



URSULINE HIGH SCHOOL
Wimbledon

**Safeguarding and Child
Protection Policy**
September 2026

Updated in line with KCSIE guidance 2026, effective from 1st September 2026

Review date: July 2027 or when new legislation requires changes.

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1. Terminology and Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 means:

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

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) further extends this definition to include:

- *promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children*
- *taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.*

Child/ren: In line with the law, this policy defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 years but in the case of SEN it is up to 25 years of age and applies to pupils/ students of our school; however the policy will extend to visiting children and students from other establishments.

Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online. Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives or is found in their area is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, it has a duty to make such enquiries as it considers necessary to decide whether to take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Such enquiries, supported by other organisations and agencies, as appropriate, should be initiated where there are concerns about all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation whether this is taking place in person or online, inside or outside of the child's home. Schools are required to cooperate with children's social care when carrying their inquiries and therefore we have a duty to share information when requested to do so.

Child in Need: A child in need is defined under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired without the provision of services, or a child who is disabled.

Harm is ill treatment or impairment of health and development, including impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another

Significant Harm is the threshold for a child protection response to support and or protect children. Harm is defined in the Children Act 1989 as the ill-treatment of a child or the impairment of their health or development. This can include harm caused by seeing someone else being mistreated, for example by witnessing domestic abuse.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child, and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Section 13 explains the different types of abuse.

Neglect is a form of abuse and 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. Section 13 defines neglect in more detail.

Children and Families Hub – C and F Hub (formerly known as MASH – Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) provides a single point of contact for professionals and members of the public who want to seek support or raise concerns about a child. The Children and Families Hub is a fully integrated multi-agency team which involves key safeguarding agencies including professionals from social care, police, health and education. These agencies work together to identify the need of children and their families and signpost to the appropriate agency or resources where threshold is met.

Family Help (Previously described as Early Help) means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. KCSIE 2026 distinguishes between universal services and community-based early help, the targeted early help level of Family Help (sections 10 and 11 of the [Children Act 2004](#)), and statutory services

Children in Care: A child is 'looked after' (in care) if they are in the care of the Local Authority for more than 24 hours. Children can be in care by agreement with parents or by order of a court. The placement providing the care can be a connected person to the child or a Local Authority approved foster carer.

Kinship Care refers to a type of care where a child who cannot be looked after by their birth parents is cared for by relatives or friends. The government in England has launched a [Kinship Care Strategy](#) to improve kinship carers' financial stability, education, training, and partnership with local authorities and other agencies.

Victim is a widely understood and recognised term, but we understand that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described that way. When managing an incident, we will be prepared to use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with.

Alleged perpetrator(s) and **perpetrator(s)** are widely used and recognised terms. However, we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children and their parents and carers) as, in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. Schools are also aware and will consider a reported child may have also experienced abuse. We will decide what is appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis. The Ursuline will work to the recommendations of Merton Local Authority and specialist services for appropriate terminology and may use terms such as '*the reporting and reported child / persons*'.

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

Parents refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, e.g. step-parents, foster carers, adoptive parents and those adults caring for children with a Special Guardianship Order.

Social Care refers to Children's Services in the area in which the child is resident, unless a child is a Child Looked After then this will be the Children's Services in their home authority.

1. Safeguarding Statement 2026

At Ursuline High School we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils.

We make every effort to provide an environment in which children and adults feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident to talk if they are worried, believing they will be effectively listened to.

We are alert to the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. Child protection forms part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities. We expect all staff, governors and volunteers to share this commitment to safeguarding our pupils.

We follow the **Merton Children's Safeguarding Partnership** procedures and have a number of policies and procedures in place which contribute to our safeguarding commitment, including our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy. A copy of this policy is available on our website.

In line with our duties set out in the Children Act (1989, 2004) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) we are committed to providing support and help as soon as possible, underpinned by our values that children are best looked after within their families, with their parents playing a full part in their lives where possible. We are also committed to ensuring that we work with agencies, including the Local Authority, to access support and targeted interventions for families when we consider that a child is, or may be, at risk of harm.

This policy sets out our values and processes to keep children safe from harm and should be read in conjunction with [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026](#) ; statutory guidance for schools and colleges. At the Ursuline, we adopt the fundamental principal of *working in a child-centred approach within a whole family focus* as promoted in [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#).

We hope that parents and carers will support us to undertake our statutory duties to offer Universal and Community Early Help support and to liaise with agencies to protect children who have suffered or otherwise likely to suffer significant harm without doing so. The core objective of Early Help support is to support children and families to thrive and prevent children being placed at increased risk. This policy outlines the commitment to our legal duties to safeguard children, the responsibilities for all our staff and the specific roles and responsibilities for our key Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and Governance.

This principle is underpinned by the findings and recommendations within the Government's 2023 publication [Stable Homes, Built on Love](#) in response to the recommendations of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care. The strategy sets out how children's social care is to be committed to supporting every child to grow up in a safe, stable and loving home. For most children this means growing up within their family. The strategy also emphasises the importance of having stronger expectations of support through early help and family networks.

When a safeguarding issue arises, staff at Ursuline High School will be focused on securing positive outcomes for the child/children: the purpose of all interventions should be to achieve the best possible outcomes for each child recognising each is unique. These outcomes should contribute to the key outcomes set out for all children set out in the Children Act 2004 and [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026](#)

The purpose of this policy is to provide staff, volunteers and governors with the framework they need in order to keep children safe and secure in our school. The policy also informs parents and carers how we will safeguard their children whilst they are in our care. We are keen to support families in a strength and solution-based approach, encouraging motivation and confidence to improve their own agency to make safe and positive decisions for themselves and their children.

Safeguarding Contacts

Organisation / Role	Name	Contact details
Headteacher responsible for implementing policies & procedures, allocating resources to the safeguarding team & addressing staff safeguarding concerns.	Mr Eoin Kelly	Via PA : lydia.torch@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) A member of the leadership team with appropriate authority, responsible for dealing with safeguarding issues, providing advice and support to other staff, liaising with the local authority, and working with other agencies.	Mrs Rachael Gilmore	rachael.gilmore@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk 0203 908 3168 Mon - Thurs
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) A member of the teaching, support or pastoral staff, in a post which requires assessment of children and with sufficient status & authority to effectively deputise for the DSL role above.	Mrs Sarah McCourt	sarah.mccourt@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk 0203 908 3197 Mon - Tues, Thurs - Fri
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) A member of the leadership team with appropriate authority with sufficient status & authority to effectively deputise for the DSL role above.	Mrs Michelle Alexander	michelle.alexander@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk 0203 908 3139 Tues - Fri

Organisation / Role	Name	Contact details
Safeguarding officer and Assistant Headteacher Behaviour and Ethos	Ms Kerry Connor	kerry.connor@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk 0203 908 3158
Safeguarding officer and Deputy Headteacher Sixth Form	Mr Didier Adam	didier.adam@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk 0203 908 3140
Safeguarding officer and Assistant Headteacher Sixth form	Mr Matthew Collins	matthew.collins@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk 0203 908 3126
Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCO) and Safeguarding officer A staff member who provides advice, liaison & support for school staff and other agencies working with pupils with special education needs and their parents or carers.	Mrs Victoria Jefferies	victoria.jefferies@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk 020 3908 3132
Safeguarding Officer and Social and Emotional Health Lead	Ms Katarina Zatkovicova	katarina.zatkovicova@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk
Mental Health Lead	Mrs Rachael Gilmore	rachael.gilmore@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk 0203 908 3168 Mon-Thurs
DSL Prevent Lead	Mrs Rachael Gilmore	rachael.gilmore@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk 0203 908 3168 Mon-Thurs
Chair of Governors Takes the lead in dealing with allegations of abuse made against the Head Teacher /Senior Manager (and other members of staff when the Head Teacher is not available), in liaison with the Local Authority; and on safe	Ms Beau Fadahunsi	afadahunsi.gov@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk

Organisation / Role	Name	Contact details
recruitment practices with the Head Teacher /Senior Manager.		
Vice Chair of Governors	Dr. Ardle MacMahon	amacmahon.gov@uhsw.com
Link Safeguarding Governor Ensures there are appropriate safeguarding children policies and procedures in place, monitors whether they are followed and, together with the rest of the governing body, remedies deficiencies and weaknesses that are identified.	Ms. Iasone Lucas	ilucas.gov@uhsw.com
Data Protection Lead	Mr Didier Adam	didier.adam@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk 0203 908 3140

Non School Contacts:

Organisation / Role	Name	Contact details
Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP)		Email: Home - Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership
Merton Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Merton Part-time LADO	John Shelley Christine Dyson	Tel: 0208 545 3187 Email Lado Referral: lado@merton.gov.uk or securely: lado@merton.gov.uk.cjsm.net .
Merton Local Authority Children and Families Hub (previously MASH)	Children and Families Hub	Tel: Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm 020 8545 4226 / 4227 Email: candfhub@merton.gov.uk OUT OF HOURS: Children's Emergency Duty Team 020 8770 5000 Requests for a Service
Merton Local Authority		Tel: 020 8274 5300 Email: FSD@merton.gov.uk

Organisation / Role	Name	Contact details
Early Years, Family Wellbeing and Early Help Service		
Merton Education Welfare Service		Tel 020 8545 4021 Email: education.welfare@merton.gov.uk
Merton Local Authority Lead for Previously / Looked After Children		Head of Service Rosemary Frimpong
Merton Local Authority Lead for Young Carers		Carers First
Merton Local Authority Lead for Homelessness (16+)		Team Manager, Family Assessment and Intervention Service Laura Darlington Wendy Tomlinson Service Manager
Merton Local Authority Hate Crime and Prevent Lead		safer.merton@merton.gov.uk
Prevent Prevent referrals Parent guidance Advice line for members of the public Channel helpline		Making a Referral to Prevent DFE National Prevent Referral Form Parents' Booklet (educateagainsthate.com) ACT Early Prevent radicalisation 0800 011 3764 020 7340 7264
NSPCC Helpline	N/A	Call: 0808 800 5000 Email help@NSPCC.org.uk .
The Lucy Faithful Foundation: Shore Space :		Stop It Now helpline: Tel: 0808 1000 900 Email: contactus.stopitnow.org.uk
Police	N/A	Emergency 999. Non-emergency 101
Channel helpline		020 7340 7264

Safeguarding Team



3. Introduction

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Education Act 2002, [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026](#) and in line with government publications: 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2026, 'What to do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused' 2015.

The policy also reflects, both statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2026 (KCSIE), and Merton Children's Safeguarding Partnership (MCSP) Procedures.

The Governing Body takes seriously its responsibility under section 175/157 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our school to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm.

This policy applies to all of our staff including permanent, temporary and supply, volunteers, governors and contractors.

3.1 Guidance and documents referred to in this policy

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance.

The policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2026\)](#), [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2026\)](#) and [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026](#) to comply with current guidance and the arrangements.

Keeping children safe in education 2026 which sets out the legal duties that all schools and colleges in England must follow to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under the age of 18.

Section 175 of the [Education Act 2002](#), places a duty on schools and Local Authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

Under Section 10 of the Children Act 2004, all maintained schools, further education colleges and independent schools, including free schools and academies, are required to co-operate with the local authority to improve the wellbeing of children in the local authority area.

Under Section 14B of the Children Act 2004, the Local Safeguarding Children Board can require a school or further education institution to supply information in order to perform its functions. This must be complied with. All procedures can be found on the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

[The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009¹](#), which sets out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least 1 person conducting an interview to be trained in safer recruitment techniques.

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 at the school.

- [Children Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- [Working together to safeguard children 2026](#) outlines what organisations and agencies must and should do to help, protect and promote the welfare of all children and young people under the age of 18 in England
- The Lead Safeguarding Partners for the [Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) are Merton Safeguarding Adults Board, South West London Integrated Care Board and the Metropolitan Police. They have a joint and equal duty to ensure multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are in place at a local level, and organisations and agencies are clear about how they will work together to safeguard children and promote the welfare of children.
- [Serious Crime Act 2015](#), Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 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 regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM

¹ KCSIE para 266: Schools and colleges can use the DfE's Check a teacher's record to make prohibition, direction, restriction, and children's barred list checks. The service is free to use and is available via the DfE's web page. Users will require a DfE Sign-in account to log onto the service.

- [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
- [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”
- [Crime and Policing Act 2026](#) to recruit safely and tackle the epidemic of serious violence and violence against women and girls.
- [The Human Rights Act 1998](#), which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the [European Convention on Human Rights](#) (ECHR)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#), which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race). This means our governors and headteacher should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils regarding these characteristics.
- [The Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Working collaboratively as professionals is a key part of providing services to children and families. When professional disputes happen that cannot be resolved in a timely manner the [MSCP’s Multi-Agency Escalation Policy](#) should be followed.
- [DfE Information Sharing Advice For Practitioners 2024](#) produced by the DfE, outlines the importance of sharing information about children, young people, and their families in order to safeguard children. It provides clarity on when and how information can be shared legally and professionally to achieve improved outcomes. It also includes the “Seven Golden Rules for Sharing Information,”
- [Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026](#)
- ‘What to do if you are worried a child is being abused’ 2015
- [Teachers’ Standards guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\) \(updated 2021\)](#)
- [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance \(2025\)](#)
- [Searching, Screening and Confiscation \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Guidance from the UK Council for Internet Safety \(updated March 2024\)](#)
- [Mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK](#)
- [Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges - GOV.UK](#)

3.2 Related Policies

The Ursuline High School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding. This policy sets out how the School will deliver these responsibilities. This is an overarching policy and forms part of a suite of documents and policies which relate to the child protection and safeguarding responsibilities of the school.

