Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

September 2026

Hardwick Primary School

Pending Trust Board Approval

This policy was approved by the Trustees on…….awaiting approval

Adopted by the school on Sept 2026

This policy will be reviewed annually on or before Sept 2027

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1 Our strong safeguarding culture

1.1 Why it is important

1.1.1 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and it is the duty of the Derby Diocesan Academy Trust (hereafter referred to as DDAT) and all its schools

to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. 'Children' includes everyone under the age of 18. This is our core safeguarding principle.

1.1.2 In adhering to this principle, we focus on providing a safe and welcoming environment for all our children regardless of age, ability, culture, race, language, religion, gender identity, or sexual identity. All our children have equal rights to support and protection.

1.1.3 One of the cornerstones of our safeguarding culture is this policy and the procedures contained within it. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and governors, all of whom are trained upon its contents and on their safeguarding duties. We update this policy at least annually to reflect changes to law, guidance, and best practice.

1.1.4 This policy should be read with reference to other safeguarding policies, as set out in Appendix Two.

1.2 **What it means for our pupils**

1.2.1 All our schools work with our local safeguarding partners to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified, and contributing to inter-agency plans, which provide additional support to the child. It also includes contributing to broader, multi-agency strategic discussions about safeguarding children.

1.2.2 All our staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may indicate that a child is at risk of harm. Any pupils or staff involved in child protection or safeguarding issue will receive appropriate support.

1.2.3 Our strong safeguarding culture ensures that we treat all pupils with respect and involve them in decisions that affect them. We encourage positive, respectful, and safe behaviour among pupils and we set a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately.

1.2.4 Identifying safeguarding and child protection concerns often begin with recognising changes in pupils' attendance and/or behaviour and knowing that these changes may be signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse.

1.2.5 All our staff will reassure children that their concerns and disclosures will be taken seriously, and that they will be supported and kept safe.

2 Safeguarding legislation and guidance

2.1 The following safeguarding legislation and guidance has been considered when drafting this policy:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)

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- Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2026)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015)
- Prevent Duty guidance: Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales (2023)
- The Teacher Standards 2012
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Section 157 of the Education Act 2002
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- PACE Code C 2019
- Crime and Policing Act 2026
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

3 Roles and responsibilities

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is: Mrs R Sandhu

email: head@hardwick.derby.sch.uk

Tel: 01332 272249

The deputy DSL(s) is/are: Mrs R Oliver, Mrs R Yates, Mrs G Freeman, Mrs A Awaan, Mrs S Haider

email: safeguarding@hardwick.derby.sch.uk

Tel: 01332 272249

The safeguarding link local trust committee member is: Mr A Repesa

email: admin@hardwick.derby.sch.uk

Tel: 01332 272249

The executive headteacher is: Mr J Gallimore

email: admin@hardwick.derby.sch.uk

Tel: 01332 272249

The designated teacher is: Mrs S Haider

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email: senco@hardwick.derby.sch.uk

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The Trust safeguarding lead is: Heather Hogg

Contact details: email: heather.hogg@ddat.org.uk

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The safeguarding Trustee us: Sue Whyld

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3.1 **The designated safeguarding lead (DSL):**

3.1.1 The designated safeguarding lead takes **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) in our school. The DSL duties include:

- Ensuring child protection policies are known, understood, and used appropriately by staff.
- Working with the school's local trust committee to ensure that the Trust's safeguarding and child protection policies are reviewed annually and that the procedures are reviewed regularly.
- Acting as a source of support, advice, and expertise for all staff on safeguarding and child protection matters.
- Liaising with the headteacher regarding ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations and being aware of the requirement for Children to have an Appropriate Adult in relevant circumstances.
- Acting as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners.
- Making and managing referrals to children's social care, the police, or other agencies.
- Keeping detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns, discussions, and decisions made including the rationale for those decisions (*including where referrals were or were not made*).
- Taking part in strategy discussions, and inter-agency meetings.
- Liaising with the 'case manager' and the designated officer(s) at the local authority if allegations are made against staff.

- Making staff aware of training courses and the latest local safeguarding arrangements available through the local safeguarding partner arrangements.
- Transferring the child protection file to a child's new school.
- Work with the headteacher to ensure that the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable].
- Work with the headteacher to ensure that each EYFS child is assigned a key person].

3.2 **The deputy designated safeguarding lead(s):**

3.2.1 Our deputy DSL(s) are trained to the same level as the DSL and support the DSL with safeguarding matters on a day-to-day basis.

The ultimate lead responsibility for child protection remains with the DSL.

3.3 **The safeguarding link local trust committee member:**

3.3.1 The role of the safeguarding link local trust committee member is to provide support and challenge to the DSL and the leadership of the school on how they manage safeguarding to ensure arrangements for the safety and wellbeing of children are robust and can continuously improve. The role includes:

- Understanding the requirements of the Governance Handbook and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Supporting and challenging the DSL on the standards of safeguarding in our school.
- Confirming that consistent and compliant safeguarding practice takes place across our school.
- Reporting to the local trust committee about the standard of safeguarding in our school.

3.3.2 The DSL and the safeguarding governor/trustee meet termly to discuss safeguarding issues and to agree steps to continuously improve safeguarding practices in our school

3.4 The safeguarding trustee

3.4.1 The role of the safeguarding trustee is to provide support and challenge to the Trust Safeguarding Lead and the Executive Team on how they manage safeguarding at Trust level so that the safety and wellbeing of the children can continuously improve. The role includes:

- Understanding the requirements of the Governance Handbook and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

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- Supporting and challenging the Safeguarding Lead on the standards of safeguarding across the Trust.
- Confirming that consistent and compliant safeguarding practice takes place across the Trust.
- Reporting to the board of Trustees about the standard of safeguarding in the Trust

4 Children who may be particularly vulnerable

4.1 Some children are at greater risk of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This increased risk can be caused by many factors including social exclusion, isolation, discrimination, and prejudice. To ensure that all our pupils receive equal protection, we give special consideration to children who:

- Are vulnerable because of their race, ethnicity, religion, special educational needs, disability, gender identity or sexuality.
- Are young carers.
- Are pregnant or are parents themselves.
- Are involved in the court system or have a family member in prison.
- Are vulnerable to being bullied or engaging in bullying.
- Are at risk of sexual exploitation, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, or being drawn into extremism.
- Live in chaotic or unsupportive home situations.
- Live transient lifestyles or live away from home or in temporary accommodation.
- Are affected by parental substance abuse, domestic abuse, or parental mental health needs.
- Do not have English as a first language.
- Experience or have experienced bereavement or mental health difficulties.
- Are in care or privately fostered or have returned home to their family from care.
- Have experienced multiple suspensions and are at risk of, or have been, permanently excluded.

