS any person who has engaged in

conduct that harmed – or likely harmed – a child, or who otherwise poses a risk of harm to children.)

Appendix 5: Safeguarding vs Child Protection Definitions

Safeguarding: The wider actions taken to promote children's welfare and keep them safe. The actions we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Everyone who encounters children and their families has a role to play.

Child Protection: Part of safeguarding that focuses on protecting children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Early Help: Support provided as soon as problems emerge to improve outcomes for children and prevent issues from escalating.

Abuse – abuse and harm can happen within or outside of the home/in the community. Adults and Children can cause harm / abuse others

Physical Abuse: Deliberately causing physical injury to a child.

Emotional Abuse: Persistent emotional maltreatment that harms a child's emotional development.

Sexual Abuse: Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities.

Neglect: Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs.

Harm / Significant Harm

Harm: Ill-treatment or impairment of a child's health or development.

Significant Harm: The threshold that justifies statutory intervention to protect a child from abuse or neglect.

Roles

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) - The senior member of staff with lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection in school.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) - Supports the DSL and carries out safeguarding responsibilities in their absence.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - Manages allegations against adults who work with children and coordinates the response with relevant agencies.

Safeguarding Partners - The local agencies with statutory responsibility for safeguarding arrangements: the Local Authority, Police, and Integrated Care Board (Health).

Processes

Referral - A request for support or intervention from Children's Social Care or another agency due to concerns about a child's welfare or safety.

Child in Need (CIN) - A child who requires services to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development (Children Act 1989, s17).

Child Protection (CP) - A multi-agency process to protect children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm.

Strategy Discussion/Meeting - A multi-agency discussion led by Children's Social Care to decide whether a Section 47 child protection enquiry is required and plan immediate safeguarding actions.