The following policies fall under our safeguarding umbrella and have links with this policy:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying

- Positive Behaviour Support Policy
- Positive Mental Health Policy
- SEND policy
- Behaviour for learning
- Recruitment & Selection
- Whistle-blowing
- Attendance
- Computer misuse
- Education of Human Love Policy
- Social Media
- Data Protection (GDPR)
- Health and Safety including site security
- Equalities Diversity and Cohesion Policy
- Disability and Equalities Policy
- Students with medical conditions (incorporating Medical Room procedures)
- Educational visits
- Substance Misuse Policy
- Prohibited Items
- Online Safety Policy
- AI policy
- Digital Learning and Safety Policy
- Education in Human Love: Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Safer Recruitment Procedure Policy

4. Policy Principles & Values

Safeguarding arrangements at this school are underpinned by these key principles:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: all staff / anyone who has contact with a child or young person including governors and volunteers must play their full part in keeping children safe.
- We will aim to protect children using national, local and school child protection procedures.
- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All Staff / anyone who has contact with a child or young person including governors and volunteers should have a clear understanding regarding abuse, neglect and exploitation in all forms, including how to identify, respond and report. This also includes knowledge of the process for allegations against professionals. Staff, (including governors and volunteers) must feel confident that they can report all matters of safeguarding in the school where the information will be dealt with swiftly and securely, following the correct procedures with the safety and wellbeing of the children in mind at all times.
- We operate a child-centred approach: a clear understanding of the needs, wishes, views and voices of children.

- We will ensure the school medical records are forwarded as a matter of priority and within 5 days of a child attending a new setting.
- We will encourage the use of strategies to encourage children to share concerns as well as access to ELSA. Children know who they can talk to if they don't feel safe.
- Children have a right to feel safe and secure, they cannot learn effectively unless they do so.
- We acknowledge that working in partnership with other agencies protects children and reduces risk and so we will engage in partnership working to protect and safeguard children.
- Whilst the school will work openly with parents as far as possible, it reserves the right to contact Social Care or the police, without notifying parents if this is believed to be in the child's best interests.

4.1 Policy Aims

- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to safeguarding and child protection to pupils, parents and other partners.
- To raise the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching staff of their responsibilities to safeguard children through identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To enable the school to effectively contribute to Early Help, Family Help referrals and assessments of need and support for those children.
- To provide robust school systems and procedures that are followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, in particular Early Help providers, the Police, Health and Social Care.
- To ensure that all staff working within our school who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability, including verification of their identity, qualifications, and a satisfactory DBS check (according to KCSIE guidance), and a Single Central Record is kept for audit.

5. Our ethos

The Ursuline High School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its pupils. The school will always take a considered and sensitive approach in order that we can support all our students and recognise that each students' welfare is of paramount importance. Our school will establish and maintain an ethos where:

- a) safeguarding is threaded through everything we do in our school ('the golden thread') including the curriculum;

- b) pupils feel secure, are encouraged to talk, are listened to and are safe. Children at our school will be able to talk freely to any member of staff at our school if they are worried or concerned about something, be it with regard to adults or their peers; We will include regular consultation with children e.g. through safety questionnaires and participation in anti-bullying activities;
- c) we recognise that staff at our school play a particularly important role as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children to prevent concerns from escalating. All staff are encouraged to maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here**' where safeguarding is concerned;
- d) through robust training and induction, all staff and regular visitors will know how to recognise indicators of concern, how to respond to a disclosure from a child and how to record and report this information;
- e) every pupil will know what the adult will have to do with any information the child/young person has disclosed; and
- f) at all times we will work in partnership and endeavour to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers and colleagues from other agencies in line with '*Working Together to Safeguard Children*' (2023).

We recognise that some children may be especially vulnerable to abuse and may be at greater risk of harm, both online and offline, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. Additional barriers can exist, for example, when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). We recognise that children who are abused or neglected may find it difficult to develop a sense of worth and to view the world in a positive way. Whilst at school their behaviour may be challenging and we recognise that some children who have experienced abuse may harm others.

We will reassure all children who are victims of abuse that they will be taken seriously and will be supported. They should never be made to feel ashamed or that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment.

We will ensure that following any safeguarding concern the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and ensuring that all children are provided with the same protection regardless of any additional needs, barriers or protected characteristics they may have. As part of our commitment to safeguarding, we will '*treat children as children*'. As stated in the Equality Act 2010, we recognise the protected characteristics that may be applicable to our pupils:

- › Age
- › Disability
- › Gender reassignment
- › Marriage and civil partnership
- › Pregnancy and maternity
- › Race
- › Religion or belief
- › Sex
- › Sexual orientation.

Adultification: Adultification is a concept describing when children are not afforded notions of innocence and vulnerability and are put at risk by those who do so. Adultification is always founded within discrimination and bias.

Some child may be more vulnerable and we will give special consideration to those who:

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after
- Are currently or previously have been allocated a social worker

6. Prevention / Protection

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our children by providing children with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

With reference to our values and ethos, The Ursuline High School will:

- a) include regular consultation with children e.g. through safety questionnaires and participation in anti-bullying activities;
- b) ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty;
- c) include the teaching of safeguarding across the curriculum, including PSHE opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help. In particular this will include online safety, anti-bullying work, transition support; prevention of radicalisation etc;
- d) ensure all staff members are aware of school guidance for their use of mobile technology and have discussed safeguarding issues around the use of mobile technologies and their associated risks.

7. Safe School, Safe Staff

We will ensure that:

The school operates a safer recruitment procedure that includes statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children. All staff have a responsibility to inform the school where their relationships and associations, both within and outside of the workplace (including online), may have implications for the safeguarding of children in the school. A DBS check is carried out for all new employees, staff have a responsibility to inform the Headteacher if their circumstances change whilst employed at the school. This statement is in the Staff Behaviour Policy (code of conduct) which all staff have signed and agreed to adhere to. We also require a full DBS from volunteer staff to ensure full safety and protection of our students.

We will not accept a Curriculum Vitae (CV) unless alongside a full application form from anyone applying to work at this school. As part of our background checks we will conduct an online search for shortlisted candidates, and we will inform all shortlisted candidates about this.

All staff receive information about the school's safeguarding arrangements, the school's safeguarding statement, Staff Behaviour Policy (code of conduct), Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, the role and names of the Safeguarding Lead and their deputy(s), and [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026](#) (Part 1). Designated Part 2 of this guidance relates to "The Management of Safeguarding" and will be issued to all Governors.

All staff receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction in line with advice from Merton Children's Safeguarding Partnership which is regularly updated and receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, but at least annually. In addition, we deliver fortnightly TED talks on hot topic safeguarding update sessions for all staff.

All members of staff are trained in and receive regular updates in online safety and reporting concerns.

All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to child protection procedures through the publication of the Child Protection Policy on the school's website and hard copies being available at the school office and reference to it in the school's handbook.

We provide a coordinated offer of Early Help when additional needs of children are identified and contribute to Early Help arrangements and inter-agency working and plans.

We will seek to ensure the suitability of adults working with children on school sites at any time and this includes any persons or organisations using our buildings or outside spaces in a letting or hiring agreement. Community users organising activities for children are aware of the school's Child Protection Policy, guidelines and procedures.

The name of the designated members of staff for child protection, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputy(s), are clearly advertised in the school with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected harm and abuse.

8.Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 All School Staff:

Safeguarding is **everyone's** responsibility at Ursuline High School . This policy applies to all of our staff including permanent, temporary and supply, volunteers, governors and contractors. It also applies to our safeguarding arrangements for extended school and off-site activities.

All staff will read and understand part 1 in full the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026](#), and review this guidance at least annually.

Ursuline High School plays a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of a whole-school approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and sexual violence/harassment. This will be underpinned by our school's safeguarding arrangements and systems which is explained to staff as part of their induction and annual update training.

All staff have a key role to play in identifying concerns early and in providing help for children. To achieve this, they will:

- Provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or have concerns.
- Plan opportunities within the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to assess and manage risk appropriately and keep themselves safe.
- Know the signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child sexual exploitation (CSE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM and radicalisation
- Know how to respond to a pupil who discloses harm, abuse or neglect following training of 'Working together to Safeguard Children', and 'What to do if you are worried a child is being Abused' (2015).
- Be aware that mental health issues can be both a cause and symptom of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Report their concerns to the DSL immediately and on that day if they are worried a child is being abused and record their concerns on an CPOMS. If the DSL is not contactable immediately, a Deputy DSL should be informed.
- Be prepared to refer directly to social care and the police if appropriate, if there is a risk of significant harm and the DSL or their Deputy is not available.
- Follow the allegations procedures and inform the Headteacher if the disclosure is an allegation against a member of staff, supply staff or volunteer or is a low level concern.
- Follow the staff code of conduct (see appendix i)
- Provide support for children subject to Early Help, Child in Need or Child Protection that is in keeping with their plan.
- Treat information with confidentiality but never promising to "keep a secret".
- Have an understanding of Early Help and be able to identify and support children who may benefit. (See appendix of j)
- Liaise with other agencies that support pupils and provide early help.

- Know who the DSL and Deputy DSL are and know how to contact them.
- Have an awareness of the role of the DSL part 1 and annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, the schools Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy, Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct), School Behaviour Policy, and procedures relating to the safeguarding response for children who go missing from education.
- All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and that the Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Regulations are not a barrier to sharing information where a failure to do so would place a child at risk of harm. There is a lawful basis for child protection concerns to be shared with agencies who have a statutory duty for child protection. See below for guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-protection-toolkit-for-schools>

- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing. However, staff are aware that matters relating to child protection and safeguarding are personal to children and families, in this respect they are confidential and the Headteacher or DSLs will only disclose information about a child to other members of staff on a need to know basis.
- Staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) and Children's Social Care.
- All staff will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Social Care with their parents /carers knowledge unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation.
- All staff should be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (Child In Need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.
- Be mindful that the Teacher Standards states that teachers should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.
- Assist the Governing Body and Headteacher in fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities set out in legislation and statutory guidance.

8.2 The Headteacher

In addition to the role and responsibilities of all staff the Headteacher will ensure that:

- The school fully contributes to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 guidance.
- Ensure that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction.
- The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff including reading and understanding this policy, as part of their induction.
- This policy is available to parents/carers, professionals and the community to ensure there is transparency and clear expectations about the school's duty to safeguarding and promote the welfare of children and the arrangements for responding to children presenting with needs that may require family help/early help or support to protect them.
- All staff are aware of the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), including the identity of the DSL and any deputies.
- Sufficient time, training, support, funding, resources, including cover arrangements where necessary, is allocated to the DSL to carry out their role effectively, including the provision of advice and support to school staff on child welfare and child protection matters, to take part in strategy discussions/meetings and other inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so; and to contribute to the assessment of children.
- Provide opportunities for a co-ordinated offer of Early Help when additional needs of children are identified.
- Ensure Deputy DSLs are trained to the same standard as the DSL and the role is explicit in their job description.
- With the Designated Safeguarding Lead ensure adequate and appropriate cover arrangements are in place for any out of hours/out of term activities.
- Where there is a safeguarding concern that the child's wishes, and feelings are considered when determining what action to take and what services to provide.
- Child-centred systems and processes are in place for children to express their views and give feedback.
- All staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle-blowing procedures.
- That pupils are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online.

- Act as 'case manager' and ensure that allegations or concerns against staff, supply staff or volunteers are dealt with in accordance with guidance from Department for Education (DfE) and Merton Children's Safeguarding Partnership.
- Manage cases where there are low-level concerns regarding the conduct of staff, or oversee delegation to the DSL.
- Ensure that statutory requirements are met to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service and additionally in the case of teaching staff the Teacher Regulation Agency where they think an individual has engaged in conduct that harmed (or is likely to harm) a child; or if the person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child.

8.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead:

The DSL is a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The DSL at Ursuline High School is Rachael Gilmore. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection, online safety and wider safeguarding.

When the DSL is absent, the Deputy DSL Sarah McCourt or Deputy Headteacher, Michelle Alexander will act as cover. The Deputy DSLs are trained to the same level as the DSL.

If the DSL and deputies are not available, concerns should be reported to any other member of the senior leadership team (SLT).

In addition to the role and responsibilities of all staff the DSL will:

- Take the lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems which are in place). Refer to DfE [Guidance Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges](#)
- Hold the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) in the school and this responsibility is not able to be delegated.
- Liaise with the Local Authority, the three safeguarding partners and work in partnership with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- Understand and support the school delivery with regards to the requirements of the Prevent Duty and provide advice and guidance to staff on protecting children from radicalisation.
- Report concerns that a child may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, following the Prevent Referral Process. If the matter is urgent, the Police must be contacted. The Department of Education has also set up a dedicated telephone helpline for staff and governors to raise concerns around Prevent (020 7340 7264).

- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, and in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them.
- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.
- Liaise with the “case manager” and Local Authority Designated Officer for child protection concerns in cases which concern a member of staff or a volunteer; and refer cases where a person is dismissed or left service due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service and Teaching Regulation Agency, as required.
- Be available during term time (during school hours) for staff in school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Appropriate and adequate cover arrangements will be arranged by the DSL and the school leadership for any out of hours/term activities.
- Act as a source of support and expertise in carrying out safeguarding duties for the whole school community.
- Follow DfE and KCSIE guidance ‘Child on Child Abuse’ and the school’s Child protection and safeguarding Policy when a concern is raised that there is an allegation of a pupil abusing another pupil within the school.
- Share information about incidences of sexual violence and sexual harassment with statutory colleagues such as Police and Merton Children and Families Hub in order to prepare and implement the school’s policies.
- Be confident about what local specialist support is available to support all children involved (including victims and alleged perpetrators) in sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Encourage and promote a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, amongst all staff.
- Access training and support to ensure they have the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. DSL training must be updated at least every two years and their knowledge and skills refreshed at regular intervals but at least annually.
- Have a secure working knowledge of Merton Children’s Safeguarding Partnership procedures and understand the assessment process for providing Family/Early Help and statutory intervention, including the local authority Family Wellbeing Model and referral arrangements.
- Have a clear understanding of access and referral to the local Family/Early Help offer and will support and advise members of staff where intervention is appropriate.
- Liaise with school staff (especially pastoral support, behaviour leads, school health colleagues and the SENDCo) on matters of safety and safeguarding .