5 Children with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues

5.1 Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect, and exploitation in this group of children, which can include:

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- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood, and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
- Being more prone to peer group isolation that other children.
- The potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs;
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers
- The need for intimate care or that these children are isolated from others.
- That these children are more likely to be dependent on adults for care, and
- These children may have issues over cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in school or the consequences of doing so.

5.2 Our staff are trained to be aware of and identify these additional barriers to ensure this group of children are appropriately safeguarded.

6 Children who are absent from education

6.1 Children being absent from education for prolonged periods, on an increasing basis and/or on repeat occasions, and children with unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, can be an indicator of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including sexual abuse or exploitation, trafficking, modern slavery, child criminal exploitation, mental health problems, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Our staff are alert to these risks.

6.2 We closely monitor attendance, absence, and exclusions and our DSL will take appropriate and proactive action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions, on an increasing basis and/or are missing for periods during the school day.

7 Alternative provision

7.1 Where a pupil is placed with an alternative provision provider, we continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and will ensure we are satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs.

8 Mental health

8.1 Schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils.

8.2 All staff are aware that mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation, and that in some cases they can develop into safeguarding concerns. Staff are also aware that where children have suffered adverse childhood experiences those experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

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8.3 All staff are aware that there are potential warning signs when a child is struggling with their mental health. These include:

8.3.1 Significant changes in behaviour.

8.3.2 Ongoing difficulty sleeping.

8.3.3 Withdrawing from social situations.

8.3.4 Not wanting to do things they usually like; and

8.3.5 Physical signs of self-harm or neglecting themselves.

8.4 Where staff are concerned that a child's mental health is also a safeguarding concern, they will discuss it with the DSL or a deputy who will alert other relevant agencies as necessary.

9 Children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual

9.1 The fact that a child or a young person may be lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. Unfortunately, children who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual, or are simply perceived to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual, can be vulnerable to discriminatory bullying by other children. The risk to these children can be compounded where children who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open.

9.2 Our staff endeavour to reduce the barriers and provide a safe space for those children to speak out or share their concerns with them.

10 Children who are questioning their gender

10.1 The school will take a sensitive, child-centred approach to pupils who are questioning their gender identity or who have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment, having regard at all times to the welfare of the individual pupil and the welfare of other pupils.

10.2 The school will respect both gender-critical and gender-affirming beliefs held within the school community and will not tolerate bullying, harassment, or discrimination in connection with any such beliefs.

10.3 The school will not initiate any social transition actions. Where a child, parent, or carer requests support in relation to gender identity, including any form of social transition (such as changes to name, pronouns, or presentation), the school will only implement any changes following a school-level decision made in accordance with the following process:

10.3.1 **DSL involvement**: The designated safeguarding lead ("DSL") will be informed and involved in the decision-making process from the outset, as gender-related requests may intersect with safeguarding considerations.

10.3.2 **Parental engagement**: Parents and carers will be engaged as a matter of priority and their views treated with importance. The school will not implement any social transition arrangements without parental knowledge

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and engagement, save in the exceptional circumstances described in paragraph 10.3.3 below.

10.3.3 **Exception to parental engagement**: Where staff have reasonable grounds to conclude that involving parents or carers would create a greater risk of harm to the child, the DSL will determine what safeguarding action is appropriate before parents are contacted and before any decision is taken. Any decision to proceed without parental engagement will be documented with clear reasons.

10.3.4 **Professional advice**: Where appropriate, the school will seek advice from relevant professionals, which may include the school's special educational needs coordinator ("SENCO"), relevant health professionals, or the local authority designated officer ("LADO") where applicable. The school will be alert to the possibility that gender-questioning presentations may co-occur with, or be influenced by, other factors including neuro-developmental conditions, mental health difficulties, or other needs.

10.3.5 **Cautious approach**: The school will take a careful and considered approach, recognising that social transition is an active intervention with potentially significant consequences. In primary schools, support for full social transition will be agreed only in very rare circumstances.

10.3.6 **Record-keeping**: All discussions, decisions, and the reasons for those decisions will be recorded in writing and stored securely and confidentially. Records will be kept under review and revisited if circumstances change.

10.3.7 **Review**: Any agreed arrangements will be subject to periodic review. Where circumstances change, the DSL will be informed immediately and arrangements will be reassessed.

10.4 The school will ensure that its facilities arrangements comply with its legal obligations in relation to biological sex and with its safeguarding duties.

10.4.1 **Toilets**: The school will not permit a child to use toilet facilities designated for the opposite biological sex. Where a pupil does not wish to use toilet facilities designated for their biological sex, the school will consider whether an alternative arrangement, such as a self-contained individual toilet, can be provided without compromising single-sex provision or the safety, comfort, privacy, or dignity of the pupil or other pupils. Any such arrangement will be recorded and reviewed regularly.

10.4.2 **Changing rooms and showers**: The school will not permit a pupil aged 11 or over to undress in the presence of a pupil of the opposite biological sex and will not permit access to changing rooms or shower facilities designated for the opposite biological sex as part of any social transition arrangements. Where a pupil does not wish to use facilities designated for their biological sex, the school will consider alternative arrangements that do not compromise single-sex provision, and will keep clear records, communicate appropriately, and review regularly.

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10.4.3 **Overnight accommodation**: The school will not permit a pupil to share overnight accommodation with a pupil of the opposite biological sex. Where a pupil does not wish to share accommodation with a pupil of the same biological sex, the school will seek to identify alternative arrangements where possible without compromising safety, comfort, privacy, or dignity, and will document those arrangements.

10.5 For safeguarding purposes, relevant staff will be made aware of a pupil's biological sex in all cases, and a pupil's biological sex will be recorded accurately wherever it is recorded by the school.

11 Child-on-child abuse

11.1 Child-on-child abuse – *children harming other children* - is unacceptable and will be taken seriously; it will not be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys'. The school takes a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and sexual violence; it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated.

11.2 It is more likely that boys will be perpetrators of child-on-child abuse and girls' victims, but allegations will be dealt with in the same manner, regardless of whether they are made by boys or girls.

11.3 All staff are aware that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and alleged perpetrator, and they are clear about the school's policy and procedures for addressing child-on-child abuse and maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.

11.4 Child-on-child abuse can take many forms, including:

- **Physical abuse** such as shaking, hitting, biting, kicking or hair pulling.
- **Bullying,** including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.
- **Sexual violence** such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).
- **Sexual harassment** such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse and which may include misogyny/misandry.
- **Serious physical assault and harm**, or the threat of harm with a weapon.
- **Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent**, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
- **Up skirting**, which involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission for the purposes of sexual gratification or to cause humiliation, distress or alarm.

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- **Consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos** (including those generated by AI), and including pressuring others to share sexual content.
- **Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (also known as teenage relationship abuse)** - such as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual or emotional abuse.
- **Initiation/hazing** – used to induct newcomers into sports teams or school groups by subjecting them to potentially humiliating or abusing trials with the aim of creating a bond.

11.5 Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse, for example girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence.