- Be alert to the specific needs of a Child In Need, those with SEND and Young Carers.
- Understand the risks associated with online activity and be confident that they have the up to date knowledge and capability to keep children safe whilst they are online at school; in particular understand the additional risks that children with SEND face online and the associated and appropriate support they require.
- Oversee mental health concerns that constitute safeguarding issues, ensuring timely referrals and coordination with services such as CAMHS, mental health support team's (MHST), counselling, or other pathways through Health services and social care services.
- Keep detailed, accurate records (either written or using appropriate secure online software), that includes all concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral and the rationale for decisions made and action taken.
- Ensure there is oversight and analysis of safeguarding records (e.g. through electronic records system) to identify patterns and inform strategy.
- Ensure that when a pupil transfers school, their Child Protection file is passed to the new school as soon as possible, and within statutory timescales (separately from the main pupil file and ensuring secure transit) and that confirmation of receipt is received.
- Ensure that where a pupil transfers school and is on a Child Protection Plan or is a Looked After Child, their information is passed to the new school immediately, using the Child protection file, CPOMs if available at the transition school, and that the child's social worker is informed. In addition, consideration should be given to a multi-agency schools transition meeting if the case is complex or on-going.
- Ensure that a copy of the Child Protection file is retained until such a time that the new school acknowledges receipt of the original file. The copy should then be securely destroyed.
- Ensure that the school will be included in statutory discussions in cases of child on child abuse.
- Work with the DSL team, local authority and social workers to make informed decisions in the best interests of the child, for instance the child's safety, educational outcomes and welfare. This should be a matter of routine. Furthermore, the social worker and the DSL need to work together to respond to unauthorised absences etc., and promote welfare.
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and SLT to ensure that relevant members of staff, know who these children are, understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort; supporting teaching staff to identify the challenges that children in this group might face and the additional academic support and adjustments that they could make to best support these children.

- Report to the headteacher any significant issues for example use of the MCSP multi-agency escalation procedures enquiries under section 47 of the Children's Act 1989 and police investigations.
- Keep the Headteacher informed of any issues, the conversations with children and their families, universal services and referrals to external agencies and statutory services.
- Be aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult. Guidance – [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Code C revised 2019](#) - Code of Practice for the detention, treatment and questioning of persons by Police Officers.
- Ensure that the case holding Social Worker is informed of any child currently with a child protection plan who is absent without explanation.
- Ensure that all staff, within 3 months of employment at Ursuline High school and updated once a year thereafter, sign to say they have read, understood and agree to work within the school's Child Protection Policy, Staff Behaviour Policy (code of conduct), School Behaviour Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE) Part 1 and ensure that the policies are used effectively.
- Organise child protection and safeguarding induction, regularly updated training, following the training guidance published by the London Borough of Merton Safeguarding in Schools Officer, and a minimum of annual updates (including online safety) for all school staff, keep a record of attendance and address any absences.
- Ensure that in collaboration with the school leadership and governors, the Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually, and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly.
- Ensure that the Child Protection Policy is available publicly and that parents are aware that referrals about suspected harm and abuse will be made and the role of the school in this.
- Will ensure that the name of the designated members of staff for Child Protection, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies, are clearly advertised in the school, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.
- Meet all other responsibilities as set out for DSLs in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

8.4 The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s):

In addition to the role and responsibilities of all staff each Deputy DSL will:

- Be trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the role is explicit in their job description.
- Provide support and capacity to the DSL in carrying out delegated activities of the DSL.
- In the absence of the DSL, carries out the activities necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of children. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

8.5 The Safeguarding Team

The Safeguarding team meet weekly to review students who are on the CP/CIN/LAC/Mental health concerns or at risk. Additionally there is a strategic team that look at the strategy for safeguarding on a weekly basis and discuss the role of the pastoral support and review and evaluate the impact we are having as a team and the involvement of multiagency work.

8.6 The Governing Body

The Governing Body will approve this policy at each review; ensure it complies with the law and hold the Headteacher account for its implementation.

All members of The Governing Body understand and fulfil their responsibilities to ensure that:

- All governors receive appropriate safeguarding training, including at induction. This training should equip governors with the knowledge and skills to understand their safeguarding responsibilities and contribute to a safe school environment as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- They facilitate a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of, and underpin, all relevant aspects of process and policy development for the setting.
- All governors/trustees: read [Keeping Children Safe in Education in its entirety](#), and review compliance of this task at least annually.
- Sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to say that they have reviewed the above guidance.
- The school has effective safeguarding policies and procedures including a Child Protection Policy, a Staff Behaviour Policy or Code of Conduct, a Behaviour Policy and a safeguarding response to children who go missing from education. Ensure policies are consistent with Merton Children's Safeguarding Partnership and statutory requirements, are reviewed annually and that the Child Protection Policy is available on the school website.

- Evaluate and approve recommendations/action plans identified through quality assurance activity that the Headteacher/DSL undertakes to review safeguarding practice through audits and annual/termly governing reports to ensure that they have regular oversight and hold the Headteacher accountable for the practice improvement.
- Where there is a safeguarding concern, children's wishes, and feelings should be taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be well promoted, understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report abuse, knowing that their concerns will be treated seriously.
- That the school operates a safer recruitment procedure that includes statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children and by ensuring that there is at least one person on every recruitment panel who has completed safer recruitment training as stated in, the contents of the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) and in line with [Safer Recruitment Consortium](#). (see appendix L)
- That at least one member of the governing body has completed safer recruitment training to be repeated every five years.
- Staff have been trained appropriately and this is updated in line with guidance and all staff have read Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) part 1 and that mechanisms are in place to assist staff in understanding and discharging their roles and responsibilities as set out in the guidance.
- The governing body will ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety training providing an understanding of the expectations and applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.
- The governing body should consider the number and age range of children, those who are potentially at greater risk of harm and how often they access the IT system.
- All Governors should receive appropriate safeguarding training at induction and then at regular intervals. Training should provide them with the knowledge to ensure their school's safeguarding policies and procedures are effective.
- That all staff including temporary staff and volunteers are provided with the school's Child Protection Policy and Staff Behaviour Policy.
- That the school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff (including trainee teachers, supply staff and the Headteacher), contractors, volunteers and that a referral is made to the DBS if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have had they not resigned.
- That a Designated Governor for Safeguarding is identified.
- That a member of the Senior Leadership Team has been appointed by the Governing Body as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection and that the role is explicit in the role holder's job description.

- That on appointment, the DSL and deputies undertake DSL New to Role training and then 'Update' training every two years as well as attending DSL network events and meetings.
- There are effective procedures for dealing with allegations of peer on peer abuse.
- Children are taught about safeguarding (including online safety) as part of a broad and balanced curriculum covering relevant issues through relationships and sex education (RSE). We recognise that there cannot be a "one size fits all" style and there needs to be a personalised and contextualised approach for more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and those with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- That the school will comply with regular data returns requested by the Local Authority, regarding all pupils, of statutory school age, attending alternative provision and/or on a reduced or modified timetable.
- Appropriate online filtering and monitoring systems are in place. Governors will ensure that the Senior Leadership Team and relevant staff are aware of the systems, manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified. This includes reviewing the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards and discussing with IT staff and service providers what needs to be done to support the school in meeting these standards. [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges](#)
- Enhanced DBS checks are in place for all Governors.
- Where another body is providing services or activities on the school site (regardless of whether or not the children who attend these services/activities are children on the school roll):
 - seek assurance that the other body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies/procedures in place and inspect them if needed.
 - make sure there are arrangements for the body to liaise with the school about safeguarding arrangements, where appropriate.
 - make sure that safeguarding requirements are a condition of using the school premises, and that any agreement to use the premises would be terminated if the other body fails to comply.
- The Chair of Governors will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation is made against the Headteacher where appropriate
- The school will comply with The Human Rights Act 1998 setting out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the United Kingdom is entitled to. It is unlawful for schools to act in a way that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights, specifically:
 1. Article 3: the right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment (an absolute right)

2. Article 8: the right to respect for private and family life (a qualified right) includes a duty to protect individuals' physical and psychological integrity
 3. Article 14: requires that all of the rights and freedoms set out in the Act must be protected and applied without discrimination,
 4. Article 2: protects the right to education.
- The school will not contravene the Equality Act 2010 by discriminating against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).

8.7 Site Security

Ursuline High School aims to provide a secure school site but recognises that the site is only as secure as the people who use it. Therefore, all people on the site must adhere to the rules, which govern it. It is recognised that laxity can cause potential problems in safeguarding. Therefore, Ursuline High School ensures that:

- Gates are locked at 08.50 and will be unlocked at 15.20 for ten minutes, and then locked again.
- Duty staff ensure that no unauthorised persons enter the school site.
- Doors are kept closed/locked to prevent intrusion.
- Visitors only enter through the main entrance. They must sign in at reception and be reminded to wear their visitor badge while on site.
- Students are only allowed home with adults/carers with parental responsibility or when confirmed permission has been received in advance.
- Should a young person leave the school premises without permission then staff must inform the DSL and the attendance officer **immediately**. Parents will be informed and police will then be informed if appropriate.
- There are robust procedures for lockdown and fire evacuation.

8.8 Screening

The Headteacher and authorised Senior Leaders have the statutory power to search a student of their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that they may have prohibited items. The Headteacher and authorised staff may also use reasonable force to carry out a search when required. Full details of prohibited items and procedures can be found in the Prohibited Items policy.

8.7 Multi-agency Working

School has a pivotal role to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The Governing Body, SLT and DSLs need to ensure that the school contributes to the multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. Agencies will work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including identifying and responding to their needs.

We will ensure that we will fully contribute to all social care assessments concerning students/ pupils at this school.

8.8 Working with Families

Our principles include, but are not limited to:

Promoting effective partnership working with parents and carers e.g. build strong, positive, trusting, and co-operative relationships by:

- approaching families and their wider family networks and communities with empathy, respect, compassion, and creativity
- ensuring we work sensitively with parents, carers, and children, to identify and understand the impact of adversity and trauma in their lives.
- ensuring we understand the family's background and potential barriers these create in seeking and accessing help and support

Communicating effectively verbally and non-verbally by:

- communicating with respect, being clear, curious and inclusive; adapting to parent's and carer's needs

Empowering our parents and carers to participate in decision-making to help, support and protect children by:

- creating a safe culture which is an open and accepting forum free from discriminatory or prejudicial judgements
- ensuring the open culture is one which still provides reflection and challenge where the information has the potential to be a risk or influencing factor which may impact on a child's safety and wellbeing
- being transparent about our concerns and why we may need to request support from an outside agency; and the potential actions should our concerns increase for the children
- helping parents and carers to understand what the issues are and how these impact on the child, what decisions could be made, what changes need to be made, why and how, timescales and possible outcomes
- providing information about different types of support, what it involves and expects from parents and carers so they can make an informed choice and decision about which support pathways will be more helpful and effective for them.

9. Confidentiality and Sharing Information

Ursuline's Data Protection policy is available as a separate document and outlines how personal data may be shared.

All matters relating to child protection will be treated as confidential and only shared as per the [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-sharing-advice-for-safeguarding-practitioners) (May 2024)

Information will be shared with staff within the school who 'need to know'.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. The [Data Protection Act \(DPA\) 2018](#) does not prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Ursuline High School recognises that timely information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding. Whilst we promote collaboration and partnership with our families, fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children when required. There is a lawful basis for child protection concerns to be shared with agencies who have a statutory duty for child protection.

If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a young person at risk.

The government's [information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#) includes rules for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information.

All staff must also be aware of the provisions in the school's current Data Protection and Subject Access Request Policy.

10. Child Protection Procedures

The following procedures apply to all staff working in the school and will be covered by training to enable staff to understand their role and responsibility.

The aim of our procedures is to provide a robust framework which enables staff to take appropriate action when they are concerned that a child is being harmed or abused or is at risk of harm or abuse.

The prime concern at all stages must be the interests and safety of the child. Where there is a conflict of interest between the child and an adult, the interests of the child must be paramount.

All staff are aware that very young children and those with disabilities, Special Educational Needs and with language delay may be more likely to communicate concerns with behaviours rather than words. Additionally, staff will question the cause of knocks and bumps in children who have limited mobility.

If a young person is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, or is in immediate danger, the DSL must be informed in person immediately, or the deputy DSL if the DSL is not available. A referral will be made by a member of the safeguarding team to children's social care and/or the police **immediately**. Anyone can make a referral.

If a member of staff suspects abuse, spots signs or indicators of abuse, or they have a disclosure of abuse made to them they must:

1. Report it to the DSL immediately.
2. Make an initial record of the information related to the concern using CPOMs
3. The DSL will consider if there is a requirement for immediate medical intervention, however urgent medical attention should not be delayed if the DSL is not immediately available.
4. Make an accurate record (which may be used in any subsequent court proceedings) as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the occurrence, of all that has happened, including details of:
 - Dates and times of their observations
 - Dates and times of any discussions in which they were involved.
 - Any injuries identified on a body map
 - Explanations given by the child / adult
 - Rationale for decision making and action taken
 - Any actual words or phrases used by the child
5. Any paper records must be signed and dated by the author. The record needs to be completed by the adult who received the information.
6. In the absence of the DSL or the deputies, staff must be prepared to refer directly to Children and Families Hub (formally MASH), and the police if appropriate, if there is the potential for immediate significant harm.

10.1 Report of Concerns

Following a report of concerns the DSL must:

1. Decide whether or not there are sufficient grounds for suspecting significant harm, in which case a referral must be made to the Children and Families Hub (formally MASH) and the police if it is appropriate.
2. Try to discuss any concerns about a child's welfare with the family and where possible to seek their agreement before making a referral to the Children and Families Hub. However, this should only be done when it will not place the child at increased risk or could impact a police investigation. The child's views should also be taken into account.
3. Contact the Children and Families Hub if there are grounds to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm or abuse. If a child is in immediate danger and urgent protective action is required, the Police (dial 999) must be called. The DSL must also notify social care of the occurrence and what action has been taken
4. Contact the Children and Families Hub if the DSL feels unsure about whether a referral is necessary to discuss concerns.
5. If there is not a risk of significant harm, the DSL will either actively monitor the situation or consider Family/Early Help.
6. Arrange to take the child to the Accident and Emergency Unit of the local hospital when a pupil is in need of urgent medical attention, and if there is suspicion of abuse the DSL or their Deputy must inform social care. The DSL should seek advice about what action the Children and Families Hub will take and about informing the parents, remembering that parents should normally be informed that a child requires urgent hospital attention.

11.Dealing with disclosures

All staff

A member of staff who is approached by a child should listen positively and try to reassure them. They cannot promise complete confidentiality and should explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe. The degree of confidentiality should always be governed by the need to protect the child.

Additional consideration needs to be given to children with communication difficulties and for those whose preferred language is not English. It is important to communicate with them in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference.

We are aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened.

This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This will not prevent us from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if we have concerns about a child. It is also important that we determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.

All staff must know who the DSL is and who to approach if the DSL is unavailable. All staff have the right to make a referral to the Children and Families Hub or Police directly and must do this if, for whatever reason, there are difficulties following the agreed protocol, for example, they are the only adult on the school premises at the time and have concerns about sending a child home.

If a child chooses to disclose, you SHOULD:

1. Receive

- Keep calm
- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- Take what is being said to you seriously

2. Respond

- Reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing in talking to you
- Be honest and do not make promises you cannot keep e.g. “It will be alright now”
- Do not promise confidentiality; you have a duty to refer
- Reassure and alleviate guilt if the pupil refers to it e.g. “you’re not to blame”
- Reassure the child that information will only be shared with those who need to know

3. React

- React to the pupil only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer the matter, but do not interrogate for full details
- Do not ask leading questions; “Did he/she....?” Such questions can invalidate evidence.
- Do ask open “TED” questions; Tell, explain, describe
- Do not ask the pupil to repeat it all for another member of staff
- Explain what you must do next and who you must talk to

4. Record

- Make some brief notes at the time on any paper which comes to hand and write them up as soon as possible
- Do not destroy your original notes

- Record the date, time, place, any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child. Always ensure that as far as possible you have recorded the actual words used by the child.
- Record statements and observable things rather than your interpretations or assumptions. Sign and date.

5. Report

- Report the disclosure in person to the DSL or a member of the safeguarding team
- Record the disclosure on CPOMS

6. Support

- Seek support for yourself if needed.

You should NEVER:

- take photographs of injuries
- examine marks/ injuries solely to assess whether they may have been caused by abuse (there may be a need to give appropriate first aid)
- investigate or probe, aiming to prove or disprove possible abuse – never ask leading questions
- make promises to children about confidentiality or keeping ‘secrets’
- assume that someone else will take the necessary action
- jump to conclusions or react with shock, anger or horror
- speculate or accuse anybody
- confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved
- offer opinions about what is being said or about people allegedly involved
- forget to record what you have been told
- delay or fail to pass the information on to the correct person
- ask a child to sign a written copy of the disclosure or a ‘statement’.

For children with communication difficulties or who use alternative/augmented communication systems, staff may need to take extra care to ensure that signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation are identified and interpreted correctly, but concerns should be reported in exactly the same manner as for other children.

Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This may include but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), gender-based violence, teenage relationship abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence and assaults, harmful sexual behaviours and sexting. Staff should recognise that young people can abuse their peers and family members.

11. 1 What happens next?

It is important that concerns are followed up and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they are. The member of staff should be informed by the DSL what has happened following a report being made. Ensure the incident is recorded on CPOMS and staff alerted.

If they have concerns that the disclosure has not been acted upon appropriately, they must inform the Headteacher or Safeguarding Governor of the school and/or may contact the Children and Families Hub (formally MASH).

Receiving a disclosure can be upsetting for the member of staff and schools should have a procedure for supporting them after the disclosure. This might include reassurance that they have followed procedure correctly and that their swift actions will enable the allegations to be handled appropriately.

In some cases, additional counselling might be needed and staff should be encouraged to recognise that disclosures can have an impact on their own emotions.

11.2 Record Keeping and Monitoring

- All safeguarding and child protection records are held on the electronic recording system CPOMS and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.
- The Ursuline High School staff will make timely and accurate recording of safeguarding concerns raised about a child in the school. Our staff will be supported to understand the importance of timely, comprehensive and accurate recording in line with messages from serious case reviews on issues of recording and sharing information.
- We will follow the Local Authority's current guidance on the Record Keeping Guidance of Child Protection Records for schools (including guidance on transfer and storage - Safeguarding records relating to an individual child will be retained for the student until they reach their 26th birthday or 31st birthday if there is an EHCP in place (Information Records Management Society 2022)).
- Safeguarding records which contain information about allegations of sexual abuse were being retained for the [Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse \(IICSA\)](#). The recommendations from the inquiry have stated: *Recommendation 17: Access to records The UK government should direct the Information Commissioner's Office to introduce a code of practice on keeping and accessing records which relate to child sexual abuse. The code should require records about child sexual abuse and allegations of child sexual abuse to be kept for 75 years, with appropriate review periods.*
The school will follow the Recommendation 17.
- We will therefore not destroy any child protection/welfare records including records which hold information on allegations against staff and any other person working in the school or connected to the school.

- A recording of each and every episode/incident/concern/activity regarding that child, including telephone calls to other professionals, needs to be recorded on a chronology kept within the confidential file for that child on CPOMS. This will include any contact from other agencies who may wish to discuss concerns relating to a child. Actions will be agreed and roles and responsibility of each agency will be clarified and outcomes recorded. The chronology will be brief and log activity; the full recording will be on the record of concern. Recordings of safeguarding concerns will be kept on CPOMS. Written records of concern will be made on CPOMS even where there is no immediate need to refer to Children's Social Care. The concern file will be securely stored away from the main pupil file. The main pupil file will be marked with a **red sticker** in the top right-hand corner to denote a separate file exists. A 'concern' file will be started in the event of a child welfare concern being submitted on CPOMS to the DSL.
- Records will be kept up to date and reviewed regularly by the Safeguarding Team to evidence and support actions taken by staff in discharging the school's safeguarding arrangements. Original notes will be retained as they may be important in any criminal proceedings arising from current or historical allegations of abuse or neglect.
- Staff members recording concerns about a child may not keep copies of electronic recordings made. All recordings must be sent via CPOMS to the DSL who will store them securely in the child's 'concern' file.
- The concern file can be active or non-active in terms of monitoring i.e. a child is no longer LAC, subject to a child protection plan and this level of activity can be recorded on CPOMS as a start and end date. If future concerns then arise it can be re-activated and indicated as such on CPOMS and on the chronology as new information arises.
- If the child moves to another school, the concern file will be securely sent or taken, as part of the admission/transition arrangements, to the DSL at the new establishment/school. There will be a timely liaison between each school DSL for Safeguarding to ensure a smooth and safe transition for the child.
- We will follow the Local Authority's current guidance and system for the secure transfer of school files between primary and secondary school. This ensures that child protection files are transferred to the new school as soon as possible, using a secure method and that confirmation of receipt is obtained.
- Child protection files for transferring pupils will be securely passed to the receiving school within 5 working days of the transfer (in-year) or within the first 5 days of a new term. The DSL will consider which information in a child protection file should be shared with relevant staff and when it's appropriate to do so. Files will be transferred separately from the main pupil file, and confirmation of receipt will be obtained and stored. The DSL is responsible for ensuring timely and secure transfer to support continuity of care and safeguarding oversight. In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the young person. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

- When receiving files, the school ensures that key staff such as the DSL and SENCO are aware as required. Where a child transfers to another education setting at any other time, the same principles are followed.
- Where information indicates a risk to others, (for example where a pupil has previously carried, threatened with or used a knife or weapon), the school, DSL and SLT will be responsible for assessing the risk and putting in place a support plan for when the child arrives.

12. Pastoral Concerns

Ursuline High School recognises that pastoral care and safeguarding are closely interlinked. Whilst not all pastoral concerns indicate abuse or immediate risk of harm, minor worries or ‘nagging concerns’ about a child’s wellbeing can, if left unaddressed, grow into more serious problems. Our staff must therefore remain vigilant and respond proactively to any changes or signs of distress in a student’s life.

12.1 What is a Pastoral Concern?

A pastoral concern can be any emotional, social or personal issue that may affect a student’s wellbeing or behaviour. Unlike clear-cut child protection incidents (e.g. disclosure of abuse), pastoral concerns often manifest gradually and can appear low-level. Examples might include:

- Emotional: Persistent sadness, sudden mood swings, tearfulness, withdrawal from peers, signs of anxiety or low self-esteem.
- Behavioural: Noticeable drop in engagement, aggressiveness, unusual risk-taking or attention-seeking behaviour, being unusually quiet or over-compliant.
- Social: Friendship difficulties, isolation or exclusion from peer groups, concerning changes in peer relationships, rumours of bullying.
- Physical/Presentation: Neglect of personal hygiene, uncharacteristic weight change, excessive tiredness, or non-specific physical complaints.
- Academic: Dramatic shift in academic performance, frequent non-completion of homework, lateness, or unexplained absences that may indicate deeper problems.

12.2 Responding to Pastoral Concerns

Initial Identification

Any staff member may notice a pastoral concern. Staff should record the concern as a pastoral concern. If immediate pastoral support is warranted, the staff member should inform the student’s form tutor, Head of Year, or the DSL.

Pastoral Support

Ursuline High School’s pastoral team will explore possible causes, speak to the student, and, where appropriate, contact parents/carers to build a fuller understanding of the situation.

Early interventions may include:

- Mentoring or counselling sessions
- Adjustments in class seating/activities
- Peer mediation (if conflict among pupils is contributing)
- Recommendations for external services (e.g., mental health resources)

Thresholds and Escalation

Low-level concerns can be warning signs of more serious issues e.g., emotional abuse, domestic conflict, self-harm risk, so staff must remain open-minded.

If, at any point, the concern appears to indicate actual or potential risk of harm, staff must escalate to the DSL or deputy DSL immediately, in line with reporting section 10.

Pastoral staff should maintain ongoing communication with the DSL, who will decide whether a referral to external agencies (children's social care, CAMHS, police) is needed.

Monitoring and Review

The pastoral team and DSL will review pastoral logs (e.g. CPOMS entries) to identify patterns or concerning trends, such as multiple low-level notes over time that, collectively, point to neglect, bullying or emotional abuse.

Pastoral support should be monitored and documented.

12.3 When Pastoral Concerns Become Safeguarding Concerns

Some students may initially present with low-level difficulties (e.g. changes in behaviour or frequent unexplained absences) that don't immediately suggest abuse or harm. However, over time, these might signal underlying problems such as neglect, emotional abuse, exploitation or grooming.

Where staff observe a pattern or escalation, for example, repeated expression of self-harm thoughts, sudden fear of going home, or references to domestic arguments, the concern should be escalated to the DSL without delay.

All staff are reminded to 'think the unthinkable' & 'It could happen here'. Even seemingly small pastoral concerns may be an indicator of safeguarding risk. Early reporting is essential, when unsure, seek support and record.

12.4 Supporting Students and Families

Ursuline High School recognises that early dialogue with parents/carers and Early Years, Family Wellbeing and Early Help Service services can often prevent minor issues from becoming more serious.

Where appropriate and safe, the pastoral team will engage parents in supportive conversation, signpost local services and explore strategies that address the student's difficulties.

Staff will take particular care to distinguish between current safeguarding concerns and historic information to ensure past issues are presented with appropriate context.

Ursuline High School will adopt a child-centred approach, respecting the child's wishes and feelings, and ensuring they understand that caring adults are ready to listen and help.

By proactively addressing pastoral concerns, Ursuline High School aims to cultivate an environment where all students feel supported, understood and safe. Staff at every level play a vital role in identifying the early signs of difficulty and ensuring these concerns do not escalate into serious safeguarding issues.

13. Family Help

Staff should be especially alert to the potential need for Early Help or Family help for pupils & families who are:

- Disabled or have specific health needs
- Have SEND (with or without an EHCP)
- Are at risk of criminal exploitation or County Lines
- Are frequently missing from home or education
- Are at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, criminal exploitation or sexual exploitation
- Are in families experiencing domestic abuse, adult mental health or substance misuse
- Are privately fostered or affected by imprisonment of a parent
- Are at risk of radicalisation or ‘honour’ ‘faith’ based abuse
- Are young carers

If family help is appropriate, the DSL will liaise with other agencies in setting up a multi-agency assessment. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in contributing to an assessment, and the DSL may be required to act as the lead practitioner. DSLs understand the assessment process for providing Family Help and support staff to assist.

Staff are alert to young carers needs and recognise that caring responsibilities can impact on attendance, attainment, behaviour and wellbeing, and that early identification is essential to make sure young carers receive support. The DSL will closely monitor the case and the school will consider a referral to the CandF Hub if the situation does not seem to be improving. Details and timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed by the DSL through monitoring cases closely.

If the professional identifies the need at level three of the threshold, they should look to submit an Request for Service form indicating the level of need and intervention. The referral should always be discussed with the young person and family, with their consent clearly indicated on the form. If consent is not given, the team will look to refer if the risk is assessed as a safeguarding concern.

13.1 Making a referral for Family Help

If it is appropriate to refer the case to local authority children’s social care or the police, the DSL will make the referral or support a team member to do so. If a member of staff who is not on the safeguarding team makes a referral directly they must inform the DSL as soon as possible. [Child abuse concerns: guide for practitioners - GOV.UK](#) The local authority will decide if a referral is needed and what course of action to take and will let the setting know the outcome. The DSL will follow up with the local authority if this information is not made available, and ensure outcomes are properly recorded.

If the young person's situation does not seem to be improving after the referral, or there is a threshold disagreement, the DSL or person who made the referral must follow local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the young person's situation improves.

Where there are disagreements with external agencies about thresholds, decision-making or safeguarding responses, the DSL will initiate the [MSCP Multi-Agency Escalation Procedure](#). Merton escalation procedures can be found in the multi-agency escalation procedure section of the MSCP website.

14. Allegations against adults who work with children

Procedure

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 part 4 has 2 sections.

Section 1 deals with allegations against staff which meets the threshold of being investigated by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

This procedure must be used in all cases in which it is alleged a member of staff, supply staff or volunteer in a school, or another adult who works with children has:

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

Staff are advised to self-refer where they feel they may have acted in a way that could be misinterpreted or have breached professional boundaries.

If you have concerns about a member of staff (including trainee teachers, supply staff) or volunteer, or an allegation is made about a member of staff or volunteer posing a risk of harm to young people, this must be reported to Headteacher immediately. If the concerns/allegations are about the Headteacher, speak to the Chair of Governors or the CEO of Sancta Famiia, Michael Feely. If the Chair of Governor or the CEO are not available then the LADO should be contacted directly.

There may be situations when the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will want to involve the police immediately if the person is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence.

Once an allegation has been received by the Headteacher or Chair of Governors they will contact the LADO immediately and before taking any action or investigation. [LADO Allegations - Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

Following consultation with the LADO we will inform the parents of the allegation unless there is a good reason not to.