11.6 All staff recognise that that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place but is not being reported.

11.7 **Minimising risk**

11.7.1 We take the following steps to minimise or prevent the risk of child-on-child abuse:

- Promoting an open and honest environment where children feel safe and confident to share their concerns and worries.
- Using assemblies to outline acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- Using RSE and PSHE to educate and reinforce our messages through stories, role play, current affairs, and other suitable activities.
- Ensuring that the school is well supervised, especially in areas where children might be vulnerable.

11.8 **Investigating allegations**

11.8.1 All allegations of child-on-child abuse should be passed to the DSL immediately who will investigate and manage the allegation as follows:

- **Gather information** - children and staff will be spoken with immediately to gather relevant information.
- **Decide on action** - if it is believed that any child is at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made to children's social care. The DSL will then work with children's social care to decide on next steps, which may include contacting the police. In other cases, we may follow our behaviour policy alongside this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- **Inform parents** - we will usually discuss concerns with the parents. However, our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil and so if

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the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to a child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.

- **Record** – all concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions will be recorded in writing, kept confidential and stored securely on the school's safeguarding systems and/or in the child's separate child protection file. The record will include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, and a note of the action taken, decisions reached, and the outcome.

11.8.2 Where allegations of a sexual nature are made, the school will follow the statutory guidance set out in Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. The DSL will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to carry out an immediate risk and needs assessment.

11.8.3 Reports of rape or assault by penetration are especially serious. While the school/trust establishes the facts and liaises with children's social care and the police, the alleged perpetrator(s) may be removed from any shared classes with the victim. The school/trust will also consider how to maintain a reasonable physical separation between the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) across school, including before or after school-based activities, and on transport to and from the school.

Children can report allegations or concerns of child-on-child abuse to any staff member and that staff member will pass on the allegation to the DSL in accordance with this policy. To ensure children can report their concerns easily, the school has the following systems in place for children to confidently report abuse: ***children are taught via assemblies, PHSE lessons and the Childrens Safeguarding Newsletter that all the adults in school are there to keep them safe, they are regularly reminded that they can share their concerns with trusted adults in school. Children are taught who the DSL and DDSLs are and are reassured that they can access the Rainbow Room to talk to someone at any time.***

11.8.4 Our staff reassure all victims that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe. Our staff will never give a victim the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment, nor will victims be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

11.8.5 Abuse that occurs online or outside of school will not be downplayed and will be treated equally seriously. We recognise that sexual violence and sexual harassment occurring online can introduce a number of complex factors. Amongst other things, this can include widespread abuse or harm across a number of social media platforms that leads to repeat victimisation.

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11.8.6 The support required for the pupil who has been harmed will depend on their particular circumstance, and the nature of the abuse. The support we provide could include counselling and mentoring or restorative justice work.

11.8.7 Support may also be required for the pupil who caused harm. We will seek to understand why the pupil acted in this way and consider what support may be required to help the pupil, and/or change behaviours. The consequences for the harm caused or intended will be addressed.

12 Serious violence

12.1 Serious violence is a continuing safeguarding concern which may involve physical assault, carrying, threatening with, or using weapons, often in the context of peer conflict or bullying, and criminal exploitation. All staff are aware of the signs that a child may be at risk of or involved in serious violence, including:

12.1.1 An increased absence from school or college or a significant decline in educational performance.

12.1.2 A change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups.

12.1.3 Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries, and

12.1.4 Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

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

13.1 Both CCE and CSE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate, or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. This power imbalance can be due to a range of factors, including:

13.1.1 Age.

13.1.2 Gender.

13.1.3 Sexual identity.

13.1.4 Cognitive ability.

13.1.5 Physical strength.

13.1.6 Status.

13.1.7 Access to economic or other resources.

13.2 The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. It can also be perpetrated by an organised network or gang, and the victim

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may identify as being part of this group. They can be one-off occurrences or a series of incidents over time and may or may not involve force or violence. Exploitation can be physical and take place online.

13.3 CCE and CSE can affect children, both male and female, and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation. This may constitute modern slavery.

13.4 **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

13.4.1 CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing, being forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

13.4.2 Children can become trapped by this exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or carry a knife for a sense of protection.

13.4.3 Children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

13.4.4 It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys, and both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

13.5 **CCE indicators**

13.5.1 **CCE** indicators can include children who:

(a) Appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions.

(b) Associate with other young people involved in exploitation.

(c) Suffer from changes in emotional well-being.

(d) Misuse drugs or alcohol.

(e) Go missing for periods of time or regularly return home late.

(f) Regularly or increasingly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

13.6 **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

13.6.1 CSE is a form of child sexual abuse which may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual

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images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

13.6.2 CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge, e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.

13.6.3 CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. CSE can be committed by an individual or an organised network and most sexual abuse is committed by those previously known to the victim. Some children may not realise they are being exploited, e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

13.6.4 Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking.

13.7 **CSE indicators**

13.7.1 The above indicators can also be indicators of **CSE**, as can children who:

(a) Have older boyfriends.

(b) Suffer sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant.

13.8 We include the risks of criminal and sexual exploitation in our RSE and health education curriculum. It is often the case that the child does not recognise the coercive nature of the exploitative relationship and does not recognise themselves as a victim.

13.9 Victims of criminal and sexual exploitation can be boys or girls, and it can have an adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health.

13.10 All staff are aware of the indicators that children are at risk of or are experiencing CCE or CSE. All concerns are reported immediately to the DSL. Staff must always act on any concerns that a child is suffering from or is at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation.

14 County lines

14.1 County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs around the country using dedicated mobile phone lines. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store, and sell drugs and money, with offenders often using coercion, intimidation, violence and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

14.2 County lines exploitation can occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate, or deceive a child. This power imbalance can be due to the same range of factors set out at paragraph 10.1 of this policy.

14.3 Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations, including schools and colleges. Indicators of county lines include those indicators set

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out at 10.3 of this policy, with the main indicator being missing episodes from home and/or school.

14.4 Additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited include children who:

- Go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from home.
- Have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime).
- Are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs.
- Are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection.
- Are found in accommodation with which they have no connection or in a hotel room where there is drug activity.
- Owe a 'debt bond' to their exploiters.
- Have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

14.5 All staff are aware of indicators that children are at risk from or are experiencing criminal exploitation. The main indicator is increased absence during which time the child may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs or money.

15 Sharing nudes and semi-nudes

15.1 Sharing photos, videos, and live streams online is part of daily life for many children and young people, enabling them to share their experiences, connect with friends and record their lives. Sharing nudes and semi-nudes means the creation, sending, or posting online of nude or semi-nude images, videos, or live streams by young people under the age of 18. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps, or forums, or carried out offline between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop.

15.2 Images may be taken or created by the child themselves or by another person. They may also be digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence, including what are sometimes described as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes'.

15.3 The term 'nudes' is used as it is most commonly recognised by young people and more appropriately covers all types of image sharing incidents. Alternative terms used by children and young people may include 'dick pics' or 'pics'. Other terms used in education include 'sexting', youth produced sexual imagery' and 'youth involved sexual imagery'.

15.4 The motivations for taking and sharing nudes and semi-nudes are not always sexually or criminally motivated. Such images may be created and shared consensually by young people who are in relationships, as well as between those who are not in a relationship. It is also possible for a young person in a consensual relationship to be coerced into sharing an image with their partner. Incidents may also occur where:

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- Children and young people find nudes and semi-nudes online and share them claiming to be from a peer.
- Children and young people digitally manipulate an image of a young person into an existing nude online.
- Images created or shared are used to abuse peers, e.g. by selling images online or obtaining images to share more widely without consent to publicly shame.

15.5 The school takes a safeguarding approach in response to all incidents involving the sharing of nude or semi-nude images, regardless of whether they are consensual or non-consensual. All such incidents require a safeguarding response, with a proportionate approach that considers the age, development, and circumstances of the children involved, as well as any elements of coercion, exploitation, or vulnerability. All incidents involving nude or semi-nude images will be managed as follows:

- The incident will be referred to the DSL immediately and the DSL will discuss it with the appropriate staff. If necessary, the DSL may also interview the children involved.
- Parents will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put a child at risk of harm.
- At any point in the process, if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, we will refer the matter to the police and/or children's social care.

15.6 The UK Council for Internet Safety updated its advice for managing incidences of sharing nudes and semi-nudes in February 2024 - **UKCIS advice 2024** . The school will have regard to this advice when managing these issues.

16 Online safety

16.1 It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. As well as educating children about online risks, we have appropriate and effective filtering and monitoring systems in place to limit the risk of children being exposed to inappropriate content, subjected to harmful online interaction with other users and to ensure their own personal online behaviour does not put them at risk. Our filtering and monitoring systems also prevent access to harmful and inappropriate content accessed through generative AI tools and products.

16.2 These filtering and monitoring systems block harmful and inappropriate content, and we take care to ensure that they do not unreasonably impact on teaching and learning. The systems are reviewed regularly (at least every academic year) to ensure their effectiveness, and staff have been identified and assigned suitable roles and responsibilities to manage these systems. We also have effective monitoring strategies in place to meet the safeguarding needs of our pupils.

16.3 We tell parents and carers what filtering and monitoring systems we use, so they can understand how we work to keep children safe.

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16.4 We will also inform parents and carers of what we are asking children to do online, including the sites they need to access, and with whom they will be interacting online.

16.5 Online safety risks can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **Content**: Being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content such as pornography, fake news, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories
- **Contact**: Being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this, such as peer-to-peer pressure and adults posing as children or young adults to groom or exploit children.
- **Conduct**: Personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm such as making, sending and receiving explicit images, sharing other explicit images, including those generated using AI and online bullying.
- **Commerce**: Risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing or financial scams.

16.6 All staff are aware of these risk areas and should report any concerns to the DSL.

17 [EYFS] Handheld devices and cameras

17.1 The Trust has a separate policy regarding the safe use of mobiles and cameras, which has been adopted by each school. This includes:

17.1.1 Personal devices are only to be used by staff when on a designated break away from the pupils. At all other times, personal devices are to be switched off.

17.1.2 [Academy/trust] devices are only to be used by staff for work purposes. Photographs and videos of the pupils are only to be taken on school devices.

17.1.3 Images of the pupils will only be used in accordance with our data protection policy [attach link to the relevant policy].]

18 Domestic abuse

18.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced 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.

18.2 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, and emotional abuse.

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18.3 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.

18.4 Children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic violence in their home life. Experiencing domestic abuse and exposure to it 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. All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

18.5 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. The police will also notify us if they have reasonable grounds to believe a child may be a victim of domestic abuse. This ensures that the school has up to date safeguarding information about the child.

18.6 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.

19 Honour or faith-based abuse

19.1 Honour or faith-based abuse (HBA) encompasses actions taken 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.

19.2 Abuse committed in the context of preserving “honour” often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. Our staff are aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors and we take them into consideration when deciding what safeguarding action to take.

19.3 If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead.

19.4 **Female genital mutilation**

19.4.1 FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

19.4.2 FGM is carried out on females of any age, from babies to teenagers to women. Our staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators, including concerns expressed by girls about going on a long holiday during the summer break. If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of FGM or who has suffered FGM, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead. Teachers are also under legal duty to report to the police where they discover that FGM has been carried out on a child under 18. In such

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circumstances, teachers will personally report the matter to the police as well as informing the designated safeguarding lead.

19.5 **Forced marriage**

19.5.1 A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual, and emotional pressure or abuse.

19.5.2 Forced marriage is illegal. It is also illegal to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats, or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

19.5.3 Our staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators, which may include being taken abroad and not being allowed to return to the UK.

19.5.4 Forced marriage is not the same as arranged marriage, which is common in many cultures.

19.5.5 If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of forced marriage, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead.

20 Radicalisation and extremism

20.1 Extremism is defined as vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. Radicalisation refers to the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of terrorist violence.

20.2 Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Whilst Islamic fundamentalism is the most widely publicised, extremism and radicalisation can occur in other cultures, religions, and beliefs, including the far right and white supremacy. Our staff are trained to identify those at risk of being radicalised or drawn into extremism.

20.3 If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of radicalisation or being drawn into extremism, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead.

21 Staff/pupil relationships

21.1 Staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that it is a criminal offence for them to engage in any sexual activity with a pupil under the age of 18.

21.2 We provide our staff with advice regarding their personal online activity, and we have clear rules regarding electronic communications and online contact with pupils. It is considered a serious disciplinary issue if staff breach these rules.

21.3 Our Staff Code of Conduct sets out our expectations of staff and is signed by all staff members.

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22 Safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, including supply teachers, volunteers, and contractors

22.1 If a safeguarding concern or allegation is made about a member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer, or contractor, or relates to incidents that happened when an individual or organisation was using the school premises for the purposes of running activities for children our set procedures must be followed. Our safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, supply teachers, volunteers, and contractors are detailed in our Trust policy which can be accessed here: **DDAT-Managing-Safeguarding-Allegations-and-Low-Level-Concerns-Policy-2026.pdf,** and the full procedure for managing such allegations or concerns are set out in Part Four of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

22.2 Safeguarding concerns or allegations made about staff who no longer work at the school will be reported to the police.

23 Whistle blowing if you have concerns about a colleague

23.1 It is important that all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about a colleague's practice. All such concerns should be reported to the headteacher, unless the complaint is about the headteacher, in which case concern should be reported to the chair of governors.

23.2 Staff may also report their concerns directly to children's social care or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

23.3 The trust's whistleblowing policy, which can be accessed here: **DDAT-Whistleblowing-Policy-2025.pdf** allows staff to raise concerns or make allegations and for an appropriate enquiry to take place.