In liaison with the LADO, the school will determine how to proceed and if necessary the LADO will refer the matter to Children's Social Care via the Children and Families Hub and/or the police.

If the matter is investigated internally, the LADO will advise the school to seek guidance from Local Authority colleagues in following procedures set out in part 4 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2026) and the Merton Children's Safeguarding Partnership procedures.

When using an agency for supply staff, the school will inform the agency of its process for managing allegations.

Where an allegation is made against a member of supply staff, the Headteacher will immediately contact the LADO. The school will ensure that any allegations are dealt with appropriately and liaise with relevant parties. The school will continue to support any investigation that is required.

Section 2 of part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 deals with low level concerns. These will not be treated as insignificant but will require a report to the Headteacher and/ or DSL or the LADO. If the low level concern is reported to the DSL, then the DSL will inform the Headteacher in a timely fashion according to the nature of the concern who will make the ultimate decision on how to respond.

Low-level concerns which are shared about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work. This concern does not meet the harm threshold (i.e. does not indicate a risk of significant harm to a child or warrant an immediate referral to the LADO).

Low level concerns often cause a sense of unease or a "nagging doubt", and can include conduct that is seemingly minor yet, when left unaddressed, could lead to an erosion of professional boundaries or a culture where more serious misconduct or abuse could go unchallenged.

The purpose of this policy is to create and embed a culture of honesty, openness, trust and transparency in which the school's or college's values and expected behaviour which are set out in the staff code of conduct are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff. It:

- Protects children by fostering a culture of vigilance, having the mind set 'it could happen here'.
- Maintains professional standards and uphold the Staff Code of Conduct and Teacher Standards where appropriate.
- Identifies patterns of behaviour early, so that staff receive support or corrective action before concerns escalate.
- Encourages openness and the confidence

Low-level concerns about a member of staff should be reported to the Headteacher. Where a low-level concern is raised about the Headteacher, it should be shared with the Chair of Governors.

Reporting Low-Level Concerns

1. Self-reporting: Staff are encouraged to self-report, for instance, where they feel they have made a slip in conduct or sense that their behaviour may have been misinterpreted.
2. Reporting about others: Any member of staff, volunteer or contractor who has a low-level concern about another adult's conduct should share it as soon as possible with the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors/ CEO if the concern is about the Headteacher).
3. Recording: The person reporting should provide a factual account of what happened, noting the date, time and context. Where the conduct in question is a potential breach of the Staff Code of Conduct, examples or evidence (if any) should be included.
4. Staff must never assume that someone else will act. Timely reporting of seemingly minor issues helps maintain the highest safeguarding standards.

If staff have any doubts or questions about whether an incident or behaviour constitutes a "low-level concern" or a more serious matter, they should consult the Headteacher immediately for guidance.

If there is any doubt whether the information shared about a member of staff, supply staff or contractor then the Headteacher must consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate.

If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, we will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per our behaviour policy.

Schools may receive an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using their school premises for the purposes of running activities for children (e.g., Community groups, sports associations or service providers that run extra-curricular activities). As with any safeguarding allegation, schools should follow their safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.

15. What is child abuse?

²All staff should be 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/college, inside and outside of home, and online’ (KSCIE 2026 para 18)

Extra familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse - including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and stalking), criminal exploitation (including financial exploitation), serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation. (KCSIE 2026 para 20)

Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non- consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes (KCSIE para 22)

In addition, it should be understood that children can also be abused by being sexually exploited, subjected to Honour Based Abuse, Forced Marriage or Female Genital Mutilation.

15. 1 What is abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. Children may also cause harm to other family members, often referred to as child to parent or care giver abuse

We encourage our staff to be professionally curious about what to look out for as this is vital for the early identification of abuse, neglect and exploitation so that we are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection at the earliest opportunity.

15.2 Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Any mark or noticeable bruise on the body of a child must be noted on a Body Map.

15.3 Indicators of physical abuse / factors that should increase concern

- Multiple bruising or bruises and scratches (especially on the head and face or soft areas of the body)
- Clusters of bruises – e.g., fingertip bruising (caused by being grasped)
- Bruises around the neck and behind the ears – the most common abusive injuries are to the head
- Bruises on the back, chest, buttocks, or on the inside of the thighs
- Marks indicating injury by an instrument – e.g., linear bruising (stick), parallel bruising (belt), marks of a buckle, welts
- Bite marks
- Burns or scalds, including unusual patterns, spread of injuries or deep contact burns such as cigarette burns.
- Deliberate burning may also be indicated by the pattern of an instrument or object – e.g., electric fire, cooker, cigarette
- Scalds with upward splash marks or *tide marks*
- Untreated injuries
- Recurrent injuries or burns
- Bald patches

In the context of the school, it is normal to ask about a noticeable injury. The response to such an enquiry is generally light-hearted and detailed. So, most of all, concern should be increased when:

- the explanation given does not match the injury
- the explanation uses words or phrases that do not match the vocabulary of the child (adults words)
- no explanation is forthcoming
- the child (or the parent/carers) is secretive or evasive
- the injury is accompanied by allegations of abuse or assault

You should be concerned if a child:

- is reluctant to have parents/carers contacted
- runs away or shows fear of going home

- is aggressive towards themselves or others
- flinches when approached or touched
- is reluctant to undress to change clothing for sport
- wears long sleeves during hot weather
- is unnaturally compliant in the presence of parents/carers.
- has a fear of medical help or attention
- Inappropriate or harmful medication use
- admits to a punishment that appears excessive

15.4 Emotional abuse

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 verbal abuse, such as persistent criticism, belittling or name-calling
- not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- 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
- a child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- serious bullying (including cyberbullying)
- causing a child to feel frightened or in danger
- 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. It can be difficult to recognise emotional abuse and children may not always realise they are experiencing it. However, there may be indicators in the way a child behaves and reacts to certain situations.

15. 5 Indicators of emotional abuse

Developmental issues

- Delays in physical, mental and emotional development
- Poor school performance

- Speech disorders, particularly sudden disorders or changes.

Behaviour

- Acceptance of punishment which appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation (I'm stupid, ugly, worthless etc)
- Neurotic behaviour (such as rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking)
- Self-mutilation
- Suicide attempts
- Drug/Alcohol/solvent abuse
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging
- Acting out
- Poor trust in significant adults
- Regressive behaviour – e.g., wetting
- Eating disorders
- Destructive tendencies
- Neurotic behaviour
- Arriving early at school, leaving late
- Secrecy relating to use of technology.

Social issues

- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Withdrawal from social interaction
- Over-compliant behaviour
- Insecure, clinging behaviour
- Poor social relationships

Emotional responses

- Extreme fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations ("I deserve this")
- Fear of parents being contacted

- Self-disgust
- Lack of self-confidence or self-esteem
- Unusually fearful with adults
- Lack of concentration, restlessness, aimlessness
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Excessive need for approval, attention and affection
- Sudden speech disorders.

15.6 Sexual abuse

- Most sexual abuse is committed by individuals known to the victim. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education, and all staff are aware of it and of the school's policy and procedures for dealing with it ([KCSIE 2026](#)).

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

- **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
- **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
- **Online 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.

Most sexual abuse is committed by individuals known to the victim. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education, and all staff are aware of it and of the school's policy and procedures for dealing with it ([KCSIE 2026](#)).

15.7 Indicators of sexual abuse

Physical observations:

- Damage to genitalia, anus or mouth
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Unexpected pregnancy, especially in very young girls
- Soreness in genital area, anus or mouth and other medical problems such as chronic itching
- Unexplained recurrent urinary tract infections and discharges or abdominal pain

Behavioural observations:

- Sexual knowledge inappropriate for age
- Sexualised behaviour or affection inappropriate for age
- Sexually inappropriate behaviour
- Hinting at sexual activity
- Inexplicable decline in education progress
- Depression or other sudden apparent changes in personality as becoming insecure
- Lack of concentration, restlessness, aimlessness
- Socially isolated or withdrawn
- Overly-compliant behaviour
- Acting out, aggressive behaviour
- Poor trust or fear concerning significant adults
- Regressive behaviour,
- Onset of wetting, by day or night; nightmares
- Arriving early at school, leaving late, running away from home
- Suicide attempts, self-mutilation,
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Eating disorders or sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Become worried about clothing being removed
- Alluding to secrets which they cannot reveal, secrecy relating to use of technology, or unexplained gifts or money.
- Clinginess and/or need for constant reassurance
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism.

15.8 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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

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

Educational neglect is also considered a form of neglect.

15.9 Indicators of neglect

Neglect is a lack of parental care but poverty and lack of information or adequate services can be contributory factors.

Far more children are registered to the category of neglect on Child in Need and Child Protection plans than to the other categories. As with abuse, the number of children experiencing neglect is likely to be much higher than the numbers on the plans.

Neglect can include parents or carers failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision or stimulation
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

NSPCC research has highlighted the following examples of the neglect of children under 12 years old:

- frequently going hungry
- frequently having to go to school in dirty clothes
- regularly having to look after themselves because of parents being away or having problems such as drug or alcohol misuse
- being abandoned or deserted
- living at home in dangerous physical conditions
- not being taken to the doctor when ill
- not receiving dental care.

Signs that may indicate neglect

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

Neglect is a difficult form of abuse to recognise and is often seen as less serious than other categories. It is, however, very damaging: children who are neglected often develop more slowly than others and may find it hard to make friends and fit in with their peer group.

Neglect is often noticed at a stage when it does not pose a risk to the child. The duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (*What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused* DfE 2015) would suggest that an appropriate intervention or conversation at this early stage can address the issue and prevent a child continuing to suffer until it reaches a point when they are at risk of harm or in significant need.

Neglect is often linked to other forms of abuse, so any concerns school staff must be discussed with the DSL.

16.1 Child on Child Abuse (including harassment and violence)

In most instances, the conduct of pupils towards each other will be covered by our behaviour policy. However, some allegations may be of such a serious nature that they may raise safeguarding concerns. Ursuline High School recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. This occurs when a young person intentionally threatens, harms or causes distress to another young person. We also recognise that child-on-child sexual abuse can occur between two young people of any sex and/or age. It will not be passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up' as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour and an unsafe environment. All child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously, it is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and alleged perpetrator.

The Safeguarding and Child Protection policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- could put pupils at risk
- is violent
- involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including sexting)

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

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment which may include misogyny/misandry
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- upskirting which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm

- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)
- serious physical assault and harm, or threat of harm with a weapon

The term child-on-child abuse can refer to all these definitions and a child may experience one or multiple facets of abuse at any one time. Therefore, our response will cut across these definitions and capture the complex web of their experiences.

There are also different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with child on child abuse (i.e. girls being sexually touched/assaulted, or boys being subjected to initiation/hazing type violence). It is more likely that girls will be victims and boys' perpetrators, but that all peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

We believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults and other children in school

It will not be passed off as 'banter', 'boys being boys' or 'part of growing up', and staff will challenge inappropriate behaviour between children. Any downplaying of certain conduct can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour which will lead to children not reporting or normalising abuse causing an unsafe environment. We are clear that there will be a zero-tolerance approach to any form of abuse including peer on peer abuse.

This school understands that even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse, this does not mean that it is not happening.

If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil it should be reported to the DSL who will take lead on the situation as per their role and in line with KCSIE 2026:

- if the incident is a criminal offence school will consult and work closely with agencies as required, including the police, while protecting children and/or taking any measures to manage risk. For incidences which involve significant harm and/or a potential criminal offence, the DSL will endeavour to gain consent but may override this should not gaining consent increase the risk to a child
- our DSLs are committed to ensuring that where concerns are raised about child-on-child abuse, incidences are taken seriously and dealt with fairly. DSLs will consider all information available to them and ensure that any action or decision is proportionate for all children involved, and that such decisions do not disproportionately impact on their access to education, although at times some restrictions or adaptations may be required to manage identified risk.
- The DSL will seek advice from professional services as appropriate which could include Children's Services and or children and young people mental health services (CYPMHS),
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all young people involved (including the victim(s), the young people against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed.

We will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by:

- Taking a whole school approach to safeguarding & child protection through our safeguarding curriculum.
- All staff being trained and highly vigilant and aware of specific characteristics which may indicate child on child abuse, for example, vulnerability and controlling behaviour.
- Providing a values-based curriculum, underpinned by the school's behaviour policy and pastoral support, and by a planned programme of evidence-based content delivered through the curriculum.
- Working in partnership with parents and carers.
- Engaging with specialist support and interventions.

We expect all staff to:

- challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images
- be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders, for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing, and initiation or hazing type violence
- ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
- ensure pupils are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems
- reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
- Follow the school safeguarding procedures and report concerns to the DSL

16.2 Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment

Sexual violence and harassment may or may not happen simultaneously and can occur both on and offline. They can happen between individuals or groups of pupils and will not be tolerated in any form. Those with SEND or those who identify as LGBTQ+ may be particularly susceptible to such behaviours.

Department for Education guidelines with regards to the management of sexual violence and harassment between young people at school can be found in the publication, [Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges - GOV.UK](#)

The guidance covers what sexual violence and harassment is, schools' and colleges' legal responsibilities, a whole school approach to safeguarding and child protection and how to respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment. All such incidents should be immediately reported to the DSL and managed in line with this policy. Victims of harm will be supported by Ursuline High School's pastoral system.

There is a bespoke helpline for young people who've experienced abuse at school, and for worried adults and professionals that need support and guidance. The NSPCC helpline Report Abuse in Education can be contacted by phoning 0800 136 663 or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk.

- Children making a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be taken seriously, kept safe and be well supported.
- In some cases children will find it difficult to tell staff about the abuse so it may come via a third party. Children should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual abuse or harassment.
- We will carefully listen to the child, being non judgemental.
- Staff taking the report will inform the DSL or a Deputy DSL immediately.
- Staff taking a report will never promise confidentiality.
- Parents or carers should usually be informed (unless this would put the child at greater risk).
- If a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral will be made to the Children and Families Hub (formally MASH).
- Be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems in the school or elsewhere that could be addressed by us updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with our safeguarding partners
- Consider intra-familial harms (adults close to the child and family) and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment See Appendix H For schools Reporting and recording

16.3 Risk Assessment:

Following a report the DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment on a case-by-case basis. A log of all incidents will be kept by the DSL and reporting to SLT, SG strategic meeting and governors.