24 Staff and local trust committee member training

24.1 Our staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety and an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) which is regularly updated. There is a **DDAT Staff Safeguarding Training Professional Development Framework**, which is updated annually, and details the specific safeguarding training that staff must undertake in accordance with their role in school.

In addition, all staff receive safeguarding and child protection updates on a regular basis to ensure they are up to date and empowered to provide exceptional safeguarding to our pupils; in our school ***add details here of how staff receive these updates***

24.2 New staff and volunteers receive a briefing during their induction which covers this Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and our staff code of conduct, how to report and record concerns and information about our designated safeguarding lead and deputy DSLs.

24.3 Our local trust committee members receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) training at induction

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which equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that there is an effective whole trust approach to safeguarding. This training is updated at least annually.

24.4 Our local trust committee safeguarding link member receives additional training to empower them to support and challenge the designated safeguarding lead and support the delivery of high-quality safeguarding across the trust.

25 Safer recruitment

25.1 The local trust committee and our senior leadership team are responsible for ensuring that we follow recruitment procedures which help to deter, reject, or identify people who might harm children. When doing so we check and verify the applicant's identity, qualifications, and work history in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the local safeguarding partner arrangements.

25.2 All relevant staff (involved in early years settings and/or before or after school care for children under eight) are made aware of the disqualification from childcare guidance and their obligations to disclose to us relevant information that could lead to disqualification.

25.3 We ensure that our volunteers are appropriately checked and supervised when in school. We check the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS checks where required by Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised during the school day.

25.4 When using supply staff, we will obtain written confirmation (letter of comfort) from supply agencies or third-party organisations that staff they provide have been appropriately checked and are suitable to work with children. Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained confirming their suitability to work with children.

25.5 Each school maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken in each of our academies. Our recruitment policy and procedures are detailed in our policy which can be accessed here: **DDAT-Recruitment-and-Selection-Policy-2025.pdf**

26 Site security

26.1 Visitors are asked to sign in at the school reception and are given a badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. If visitors have undergone the appropriate checks, they can be provided with unescorted access to the school site. Visitors who have not undergone the required checks will be escorted at all times.

27 Child protection procedures

27.1 Recognising abuse

27.1.1 Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse

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may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

27.1.2 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 refers to four categories of abuse. These are set out at Appendix One along with indicators of abuse and neglect.

27.2 **Taking action**

27.2.1 Any child could become a victim of abuse. Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- In an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, if necessary, call 999.
- Report your concern to the DSL or a deputy as soon as possible.
- Complete a written record of the concerns on CPOMS, including a bodymap if this is relevant.
- The staff member who witnessed/ observed the concern first hand should complete the CPOMS referral in all instances, other than where supply staff, students and visitors do not have access to CPOMS and should be supported by the Class Teacher who can record the written account in their words on their behalf.
- If the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy is not around, ensure the information is shared with the most senior person in the school that day.
- The concern must be reported on the same day and before the child is due to leave the school premises.
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only and do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family.

27.3 **If you are concerned about a pupil's welfare**

27.3.1 Staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk. This may be because the pupil's behaviour has changed, their appearance has changed, or physical signs are noticed. In these circumstances, staff will give the pupil the opportunity to talk and ask if they are OK.

27.3.2 If the pupil does reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below.

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27.3.3 Staff are aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. Children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or are being threatened, which could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This will not prevent our staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to our DSL if they have concerns about a child.

27.4 **If a pupil discloses to you**

27.4.1 If a pupil tells a member of staff about a risk to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member will:

- Remain calm and not overreact.
- Allow them to speak freely.
- Not be afraid of silences.
- Not ask investigative questions
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'.
- Not automatically offer physical touch as comfort.
- Let the pupil know that in order to help them they must pass the information on to the DSL.
- Tell the pupil what will happen next and give them an opportunity to ask questions about what will happen next.
- Report your concern to the DSL or a deputy as soon as possible.
- Complete a written record of the concerns on CPOMS, including a bodymap if this is relevant.
- The staff member who witnessed/ observed the concern first hand should complete the CPOMS referral in all instances, other than where supply staff, students and visitors do not have access to CPOMS and should be supported by the Class Teacher who can record the written account in their words on their behalf.
- If the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy is not around, ensure the information is shared with the most senior person in the school that day.
- The concern must be reported on the same day and before the child is due to leave the school premises.

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- Report verbally to the DSL even if the child has promised to do it by themselves.
- Let the pupil know when they can expect to be updated or receive more information, emphasising that the pupil can talk to them or the DSL at any time.

27.5 **Notifying parents**

27.5.1 The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. If the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are notified.

28 Referral to children's social care

28.1 The DSL will make a referral to children's social care if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

29 Reporting directly to child protection agencies

29.1 Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care or the police if they are convinced that a direct report is required or if the designated safeguarding lead, the deputies, and the head teacher are not available, and a referral is required immediately.

30 Confidentiality and sharing information

30.1 Child protection issues necessitate a high level of confidentiality. Staff should only discuss concerns with the designated safeguarding lead, headteacher, or chair of governors.

31 Sharing information

31.1.1 The DSL will normally obtain consent from the pupil and/or parents to share child protection information. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSL may share information *without* consent and will record the reason for deciding to do so.

31.1.2 Information sharing will take place in a timely and secure manner and only when it is necessary and proportionate to do so and the information to be shared is relevant, adequate, and accurate.

31.1.3 Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share.

31.1.4 The UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil

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or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Data Protection Officer.

31.2 **Storing information**

31.3 Child protection information will be stored separately from the pupil's school file, and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held. It will be stored and handled in line with our retention and destruction policy.

31.4 Our confidentiality and information sharing policy and our retention and destruction policy are available to parents and pupils on request.

32 Special circumstances

32.1 **Looked after children**

32.1.1 The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The designated teacher for looked after children and the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head for children in care.

32.2 **Children who have a social worker**

32.2.1 Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Local authorities will share this information with us, and the DSL will hold and use this information to inform decisions about safeguarding and promoting the child's welfare.

32.3 **Work experience**

32.3.1 The school has detailed procedures to safeguard pupils undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervise pupils on work experience, which are in accordance with statutory guidance.

32.4 **Children staying with host families**

32.4.1 The school may make arrangements for pupils to stay with host families, for example during a foreign exchange trip or sports tour. When we do, we follow the guidance set out in the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 to ensure hosting arrangements are as safe as possible.

32.4.2 Schools cannot obtain criminal record information from the Disclosure and Barring Service about adults abroad. Where pupils stay with host families abroad, we will agree with the partner schools a shared understanding of the safeguarding arrangements. Our designated safeguarding lead will ensure the arrangements are sufficient to safeguard our pupils and will include ensuring pupils understand who to contact should an emergency occur, or a

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situation arise, which makes them feel uncomfortable. We will also make parents aware of these arrangements.

32.4.3 Some overseas pupils may reside with host families during school terms, and we will work with the local authority to check that such arrangements are safe and suitable.

32.5 **Private fostering arrangements**

32.5.1 A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16 or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. By law, a parent, private foster carer, or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible.

32.5.2 Where a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement, they will tell the DSL, and the school will notify the local authority of the circumstances.

32.6 **Safeguarding guidance for schools facilitating arrangements with charity holiday providers**

The protocol below must be followed by all DDAT schools who enter into arrangements with providers of holiday for disadvantaged children.

To facilitate holiday arrangements, schools must:

- Check that the organisation is a registered charity.
- Review the organisation's website, to check on the processes in place for the recruitment, screening, and training (including safeguarding training) of employees and volunteers.
- Request from the holiday provider, and retain on file, copies of the following documentation, to reassure themselves that the policies and procedures in place to keep children safe are robust:
  - The organisation's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and confirmation that all employees and volunteers have read and understood it.
  - A letter of comfort which details the checks undertaken by the organisation in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026).

    These checks must meet the requirements of the Trust in accordance with the **DDAT SCR Guide (V5 01/09/26).**
  - Risk assessments for all activities the children will be involved in.

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Schools are a facilitator in these arrangements; they may identify children who meet the criteria outlined by the charity and advise parents/carers of the opportunity for their child to be allocated a holiday experience.

The school may support parents/carers to complete the necessary paperwork for their child, if there is a need, but it must be explained to the parent/carer that the holiday has not been organised by the school, and that no school staff will be attending/supporting the holiday as they would for a residential school trip.

Any holidays taken by pupils of DDAT schools in accordance with these arrangements must be taken during the school holidays and not in term time.

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Appendix One: The four categories of abuse

It is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and neglect and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead. It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns.

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation, and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another. All staff are also aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery, understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside of home, and online.

1 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.

1.1 Indicators of physical abuse

The following may be indicators of physical abuse:

- Have bruises, bleeding, burns, bites, 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.
- An injury that is not consistent with the account given.
- Symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication or poisoning.
- Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance.
- Violence or aggression towards others including bullying.
- Isolation from peers.

2 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 from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may

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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.

2.1 Indicators of emotional abuse

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- The child consistently describes him/herself in negative ways.
- Over-reaction to mistakes.
- Delayed physical, mental, or emotional development.
- Inappropriate emotional responses, fantasies.
- Self-harm.
- Drug or solvent abuse.
- Running away.
- Appetite disorders – anorexia nervosa, bulimia; or
- Soiling, smearing faeces, enuresis.

3 Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving 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 penetration with an object) 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

3.1 Indicators of sexual abuse

The following may be indicators of sexual abuse:

- Sexually explicit play or behaviour or age-inappropriate knowledge.
- Aggressive behaviour including sexual harassment or molestation.
- Reluctance to undress for PE or swimming.
- Anal or vaginal discharge, soreness, or scratching.
- Bruises or scratches in the genital area.

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- Reluctance to go home.
- Refusal to communicate.
- Depression or withdrawal.
- Isolation from peer group.
- Eating disorders, for example anorexia nervosa and bulimia.
- Self-harm.
- Substance abuse.
- Acquiring gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'.

4 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, for example, 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 caregivers); or
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

4.1 Indicators of neglect

The following may be indicators of neglect:

- Constant hunger or stealing, scavenging and/or hoarding food.
- Frequent tiredness.
- Frequently dirty or unkempt.
- Poor attendance or often late.
- Poor concentration.
- Illnesses or injuries that are left untreated.
- Failure to achieve developmental milestones or to develop intellectually or socially.
- Responsibility for activity that is not age appropriate such as cooking, ironing, caring for siblings.
- The child is left at home alone or with inappropriate carers.

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Appendix Two: Related Policies

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy should be applied in conjunction with other Trust and school policies, including:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Restrictive Intervention and the use of Reasonable Force
- Attendance

- Behaviour
- Intimate Care
- Bullying
- Whistleblowing
- SEND
- Recruitment and Selection
- Managing Safeguarding Allegations and Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Staff Disciplinary
- Mobile Phones

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Appendix Three: Derby & Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures

Thresholds, Escalation Routes & Local Pathways

Please refer to **Appendix Five** for Derby City and Derbyshire Children's Social Care contact details.

1. Purpose of this Appendix

This appendix sets out the **local Derby & Derbyshire multi-agency safeguarding arrangements** that all Trust schools must follow. It ensures safeguarding practice is fully aligned with DDSCP expectations.

It provides DSLs and staff with:

- DDSCP Thresholds of Need
- Early Help/Family Help pathways
- Step Up/Step Down guidance
- Escalation routes for professional challenge
- Referral processes and front-door contact details
- Local multi-agency guidance relevant to Derby/Derbyshire

2. DDSCP Thresholds of Need

The Trust adopts the **DDSCP Thresholds Document (June 2026)** as the framework for identifying levels of need and determining the appropriate response.

threshold-document-june-2026-.pdf

2.1 Levels of Need

Please note that DDSCP is transitioning from **Early Help** to **Family Help** terminology; both terms refer to **Level 2** support.

- **Level 1 Universal** Children with no additional needs; support delivered through universal services.
- **Level 2 Emerging Needs (Early Help/Family Help)** Support required to prevent escalation; coordinated by Early Help Locality Teams or school-based support.
- **Level 3 Complex Needs** Multi-agency support required; coordinated through targeted Early Help or multi-agency meetings.
- **Level 4 Acute Needs/Child Protection** Immediate statutory intervention required; referral to Children's Social Care.

3. Early Help/Family Help Pathways

All Trust schools must follow DDSCP Early Help arrangements.

Core processes:

- Early Help Assessment
- Coordination with Early Help Locality Teams
- Multi-agency meetings
- Regular review of plans and outcomes
- Step-down arrangements from statutory services

School responsibilities:

- DSLs must consider Early Help at **Level 2 and Level 3**.

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- Staff must report emerging concerns promptly.
- Schools must contribute to Early Help plans and attend meetings.

4. Step Up/Step Down Guidance

DDSCP guidance must be followed when:

- **Step Up:** Early Help is no longer sufficient and statutory intervention is required.
- **Step Down:** Statutory intervention ends and Early Help or school-based support is appropriate.

DDAT expectations of DSLs:

- Use DDSCP guidance to determine escalation.
- Communicate clearly with Early Help and Children's Social Care.
- Record decision-making and rationale on CPOMS.

5. Local Escalation Routes (Professional Challenge)

Where professionals disagree about level of need or response, DSLs must follow the **DDSCP Escalation Protocol.**

multi-agency-dispute-resolution-escalation-protocol-final-nov-2024.pdf

Escalation stages:

- **Stage 1:** Practitioner-to-practitioner discussion
- **Stage 2:** DSL-to-manager discussion
- **Stage 3:** Formal escalation to Children's Social Care
- **Stage 4:** Escalation to DDSCP if unresolved

DDAT expectations of DSLs:

- Escalate concerns promptly and confidently.
- Record all escalation attempts.
- Inform the Trust Safeguarding Lead of **Stage 3 or Stage 4** escalations.
- Record: who was spoken to, when, what was discussed, outcome, and next steps.