The risk assessment will consider;

- The victim, especially their protection and support.
- The alleged perpetrator, their support needs and any discipline action.

- All other children at the school.
- The victim and the alleged perpetrator sharing classes and space at school.
- The risk assessment will be recorded and kept under review.

Where there has been other professional intervention and/or other specialist risk assessments, these professional assessments will be used to inform the school's approach to supporting and protecting pupils.

16. 4 Action: The DSL will consider:-

- The wishes of the victim.
- The nature of the incident including whether a crime has been committed and the harm caused.
- Ages of the children involved.
- Developmental stages of the children.
- Any power imbalance between the children.
- Any previous incidents.
- Ongoing risks.

Other related issues or wider context.

16. 5 Options:

- Manage internally
- Family Help/Early Help intervention
- Refer to social care for support (Children and Families Hub)

- Report to the police (generally in parallel with a referral to social care)

16.6 Ongoing Response:

The DSL will manage each case individually and will ensure the risk assessment is reviewed regularly with relevant partner agencies, for example the Police and Merton Children's Services.

Where there is a criminal investigation into a rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, the alleged perpetrator should be removed from any classes they share with the victim.

The DSL will consider how best to keep the victim and perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school premises and on transport where appropriate.

Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, the school will take suitable action. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and may lead to the view that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the same school or college would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially themselves and other pupils).

We will reassure children that the law is in place to protect rather than to criminalise them.

Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, the school or college will, if it has not already, consider any suitable sanctions in light of their behaviour policy, which may include consideration of permanent exclusion. Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the school or college, the Headteacher should continue keeping the victim and perpetrator in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school and college premises and transport. The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.

The victim, alleged perpetrator and any other affected children & adults will receive appropriate support and safeguards on a case-by-case basis.

The school will take any disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator in accordance with the school behaviour policy.

The school recognises that taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions and will occur at the same time if necessary.

16.7 Physical Abuse

While a clear focus of peer on peer abuse is around sexual abuse and harassment, physical assaults and initiation violence and rituals from pupils to pupils can also be abusive. These are equally not tolerated and if it is believed that a crime has been committed, will be reported to the police. The principles from the anti-bullying policy will be applied in these cases, with recognition that any police investigation will need to take priority.

17. Harmful Sexual behaviour

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is "harmful sexual behaviour" (HSB). HSB can occur online and/or face to face and can also occur simultaneously between the two. HSB should be considered in a child protection context.

Sexual behaviour between children will be considered harmful if one of the children is much older if there is more than 2 years difference in age or one child is in puberty and the other is not. A younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if one has power over the other, for example, with a disability or Special educational Needs.

Children displaying HSB have often experienced their own abuse and trauma. It is important that they are offered appropriate support.

School staff are aware of the importance of:

- Recognising the escalatory nature of misogyny and the benefits of early identification to support the minimising the risk of HSB to escalate into sexual harassment and sexual violence
- Taking a safeguarding approach in response to all incidents involving the sharing of nude or semi-nude images, regardless of whether they're consensual or non-consensual
- Acknowledging Sexual behaviour between young people with an age gap could be considered harmful.

[Harmful Sexual Behaviours.](#)
[Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse](#)

17.1 Technology Assisted Harmful Sexual Behaviours (TA-HSB)

Technology-assisted harmful sexual behaviour (TA-HSB) refers to children or young people using digital devices to engage in sexual activity that is harmful, abusive, or developmentally inappropriate for them or others. It spans a wide spectrum, ranging from sharing self-produced images and sextortion to online grooming and the viewing of extreme pornography.

Types of TA-HSBTA-HSB involves both self-directed harms (such as inappropriate use of pornography or risky digital exploration) and behaviours that directly victimize or abuse others. Common examples include:

Image-Based Sexual Abuse (IBSA) / 'Revenge Pornography' - Non-consensual sharing or distribution of intimate, self-produced, or manipulated images.

Sextortion & Coercion – Forcing or pressuring someone to engage in sexual acts or send explicit materials by threatening to publish existing sexual content.

Grooming & Online Solicitation - Using the internet to befriend younger children or peers for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Sexual Harassment & Bullying - Using online messaging, social media, or "deepfake" technology to degrade, embarrass, or sexually target individuals

Professionals typically evaluate these behaviours on a continuum of sexualised behaviour ranging from normal or developmentally appropriate exploration to abusive and violent acts. To identify whether a behaviour requires intervention, it is essential to consider:

Context - The level of coercion or the emotional distress of the victim. Developmental Stage - whether the action is appropriate for the chronological and developmental age of the youth.

Consent & Power Dynamics - the presence of power imbalances, such as age gaps or the threat of reputational harm.

[Centre of expertise on Child Sexual Abuse](#) offers detailed research and definitions regarding how children engage in [technology assisted -HSB](#) and best practices for safeguarding. Their resources include a guide determine whether a child's digital behaviour crosses into harmful territory, providing clear guidance on how to respond and intervene.

18. Anti-Bullying/Cyberbullying

Our school policy on anti-bullying is set out in a separate document and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

We keep a record of known bullying incidents which is shared with, and analysed by the governing body. All staff are aware that children with SEND and/or differences/perceived differences are more susceptible to being bullied/victims of child abuse.

When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern. If the anti-bullying procedures are seen to be ineffective, the Headteacher and the DSL will also consider child protection procedures.

PHSE education regularly provides opportunities for children to understand bullying is wrong, its impact and how to deal with it.

19. Children who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transexual (LGBTQ+) and social transition

The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBTQ+ can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBTQ+ neglect (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBTQ+. We also recognise that LGBTQ+ children are more likely to experience poor mental health and any concerns should be reported to the DSL.

Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBTQ+ lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. Ursuline High School will provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

Ursuline High School believes that respect is a fundamental right and responsibility for all. It is the duty of all employees to ensure that every member of our school community feels valued, irrespective of their sexual/gender orientation, race or religion. Diversity is celebrated and valued at Ursuline High School. We will endeavour to ensure that LGBT pupils have a trusted adult with whom they can be open. Children may at any time question their gender identity or express that they are not the sex biologically assigned to them. Young children go through a period of questioning their gender, but for the majority this will not continue into adulthood.

Ursuline High School is aware of the potential vulnerabilities of these children (e.g. the possibility of complex mental health and psychosocial needs, for example relating to relationships with family and peers) and adopts policies that maintain flexibility and takes a strong, proactive stand against all forms of bullying.

When supporting a gender questioning pupil, we will take a cautious approach as there are still unknowns around the impact of social transition, and a pupil may have wider vulnerability, such as complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and SEND needs including SEMH and neurodiversity.

We will also consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with their parents/carers (unless there are circumstances where doing this would constitute a greater risk to the child than not involving them). We will also include any clinical advice that is available and consider how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying.

The school will work with a child and their family to support them on their journey and to put in place a bespoke package which allows them to take appropriate steps forward. A child may be in a vulnerable state as they try to navigate their feelings. It is also important to understand that parents and family may also struggle to come to terms with the wishes and intentions of their children.

Where a child or their parent/carer has raised a request relating to social transition, the school will:

- Consider the best way to support the child and take the necessary steps when a child requests support
- Document decision-making processes and keep records, ensuring compliance with safeguarding legislation and equality and human rights law
- Ensure any assessment is informed and evaluated with the welfare and best interests of the child and other children at the heart of any decision making.

Paragraphs 262-265 and 278-282 in KCSIE 2026 provide more detail on reviewing previous decisions, recording correct information, children 'living in stealth' and supporting children who wish to detransition (282). Safeguarding requirements relating to school premises and single sex sport can be found here: [KCSIE 2026](#)

Ursuline High School will endeavour to support families during this time, but the welfare and safety of the pupil will always come first.

Staff should **not** adopt any changes relating to social transition unless a decision has been made by Headteacher, DSL and the child's parents/carers have been involved. In addition to caring for the welfare of children, we will ensure that the legal rights of children are observed under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and associated legislation.

- LGBTQ+ inclusion is part of the statutory Relationships, Sex Education and Health Education curriculum and there is a range of support available to help schools counter homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and abuse. (see Education in Human Love: Relationships and Education Policy)

20. Online Safety and the use of mobile technology

20.1 Rationale and context

Ursuline High School recognises that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues, and that pupils are at risk of abuse and other harms both online and offline. Ursuline's online safety provision aims to comply with the [Online Safety Act](#) and ensure that:

- Staff and pupils understand the risks associated with the online environment.
- There is a robust approach to filtering, monitoring and using technology safely, which is reviewed annually.
- Pupils, staff and parents are empowered to report online safety concerns promptly.

Ursuline High School provides age-appropriate education and training on how to stay safe online, and to protect under-18s from harmful online content. This includes content relating to:

- Pornography, sharing images, deepfakes, and misogynistic influencers
- Generative AI and education

This section should be read in conjunction with the following school policies

- Digital Learning and Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct, addressing the use of social media and electronic communications.
- Behaviour policy

- Anti-Bullying policy
- AI Policy

As well as DfE's [Mobile phones in schools' policy](#) , which outlines the implementation of a policy whereby pupils don't have access to their mobile phone during the school day.

The school has an online safety policy which explains how we try to keep pupils safe in school and how we respond to online safety incidents. We follow the 'Teaching online safety in school; Guidance supporting schools to teach their pupils how to stay safe online, within new and existing school subjects ([Teaching online safety in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)) guide practice.

Children increasingly use electronic equipment, including at home, on a daily basis to access the internet, share and view content and images via social media sites such as Facebook, X (formally known as Twitter), Instagram, Snapchat, Tik-tok and Voodoo and for online gaming.

Some adults and other children use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts or emails, to grooming and enticing children to engage in extremist or sexual behaviour such as webcam photography or face-to-face meetings.

Pupils may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate material such as pornographic websites or those which promote extremist behaviour, criminal activity, suicide or eating disorders,

20.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

- The governing body ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place in accordance with [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#) and the guidance [Filtering and Monitoring standards for Schools and Colleges](#). This is to ensure that children have access to 'safe' information and that 'over blocking' does not restrict access to their learning. We have a named Online Safety Leader and a system to log any Online Safety incidents.

Headteacher / Principal

- Ensures that adequate staffing, resources and training are in place to maintain robust online safety practices.
- Ensures that all staff understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe online.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Takes lead responsibility for online safety, with a working knowledge of Ursuline's filtering and monitoring arrangements.

- Receives alerts from Smoothwall monitoring software and responds to any concerns in line with the Child Protection-Safeguarding Policy.
- The DSL (or a deputy) monitors logs and alerts generated by the software and responds in line with safeguarding procedures if any child is at risk.
- Liaises with external partners (e.g. local authority, police, and online safety organisations) where online risks or crimes are suspected.

All Staff

- Maintain an appropriate level of professional curiosity about pupils' online activities.
- Report any suspicious or concerning activity or behaviour immediately to the DSL.
- Adhere to the Staff Code of Conduct, ensuring boundaries are not blurred when communicating online with pupils.

We ensure that filtering systems are in place using a program from the London Grid for Learning. These systems are regularly checked to ensure they remain fit for purpose and respond effectively to emerging threats, in line with the DfE filtering and monitoring standards.

We review the child protection and safeguarding policy, including online safety, annually and ensure the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly; this includes using a self assessment tool 'plan technology for your school service' to self- assess against the filtering and monitoring standards and receive personalised recommendations on how to meet them.

Staff may lawfully search electronic devices, without consent or parental permission, if there is a suspicion that the pupil has a device prohibited by school rules, or the staff member has good reason to suspect the device may be used to:

- cause harm,
- disrupt teaching,
- break school rules,
- commit an offence,
- cause personal injury, or
- damage property.

Any data, files or images that are believed to be illegal must be passed to the police as soon as practicable, including pornographic images of children, without deleting them.

Any data, files or images that are not believed to be unlawful, may be deleted or kept as evidence of a breach of the school's behaviour policy. The school follows DFE [Searching, Screening and Confiscation \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)' guidance.

20.3 Education and Training

Pupils are taught about online safety throughout the curriculum and all staff receive online safety training which is regularly updated. The DSL is the lead for Online Safety.

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following 4 categories of risk as identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026:

Content – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, extreme sexual or physical violence, 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, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes

Conduct – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images including those generated using AI (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and

Commerce – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams. If we feel our learners or staff are at risk, we will report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group

Students receive age-appropriate teaching about online safety through the curriculum, Relationships, Health, Sex Education (RHSE), computing lessons and pastoral sessions. Programmes covering online harms such as sharing images, deepfakes, pornography and misogynistic influencers, and when and where to seek help will be delivered, as well as safe online communication, cyberbullying, privacy settings, grooming and radicalisation. Pupils are guided on where and how to seek help if they feel uncomfortable or threatened online.

Staff undertake regular (at least annually) online safety training to ensure they are aware of current risks, digital trends and how best to respond to concerns. Staff are trained to recognise the indicators of child-on-child online abuse, sexting or online grooming, and supporting to understand how they can overlap with other safeguarding concerns (e.g. Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation, radicalisation, incidents may involve serious physical assault and harm, or threat of harm with a weapon). There is an acknowledgement that it is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and the alleged perpetrator and that timely, evidence-based support can be key for prevention

Parents/Carers. Ursuline High School offers advice and guidance to parents/carers on keeping their children safe online when required. Parents/carers are encouraged to report concerns relating to online safety and to work in partnership with school to address incidents.

20.4 Responding to Online Safety Incidents

Any staff member who suspects or is alerted to an online safety incident must document the concerns and report them to the DSL or deputy DSL immediately. Where a pupil is found to have excessively or persistently accessed harmful or inappropriate content, the DSL will discuss this with them and their parents/carers to explore the underlying reasons and provide pastoral or external support if necessary.

For incidents involving potential or actual criminal activity (e.g. child sexual abuse material, grooming, hate crimes), the DSL will liaise with the police and/or local authority children's social care as required.

The DSL will refer to guidance regarding online safety incidents, including that from the UK council for Internet Safety (UKCIS), [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#). Pupils who commit child-on-child online abuse will be managed under the behaviour and anti-bullying policies, in addition to any safeguarding and/or criminal pathways.

The DSL can also refer to Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse resources which helps education professionals identify and respond to concerns of [child sexual abuse and abusive behaviours](#). This includes support on communicating with young people, their parents / carers, signs and indicators, safety planning and a whole setting approach.

Cybercrime. Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). Offences under the [Computer Misuse Act 1990](#) (CMA) have risen substantially and the school recognises that young people across the UK experiment with illegal online activity, often without understanding the legal or ethical implications.

The impact of cybercrime extends well beyond immediate financial losses, with scope to cause disruption to national infrastructure. Cyber-dependent crimes include:

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded,
- 'Denial of Service' (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources, and
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

Children with particular skills and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime. If there are concerns about a child in this area, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy), should consider referring into the [Cyber Choices programme](#).

20.5 Artificial intelligence (AI)

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, students and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT, Copilot and Google Gemini.

The Ursuline High School recognises that AI has many uses, including enhancing teaching and learning. Ursuline High School looks to consider the risks and challenges alongside the opportunities and benefits. School will continue to work to ensure the safety and reliability of technology, including AI tools, to support teachers and pupils.

We remain alert that AI may also have the potential to facilitate abuse (e.g. bullying and grooming) and/or expose pupils to harmful content. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

We will treat any use of AI to access harmful content or bully pupils in line with this policy and our anti-bullying and behaviour policy.

Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools whilst they are still being developed. Any interaction with those tools needs to be compliant with school policies including safeguarding, GDPR and AI.

Our school's requirements for filtering and monitoring also apply to the use of AI, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. Ursuline High School will work to [Meeting Digital and Technology Standards in Schools and Colleges](#) in and this includes guidance on e-security from the National Education Network and working to meet the Cyber security standards for schools and colleges which will help to improve Ursuline High School resilience against cyber-attacks

The guidance below supports the assessment of risk:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/generative-artificial-intelligence-in-education/generative-artificial-intelligence-ai-in-education>
- Resources for schools and education settings - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/using-ai-in-education-settings-support-materials>

20.6 Mobile phones

The school's policy on the use of mobile phones is that phones cannot be seen onsite or they will be confiscated. They must be locked away at the beginning of the day in the students locker and then collected at the end of the day.

20.7 Review

The Senior Leadership Team, in consultation with the DSL and Governance, will regularly review online safety provisions. The policy and practices will be updated in response to emerging technologies, evolving threats and updates to national guidance (including KCSIE and Working Together to Safeguard Children).

21. Racist Incidents

Our policy on racist incidents is set out separately, and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. We keep a record of racist incidents.

22. Radicalisation and Extremism

The Prevent duty is one of our wider safeguarding obligations and places a duty on education and other children's services to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Our DSLs and senior leaders are aware of the revised [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\)](#) for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 141-210, which focus on education and childcare. The guidance covers 3 general themes: leadership and partnership, capabilities, and reducing permissive environments.

Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, which aims to:

- negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or
- undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or
- intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in (1) or (2)

Radicalisation is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the Government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Some children are at risk of being radicalised; adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. This can happen both online and offline.

The school is clear that exploitation of vulnerable children and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern and follows the Department for Education guidance for schools and childcare providers on preventing children and young people from being drawn into terrorism.

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

All staff have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, [Prevent Duty 2023](#) to enable them to identify young people at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.

Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable pupils to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the school follows the [Guidance on promoting British values in schools published - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The school governors, the Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will assess the level of risk within the school and put actions in place to reduce that risk. Risk assessment may include, due diligence checks for external speakers and private hire of facilities, anti-bullying policy and other issues specific to the school's profile, community and philosophy.

The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which school staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a pupil. You can also email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk. Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.

In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger or may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
- See, hear or are told something that may be terrorist-related.

When any member of staff has concerns that a pupil may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, and the young person is not suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger, where possible first speak to the DSL to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a deputy DSL or a member of the senior leadership team if no DSL or deputy DSL is available. Seek advice from the Child and Family Hub. Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include [Channel](#), the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team via the C and F Hub.

If the matter is urgent then Police must be contacted by dialling 999. In cases where further advice from the Police is sought dial 101 or contact the the Anti-terrorism hotline on 0800 789 321. This should be done if you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger or may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
- See, hear or are told something that may be terrorist-related.

The DfE also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which all staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism for a pupil.

In non-emergency situations DSLs can also email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk. In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321. [National Prevent Referral Form](#)

22.1 Indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

Extremism is defined by the Government in the Prevent Strategy as:

Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

Extremism is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service as:

- The demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views which:
- Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;
- Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts;
- Encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts; or
- Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK.

There is no such thing as a “typical extremist”: those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity.

Pupils may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors - it is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. It is vital that school staff are able to recognise those vulnerabilities.

Indicators of vulnerability include:

- Identity Crisis – the student / pupil is distanced from their cultural / religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society;
- Personal Crisis – the student / pupil may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation; and low self-esteem; they may have dissociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging;
- Personal Circumstances – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the student / pupil’s country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy;
- Unmet Aspirations – the student / pupil may have perceptions of injustice or a feeling of failure,
- Experiences of Criminality – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment, and poor resettlement / reintegration;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability – students / pupils may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others.

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

More critical risk factors could include:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters;
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element;
- Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature;
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage;
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues;
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations; and
- Significant changes to appearance and / or behaviour;
- Experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and / or personal crisis.

The Department of Education guidance [Prevent duty guidance: Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/616222/prevent-duty-guidance-guidance-for-specified-authorities-in-england-and-wales.pdf) can be accessed via this link.

Extremist activity can also be reported via the **Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321**. The line is confidential, anonymous and intended for the reporting of non-life threatening activity.

23. Domestic Abuse

At Ursuline High School, we recognise the definition of domestic abuse set out in the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#), which identifies children who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse as victims in their own right. Domestic abuse can occur between intimate partners, former partners, family members, within young people's relationships, and through child-to-parent abuse.

It is actual or threatened physical, emotional, psychological, financial or sexual abuse. It involves the use of power and control by one person over another. It occurs regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, age, religion, mental or physical ability. Domestic abuse can also involve other types of abuse.

We use the term domestic abuse to reflect that a number of abusive and controlling behaviours are involved beyond violence. Slapping, punching, kicking, bruising, rape, ridicule, constant criticism, threats, manipulation, sleep deprivation, social isolation, and other controlling behaviours all count as abuse. Abuse may also be honour-based abuse, [Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\)](#), or [Child-to-Parent Violence and Abuse \(CPVA\)](#).

Living in a home where domestic abuse takes place is harmful to children and can have a serious impact on their behaviour, wellbeing and understanding of healthy, positive relationships, including impacting upon their own personal, intimate relationships. Children who witness domestic abuse are at risk of significant harm and experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the

family home as a result. Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16).

However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

The school is enrolled onto the Operation Encompass scheme, a joint project between the Metropolitan Police Service and Merton Schools; where our DSL is notified of all domestic abuse incidents that have occurred and been reported to Police in the previous 24 hours which involved a child at this school (72 hours on a Monday morning). This provides an opportunity for us to ensure the right support is in place at the right time for children who are experiencing domestic abuse.

When we are concerned about the amount of police notifications or disclosures of domestic abuse we will consider seeking further advice.

Staff are alert to the signs and symptoms of a child suffering or witnessing domestic abuse. Ursuline High School will work with statutory services that help to identify where domestic abuse may/has taken place.

24. Exploitation

Exploitation in relation to children refers to the use of children for someone else's advantage, gratification, or profit often resulting in unjust, cruel, and harmful treatment of the child. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It covers situations of manipulation, misuse, abuse, victimization, oppression or ill-treatment.

Our staff are aware that there are several types of child exploitation, including, but not limited to:

- **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE):** this is a type of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power, or status. It can involve contact and non-contact activities and can occur without the child's immediate recognition; this is due to their grooming by the abuser.
- **Child Labour Exploitation:** this involves the use of children in work that is harmful to their physical and mental development. It deprives them of their childhood, potential, and dignity.
- **Child Trafficking:** children are recruited, moved, or transported and then exploited, forced to work, or sold. They are often used for forced labour, sexual exploitation, or illegal activities.
- **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE):** this is where children are involved in activities of a criminal nature, often in gangs. They may be forced or manipulated into committing crimes, such as selling drugs or stealing.

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

Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation are forms of child abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child in sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status and access to economic and other resources. In some cases the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and will be to the financial benefit or other advantage, such as increased status, of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. This can be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang and the victim may identify as being part of this group. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be one off occurrences or a series of incidents over time. It can range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears to be consensual and exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online and through the use of technology. This may constitute modern slavery.

All staff are aware of the link between online safety and vulnerability to exploitation.

Any concerns that a child is being or is at risk of being sexually exploited should be passed immediately to the DSL.

The School is aware there is a clear link between regular non-attendance at school and CSE. Staff will consider a child to be at potential CSE risk in the case of regular non-attendance at school and make reasonable enquiries with the child and parents to assess this risk.

The school is aware that a child often is not able to recognise the coercive nature of the abuse and does not see themselves as a victim. As a consequence the child may resent what they perceive as interference by staff. However, staff must act on their concerns as they would for any other type of abuse. Children also rarely self-report CSE so staff must be particularly vigilant to potential indicators of risk.

The school includes the risks of sexual exploitation in the RSHE curriculum. Pupils will be informed of the grooming process and how to protect themselves from people who may potentially be intent on causing harm. They will be supported in terms of recognising and assessing risk in relation to CSE, including online, and knowing how and where to get help.

The following list of indicators is not exhaustive or definitive but it does highlight common signs which can assist professionals in identifying children or young people who may be victims of sexual exploitation.

Signs include:

- underage sexual activity
- inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour

- sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex
- repeat sexually transmitted infections
- in girls, repeat pregnancy, abortions, miscarriage
- receiving unexplained gifts or gifts from unknown sources
- having multiple mobile phones and worrying about losing contact via mobile
- having unaffordable new things (clothes, mobile) or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs)
- changes in the way they dress
- going to hotels or other unusual locations to meet friends
- seen at known places of concern
- moving around the country, appearing in new towns or cities, not knowing where they are
- getting in/out of different cars driven by unknown adults
- having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- contact with known perpetrators
- involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations
- hanging out with groups of older people, or anti-social groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
- recruiting other young people to exploitative situations
- truancy, exclusion, disengagement with school, opting out of education altogether
- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual)
- mood swings, volatile behaviour, emotional distress
- self-harming, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, overdosing, eating disorders
- drug or alcohol misuse
- getting involved in crime
- police involvement, police records
- involved in gangs, gang fights, gang membership
- injuries from physical assault, physical restraint, sexual assault.

25.1. Child Criminal Exploitation & Gangs

There are a number of areas in which young people are put at risk by gang activity, both through participation in, and as victims of, gang violence which can be in relation to their peers or to a gang-involved adult in their household. Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others. (KCSIE 2026 para 37)

A child who is affected by gang activity or serious youth violence may have suffered, or may be likely to suffer, significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect or exploitation.

The risk or potential risk of harm to the child may be as a victim, a gang member or both - in relation to their peers or to a gang-involved adult in their household. Teenagers can be particularly vulnerable to recruitment into gangs and involvement in gang violence. This vulnerability may be exacerbated by risk factors in an individual's background, including violence in the family, involvement of siblings in gangs, poor educational attainment, or poverty or mental health problems.

Criminal exploitation of children is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity with children being exploited to move and store drugs and money. "County lines" is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". Children might be involved in violence, be pressured into doing things like stealing, carrying drugs or weapons or be abused, exploited and put into dangerous situations.

Signs that suggest involvement in county lines:

- Frequently missing from school or home / Travelling alone to places far away from home / not attending education
- Suddenly have lots of money / lots of new clothes / new mobile phone / Receiving more calls or texts than usual / Carrying or selling drugs / Carrying weapons or know people that have access to weapons
- Relationships with or hanging out with someone/people that are older and controlling
- May have unexplained injuries / seem scared very reserved or seem like they have something to hide / self-harm

When the victim may have been trafficked for transporting drugs, a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered with Social Care and Police colleagues.

A child who is affected by gang activity, criminal exploitation or serious youth violence can be at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Girls may be particularly at risk of sexual exploitation. Young people often don't see themselves as victims or realise they have been groomed to get involved in criminality.

Any concerns that a child is being or is at risk of being criminally exploited will be passed without delay to the DSL. The school is aware there is a clear link between regular non-attendance at school and exploitation. Staff will consider a child to be at potential risk in the case of regular non-attendance at school and make reasonable enquiries with the child and parents to assess this risk.

A referral to the Children and Families Hub (formally MASH) will be made when any concern of harm to a child because of gang activity including child criminal exploitation becomes known. Any member of staff who has concerns that a child may be at risk of harm should immediately inform the DSL. The DSL will contact the Children and Families Hub for advice. A modern slavery referral will be considered where a potential victim is CSE or CCE is identified. The DSL may choose to involve [Catch 22](#), to ensure that young people who have become involved in county lines are able to access specialist support and avoid further involvement in situations that they find difficult to get themselves out of.

Ursuline High School will report concerns to the police by dialling 101, or in an emergency 999. Concerns may also be reported by calling Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. Any concerns linked to the railways will be reported to the British Transport Police by texting 61016 or by dialling 999 in an emergency.

26. Children at Risk or Involved in Serious Violent Crime

Serious violence is a safeguarding concern. Serious violent youth crime' is defined by the Home Office Assessment of Policing and Community Safety (APACS) as 'any offence of most serious violence or weapon enabled crime, where the victim is aged 1-19'.

It may involve: physical assault, carrying, threatening with, or using weapons, often in the context of peer conflict or bullying, and it can also be associated with criminal exploitation.

Indicators:

- Unexplained gifts/new possessions – these can indicate children have been approached by/involved with individuals associated with criminal networks/gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation
- Increased absence from school
- Change in friendship/relationships with others/groups
- Significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm/significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault/unexplained injuries

Risk factors include:

- being male
- having been suspended, spent time in Alternative Provision or permanently excluded from school
- having experienced child maltreatment

- having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery
- having used drugs or alcohol in early adolescence, and
- having previously been a victim or previously perpetrated violence

Staff should report any concerns about a child carrying or using a weapon (or expressing intent to do so) to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy. The DSL or deputy will:

- Assess the risk to the individual pupil and others in the school, considering wider information or concerns
- Put in place a safety and support plan depending on the risk
- Consider actions to de-escalate peer conflict where relevant

Staff need a keen awareness that violence can often peak in the hours just before or just after school, when pupils are travelling to and from school and can concentrate in particular places.