6. Local Multi-Agency Guidance

Trust schools must follow relevant DDSCP guidance available in the **Documents Library**, including:

- **Child Exploitation**
- **Neglect Strategy**
- **Domestic Abuse (Operation Encompass)**
- **Digital Harm/Online Safety**
- **Serious Violence & Contextual Safeguarding**
- **Children Missing Education (CME) Protocol**
- **Private Fostering Guidance**
- **Harmful Sexual Behaviour**

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DSLs must ensure staff are trained in guidance relevant to their role and as detailed in the DDAT Staff Safeguarding Training Professional Development Framework.

7. Referral Processes & Contact Details

To ensure consistency across all Trust schools:

- DSLs must use DDSCP thresholds in decision-making.
- Schools must follow DDSCP Early Help and referral pathways.
- Escalation must follow DDSCP professional challenge routes.
- Safeguarding records must reference DDSCP thresholds where relevant.
- DSLs must follow DDSCP information-sharing guidance.
- Records must demonstrate clear rationale and chronology.

Referral routes:

Information can be accessed here: Worried About a Child?

- **Derby City:** Online referral system – *Report Concerns About a Child*

Report Concerns About a Child - myAccount

- **Derbyshire:** *Starting Point* referral service

Starting Point contact and referral service - Derbyshire County Council

- **DDSCP guidance:** *Making a Referral to Social Care*

8. Information Sharing Expectations

DfE non statutory information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers

DSLs must ensure:

- Timely sharing of relevant information with partner agencies.
- Clear rationale for information sharing recorded in CPOMS.
- Chronology demonstrates how information informed decision-making.
- Compliance with DDSCP Information Sharing Guidance and statutory requirements.

9. Trust-Wide Implementation Requirements

All DDAT schools must:

- Apply DDSCP thresholds consistently.
- Follow Early Help, referral, and escalation pathways.
- Maintain threshold-aligned safeguarding records.
- Ensure staff training reflects DDSCP guidance.
- Implement Trust safeguarding action plans following QA activity.

10. Review Cycle

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This appendix will be updated:

- Annually
- When DDSCP publishes updated guidance
- When statutory guidance changes
- Following learning from local or national reviews

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Appendix Four: DSL Operational Expectations

This appendix sets out Trust-wide expectations for DSL practice.

1. How DSLs use thresholds in decision-making

DSLs must apply DDSCP Levels 1 to 4 consistently to ensure defensible, transparent decisions.

Core expectations:

- Identify level of need using DDSCP Thresholds Document.
- Record threshold rationale clearly, including indicators of risk and protective factors.
- Apply thresholds consistently across all cases.
- Use threshold language in discussions with staff and partner agencies.

Evidence requirements:

Safeguarding records must show:

- Threshold level applied
- Clear rationale
- Chronology of decisions
- Multi-agency communication

2. How escalation Is evidenced

Escalation must be used confidently when professional disagreement arises.

Core expectations:

- Follow DDSCP Escalation Protocol stages 1–4.
- Escalate without delay when safety or access to services is compromised.
- Notify Trust Safeguarding Lead of Stage 3/4 escalations.

Evidence requirements:

CPOMS must contain:

- Escalation chronology
- Emails, call notes, meeting notes
- Threshold rationale
- Confirmation of Trust Safeguarding Lead notification

3. How Family Help is coordinated

DSLs must ensure Family Help is used proactively at Levels 2 and 3.

Core expectations:

- Consider Family Help for all emerging needs.
- Coordinate Early Help activity effectively.
- Work closely with Early Help Locality Teams.
- Follow step-up and step-down processes.

Evidence requirements:

Records must show:

- Early Help Assessment
- Multi-agency meeting notes
- Review dates and outcomes
- Step-up/step-down rationale
- Clear chronology of support

4. How the Trust monitors compliance

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The Trust Safeguarding Team ensures consistent, high-quality practice through structured quality assurance processes, internal and external audits, self-assessment tools and supervision.

Core expectations:

- DSLs must participate in Trust quality assurance processes.
- Schools must evidence threshold-aligned decision-making.
- DSLs must engage in safeguarding supervision.
- Schools must demonstrate compliance with DDSCP pathways.

Evidence requirements:

Schools must provide:

- Threshold-aligned case records
- Evidence of Family Help coordination
- Escalation chronologies
- Updated safeguarding arrangements
- Staff training records
- Implementation of Trust action plans and recommendations

5. Information Sharing with the Trust Safeguarding Lead

This section sets out Trust-wide expectations for when, how, and what DSLs must share with the Trust Safeguarding Lead to ensure robust oversight, early identification of risk, and a transparent safeguarding culture across all DDAT schools.

5.1 Situations requiring immediate notification to the Trust Safeguarding Lead

DSLs must notify the Trust Safeguarding Lead without delay when any of the following occur:

- **High-risk safeguarding concerns** involving significant harm, imminent danger, or acute vulnerability.
- **Complex or high-profile cases** where risk extends beyond the child (e.g., peer group, community, online networks).
- **Concerns involving staff** including allegations, conduct issues, or any matter requiring LADO involvement.
- **Cases with reputational risk** to the school or Trust (e.g., media interest, community escalation, police operations on site).
- **Serious incidents** requiring immediate multi-agency coordination.
- **Escalations reaching Stage 3 or Stage 4** under the DDSCP Escalation Protocol.
- **Any safeguarding matter where the DSL requires strategic advice, support, or oversight.**

These expectations align with Trust governance responsibilities and ensure early strategic intervention.

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5.2 Routine information sharing requirements

DSLs must ensure the Trust Safeguarding Lead has **ongoing visibility** of safeguarding practice across all schools. This includes:

- **Regular updates** on emerging patterns, themes, or concerns.
- **Notification of any child subject to Level 3 or Level 4 intervention.**
- **Updates on Family Help cases** where risk is escalating or multi-agency coordination is required.
- **Sharing of anonymised trend data** where relevant (e.g., peer-on-peer harm, online harm, neglect indicators).
- **Requests for support** where capacity, complexity, or multi-agency challenge requires Trust involvement.

This ensures the Trust can identify cross-school trends and provide targeted support.

5.3 Trust Oversight of CPOMS

To fulfil statutory oversight responsibilities in accordance with the Academy Handbook, the Trust Safeguarding Lead will have access to each school's CPOMS system, this will enable:

- **Case sampling** focusing on thresholds, escalation, Family Help, and decision-making quality.
- **Review of high-risk or complex cases** to ensure defensible practice.
- **Audit of chronology quality**, information sharing, and threshold rationale.
- **Monitoring of DSL workload and case distribution** to ensure safe capacity.
- **Verification of compliance** with DDSCP pathways and Trust expectations.

DSL responsibilities:

- Ensure records are up-to-date, accurate, and threshold-aligned.
- Ensure all high-risk cases are clearly flagged through appropriate use of the DDAT aligned categories.
- Ensure all escalation attempts are fully documented.
- Ensure CPOMS access for the Trust Safeguarding Lead remains active.

5.4 Timeframes for sharing information

To ensure timely oversight and intervention:

Immediate (same day):

- High-risk concerns
- Staff allegations
- Stage 3/4 escalations
- Serious incidents
- Cases with reputational risk
- Police involvement on site
- Any case where a child's safety is compromised

Within 48 hours:

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- Emerging complex cases
- Step-up or step-down decisions
- Multi-agency disagreements at Stage 1 or Stage 2
- Significant changes in risk level
- Requests for Trust support

5.5 Expectations for an open and honest safeguarding culture

All DDAT schools must operate within a culture of transparency, professional curiosity, and shared responsibility.

DSLs must:

- Communicate openly with the Trust Safeguarding Lead about concerns, capacity, and challenges.
- Seek advice early rather than managing high-risk cases in isolation.
- Share learning from cases, audits, and multi-agency feedback.
- Promote a culture where safeguarding concerns are raised promptly and without fear.
- Model professional challenge and threshold-aligned decision-making.

The Trust Safeguarding Lead will:

- Provide supportive, non-punitive oversight.
- Offer strategic advice and case consultation.
- Ensure DSLs feel confident escalating concerns.
- Maintain a culture of shared learning across the Trust.
- Provide quality assurance, supervision, and training aligned with DDSCP expectations.

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Appendix Five: Key Local Safeguarding Contacts

	Derby	Derbyshire
Early/Family Help and Advice	• Derby City Family Hubs and Early Help • Early Help Advisors, see Safeguarding Children Procedures Contacts, advice and further information	• Family Help Service • For advice contact Starting Point Consultation and Advice Service for Professionals via 01629 535353
Targeted Early/Family Help requests	Locality Vulnerable Children Meeting (VCM)/ Family Help Forums (FHF) for requests for targeted early help via multi-agency team (MAT) or non-urgent social care referrals via Locality Casework Support Officers	Requests for support from professionals should be made via the online request for support unless a child is at risk of Significant Harm
Speak to a Social Worker for thresholds advice and consultation	Children's Services Professional Consultation Line 07812 300329	Starting Point Consultation and Advice Service for Professionals 01629 535353
Referrals to Local Authority	***Initial Response Team***	***Starting Point*** **Urgent:** Call Derbyshire 01629 533 190

	Derby	Derbyshire
Children's Social Care	**Urgent:** 01332 641172 or out of hours via Careline 01332 956606 **Non urgent:** Derby Children's Social Care Online Referral system	**Non urgent:** Starting Point online
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Derby LADO advice form Derby and Derbyshire LADO referral form **Email:** CPMduty@derby.gov.uk	Derby and Derbyshire LADO referral form **Email:** professional.allegations@derbyshire.gov.uk
Derbyshire Police	• 999 for emergencies or 101 for non-emergencies • Mandatory reporting of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) via 101 • School/College Police Safer neighbourhood team or link officer Also see *When to call the police – guidance for schools and colleges*	
Prevent (radicalisation and extremism)	• For advice contact the Local Authority Prevent Team: Derbyshire - 01629 535646 or prevent@derbyshire.gov.uk Derby - Prevent@derby.gov.uk • Police Prevent (radicalisation/extremism) Team on 101 or directly via 0300 1228694. For emergencies phone 999. See Refer someone to the Derbyshire Prevent Team (Derbyshire Constabulary) • Reporting extremism concerns about an adult working in an education setting submit the details at report extremism in education	
Children absent from education	• Derby Education Welfare Service (EWS) • Elective home education (EHE) • Children missing education (CME)	• Derbyshire Education Welfare Services • Elective home education (EHE) • Children missing education (CME) • See Children missing from education for further information on guidance, policies and procedures relating to school age children missing from education
Virtual School for Looked After Children	• Virtual School Head - 07812 301044 or graeme.ferguson@derby.gov.uk • Specialist Education Support Officer for LAC	Helen Moxon, Virtual School Headteacher 01629 538028 virtualschool@derbyshire.gov.uk • Specialist Education Support Officer for LAC or other role
Emotional Health and Well-being Services	*(Add links to relevant emotional well-being and mental health services, including school Mental Health Support Teams, North Derbyshire* Specialist Community Advisors or Derby/South Derbyshire CAMHS Duty (0300 123 9164) during office hours (Monday-Friday 09:00-17:00), out of hours, please contact the Derbyshire Mental Health Helpline and Support Service (Call 111	

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	Derby	Derbyshire
	and select the 'mental health' option, option 2). *You may wish to add a link to your own bespoke Derby and Derbyshire Mental Health Pathway Guidance)*	
Domestic Abuse	• Safer Derby City • Derbyshire constabulary - information and advice about domestic abuse webpages	• Safer Derbyshire domestic abuse webpage • Derbyshire constabulary - information and advice about domestic abuse webpages
Cyberchoices	For children at risk of being drawn into cybercrime via East Midlands Cyber Secure	
Homelessness or at risk of homelessness	Derby city council homelessness webpages	*(See relevant District council website)*

Key National Contacts

Organisation	Description and contact details
NSPCC helpline for adults	Helping adults protect children 24 hours a day. For help and support, including anyone needing advice about female genital mutilation, young people affected by gangs, concerns that someone may be a victim of modern slavery contact the NSPCC trained helpline counsellors on: • Text 88858 • 0808 800 5000 • help@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC helpline Report Abuse in Education	Bespoke helpline for children and young people who've experienced abuse at school, and for worried adults and professionals who need support and guidance including for non-recent abuse: • 0800 136 663 • help@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice	Free advice and support for professionals concerned about how child protection issues are being handled in their organisation: • 0800 028 0285 • help@nspcc.org.uk
UK Safer Internet Centre professional advice line	Helpline for professionals working with children and young people in the UK with any online safety issues they may face themselves or with children in their care: • helpline@saferinternet.org.uk

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Organisation	Description and contact details
Police Anti-Terrorist Hot Line number	0800 789 321
National Domestic Abuse Helpline	Hosted by Refuge, Helpline 0808 2000247
Operation Encompass	Information, resources and elearning for schools
Report harmful online content	• UK Safer Internet Centre – report online harm. A national reporting centre that has been designed to assist anyone in reporting harmful content online • CEOP – to report online sexual abuse or the way someone has been communicating online • Report online material promoting terrorism or extremism
Report Abuse in Education helpline	• Young people who have experienced abuse at school and parents and teachers who are concerned about sexual abuse in education settings can call the Report Abuse in Education helpline on 0800 136 663 or email help@nspcc.org.uk

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