27. Sharing Nudes and semi-nudes, including where generated by AI (previously sexting)

Nudes and semi-nudes, including where generated AI by refers to the creation, sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images by young people under the age of 18. KSCIE 2026 have used the term ‘nudes’ because it is the most widely understood by young people and best captures the full range of image-sharing behaviours. Images may be taken by the child themselves (sometimes referred to as ‘self-generated imagery’) or taken or created 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’ (KCSIE 2026).

The practice of children sharing nudes and semi nudes (formerly known as sexting or Youth produced Sexual Imagery) and videos via text message, email, social media or mobile messaging apps has become commonplace. However, this online technology has also given children the opportunity to produce and distribute sexual imagery in the form of photos and videos. Such imagery involving anyone under the age of 18 is unlawful (KCSIE 2026)

Nudes and semi nudes refers to all visual content, such as photographs, videos and livestreams.

- A person under the age of 18 creates and shares sexual imagery of themselves with a peer under the age of 18.
- A person under the age of 18 shares sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18 with a peer under the age of 18 or an adult.
- A person under the age if 18 is in possession of sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18.
- Voyeurism Act 2019 – Upskirting is now a criminal act in the UK. The response to this in schools need to be the same as child on child sexual abuse and may including contacting the police. The [Criminal Prosecution Service \(CPS\)](#) defines 'upskirting' as a colloquial term referring to the action of placing equipment such as a camera or mobile phone beneath a person’s clothing to take a voyeuristic photograph without their permission. It is not only confined to victims wearing skirts or dresses and

equally applies when men or women are wearing kilts, cassocks shorts or trousers. It is often performed in crowded public places, for example on public transport or at music festivals, which can make it difficult to notice offenders. “

All incidents of this nature should be treated as a safeguarding concern and in line with the UKCCIS guidance [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes](#)

Cases where sexual imagery of people under 18 has been shared by adults and where sexual imagery of a person of any age has been shared by an adult to a child is child sexual abuse and should be responded to.

If a member of staff is made aware of an incident involving sexting (also known as ‘youth produced sexual imagery’), they must report it to the DSL immediately.

They must **not**:

- View, download or share the imagery, or ask a pupil to share or download it. If they have already viewed the imagery by accident, they must report this to the DSL.
- Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it.
- Ask the pupil(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL’s responsibility).
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the pupil(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers.
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.

They must explain that they need to report the incident and reassure the pupil(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

The member of staff should confiscate the device involved and set it to flight mode or, if this is not possible, turn it off. Staff must not view, copy or print the youth produced sexual imagery.

Following a report of an incident, the DSL may hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to pupil(s).
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or young people’s social care.
- If it is necessary to view the imagery to safeguard the young person (in most cases, imagery should not be viewed).
- If further information is required to decide on the best response.
- Whether the imagery has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown).
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images from devices or online services.
- Any relevant facts about the pupils involved which would influence risk assessment.
- If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual.
- Whether to contact parents/carers of the pupils involved (in most cases parents should be involved).

Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is reason to believe that involving parents would put the child at risk of harm.

At any point in the process if there is concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to the Children and Families Hu or the Police as appropriate.

Immediate referral at the initial review stage should be made to Children's Social Care/Police if:

- The incident involves an adult.
- There is good reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to special education needs).
- What you know about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the child's development stage or are violent.
- The imagery involves sexual acts.
- The imagery involves anyone aged 12 or under.
- There is reason to believe a child is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery, for example the child is presenting as suicidal or self-harming.

If none of the above apply then the DSL will use their professional judgement to assess the risk to pupils involved and may decide, with input from the Headteacher, to respond to the incident without referral to the Children and Families Hub or the Police.

During the decision making the DSL will consider if:

- There is a significant age difference between the sender/receiver.
- There is any coercion or encouragement beyond the sender/receiver.
- The imagery was shared and received with the knowledge of the child in the imagery.
- The child is vulnerable, for example subject to Child in Need, Child Protection or Early Help plans, Looked After, SEND.
- There is a significant impact on the children involved.
- The image is of a severe or extreme nature.
- The child involved understands consent.

- The situation is isolated or if the image been more widely distributed.
- There other circumstances relating to either the sender or recipient that may add cause for concern.
- The children have been involved in incidents relating to youth produced imagery before.
- Voyeurism occurred.

If any of these circumstances are present the situation will be referred according to our child protection procedures, including referral to the social care or the Police.

The DSL will record all incidents of sharing nudes and semi-nudes, including the actions taken, rationale for actions and the outcome.

If at the initial review stage, a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL will conduct a further review, hold interviews with the pupils involved (if appropriate) to establish the facts and assess the risks. If at any point in the process there is a concern that a pupil has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

28. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Breast Ironing

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) FGM involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. FGM involves cutting and sometimes sewing the girl's genitalia, normally without anaesthetic, and can take place at any time from birth onwards. It is sometimes referred to as 'female circumcision' but this misnomer belies the invasive and irreversible nature of the procedure. It is now more correctly termed female genital mutilation.

Breast ironing (also known as breast flattening) is the pounding and massaging of a pubescent girl's breasts, using hard or heated objects, to try to make them stop developing or to disappear.

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 makes it a criminal offence, not only to carry out FGM in England, Scotland and Wales on a girl who is a UK national or permanent resident but also to take a girl out of the UK to have FGM performed abroad, even to countries where FGM is still legal. It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. [A mandatory reporting duty requires teachers to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s](#), which are identified in the course of their professional work, to the police.

The duty applies to all persons in school who is employed or engaged to carry out 'teaching work' in the school, whether or not they have qualified teacher status.

The duty applies to the individual who becomes aware of the case to make a report. It should not be transferred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, however the DSL should be informed.

If a teacher is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her or a teacher observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth, the teacher should personally make a report to the police force in which the girl resides by calling 101. The report should be made immediately.

School staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators of FGM.

The specific mandatory reporting duty for teaching staff above (report directly to the police) does not apply in cases where a pupil is at risk of FGM or FGM is suspected, but is not known to have been carried out. In these circumstances, staff must report to the DSL who would follow local statutory safeguarding procedures, this means share the information with children services so that a multi-agency view can be ascertained. Staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female pupils about going on a long holiday during the summer holiday.

If any agency becomes aware of a young person who may have been subjected to or is at risk of FGM they must make a referral to Children's Specialist Services. If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBA, Forced Marriage and / or FGM they should inform the DSL who will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multiagency liaison with police and children's social care. ([Crime and Policing Act 2026](#), [Crown Prosecution Service HBA](#), [Karma Nirvana](#), [Forced Marriage Unit FMU](#)).

There should also be consideration of potential risk to other girls in the family and practicing community. There may be older women in the family who have already had the procedure, and this may prompt concern as to the potential risk of harm to other female young people in the same family. Younger female siblings must also be considered. Any girl withdrawn from PSHE may be at risk as a result of her parents wishing to keep her uninformed about her body and rights.

Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm the teacher should report the case immediately to the police, including dialling 999 if appropriate.

There are no circumstances in which a teacher or other member of staff should examine a girl.

There are 4 types of procedure:

- Type 1 Clitoridectomy – partial/total removal of clitoris
- Type 2 Excision – partial/total removal of clitoris and labia minora
- Type 3 Infibulation entrance to vagina is narrowed by repositioning the inner/outer labia
- Type 4 all other procedures that may include: pricking, piercing, incising, cauterising and scraping the genital area.

Why is it carried out?

Belief that: FGM brings status/respect to the girl – social acceptance for marriage

- Preserves a girl's virginity
- Part of being a woman / rite of passage
- Upholds family honour
- Cleanses and purifies the girl
- Gives a sense of belonging to the community
- Fulfils a religious requirement
- Perpetuates a custom/tradition
- Helps girls be clean / hygienic
- Is cosmetically desirable
- Mistakenly believed to make childbirth easier

This procedure is also known as cutting, sunna, gudnin (Somali) and Tahur (Sudanese)

Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening are:

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony or becoming a woman.
- Family taking a long trip abroad
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM: Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:

- Prolonged absence from school and other activities

- Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
- Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
- Behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- Bladder, menstrual or stomach problems
- Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity or missing PE
- Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations
- Repeated urinal tract infection
- Complaining about pain or discomfort between the legs
- Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- Disclosure

29. Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities cannot) consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

Forced marriage is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights. Since June 2014 forcing someone to marry has become a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

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

School staff should never attempt to intervene directly as a school or through a third party. Contact should be made with the MAP and/or the Forced Marriage Unit 2007.

30. Honour-Based Abuse

Honour Based Abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. They are a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or

other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

Honour-Based Abuse might be committed against people who:

- become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion;
- want to get out of an arranged marriage; become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion;
- want to get out of an arranged marriage;
- want to get out of a forced marriage
- wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture

It is considered a violation of human rights and may be a form of domestic and/or sexual abuse.

31. One Chance Rule

All staff are aware of the 'One Chance' Rule' in relation to forced marriage, FGM and HBA. Staff recognise they may only have one chance' to speak to a child who is a potential victim and have just one chance to save a life.

The school are aware that if the victim is not offered support following disclosure that the 'One Chance' opportunity may be lost. Therefore, all staff are aware of their responsibilities and obligations when they become aware of potential forced marriage, FGM and HBV cases.

If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBA, Forced Marriage and / or FGM they should inform the DSL who will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multiagency liaison with police and children's social care. ([Crime and Policing Act 2026](#), [Crown Prosecution Service HBA](#), [Karma Nirvana](#), [Forced Marriage Unit FMU](#))

32. Private Fostering Arrangements

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or 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 years old or 18 years old if the child is disabled. A private arrangement is with someone who is not a :

- Parent or close relative (brother, sister, aunt, uncle, grandparent or step-parent)
- guardian or a person with parental responsibility

Private foster carers might be:

- friends of the young person's family
- someone willing to care for the young person of a family they don't know; or relatives not mentioned in the list above, for example a cousin or great aunt

Children looked after by the local authority or who are placed in residential schools, children's homes or hospitals are not considered to be privately fostered.

Private fostering occurs in all cultures and children may be privately fostered at any age.

The school recognises that most privately fostered children remain safe and well but are aware that safeguarding concerns have been raised in some cases. Therefore, all staff are alert to possible safeguarding issues, including the possibility that the child has been trafficked into the country.

By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify Children's Social Care as soon as possible.

However, where a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement, they will raise this with the DSL and the DSL will notify the local authority.

33. Children Looked After (CLA)

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and 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 legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.

The Designated Teacher and governor for Looked After Children will have the appropriate level training to equip them with the knowledge and skills to undertake their role.

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 Merton Council's Head of Virtual School.

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children will work in partnership with the Virtual School Assistant Headteacher to discuss how Pupil Premium Plus funding can be best used to support the progress of children in the school and meet the needs of the child's within their personal education plan.

33.1 Virtual School for Looked-After Children

Virtual School Heads have a responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of:

- **children in care,**
- **children previously in care;** and
- **children with a social worker** – defined as any child who has been assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and currently has a social worker; it also includes those who have been assessed as needing, or previously needing, a social worker within the past 6 years due to safeguarding or welfare reasons.

In line with Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) has been extended to include:

- **children who have previously had a social worker** – the cohort of children with a social worker and those who have previously had a social worker who are aged from 0 to 18; and
- **children in kinship care arrangements** - this means any friend or family member, who is not a child's parent but raising them for a significant amount of the time, either as a temporary or permanent arrangement.

Ursuline High School ensures that our Designated Teacher has the appropriate training, so they are able to take the leadership of this crucial area of our safeguarding arrangements in collaboration with our Designated Safeguarding Lead which includes:

- working closely with virtual school heads to ensure that funding is best used to support the child's educational achievement and development needs that are identified in their personal education plans
- collaborating with the virtual school heads to also promote the educational achievement of children previously in care.

34. Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a young person's welfare. The DSL (and any deputies) should make any referrals via C and F Hub so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into LA Children's Services where a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

35. Family Members in Prison

Young people who have children who have experienced parental imprisonment are more likely to be absent (or excluded) than their peers, to experience mental ill health and drug and alcohol misuse; they are also less likely to be in education, training or employment in later life. The school understands the need for tailored, trauma informed and sensitive support that can help mitigate potential harm and help encourage stability.

36. Contextual Safeguarding and Harm Outside The Home (HOTH)

As well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from influences outside of their families. The school recognises that these extra-familial threats might arise from within their peer groups, from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats.

Harm outside the home (HOTH) recognises that a child's environment and social context, including their peer network, community and wider societal influences can shape their behaviours, experiences and vulnerability. Consequently, contextual safeguarding seeks to identify and respond to harm occurring in these domains and to address the systems, norms and settings that allow such harm to occur. This includes altering unsafe environments as well as supporting the individual child..

Ursuline High School therefore considers these broader influences when assessing safeguarding risk and designing interventions. HOTH encompasses a range of extra-familial harms, including (but not limited to):

- Child-on-child and relationship abuse
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE) and child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Online abuse, grooming and harassment
- Missing episodes or absconding from education
- Gang involvement, serious youth violence and knife crime
- Radicalisation and extremist ideologies
- Trafficking and modern slavery
- Abuse or exploitation in public spaces, including transport networks, shops, parks or parties

At the Ursuline our Contextual Safeguarding indicators for 2026 are:

- Mental health
- Domestic abuse
- Online safety
- Gatherings (Drugs and Alcohol)
- Sexual violence and harassment

Staff are trained on contextual influences and follow the school procedures for reporting concerns to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Review contextual information, including peer dynamics, local intelligence and online activity where appropriate.
- Undertake contextual risk assessments, especially where patterns of harm or vulnerability extend beyond the home.
- Liaise with external agencies such as the Children's Services , Youth Services , Family Help or Police as necessary.
- Work with relevant partners to change or manage the environments where risk is present, and ensure interventions are child-centred, proportionate and responsive to the wider context.

37. Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The school recognises that children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers that can exist when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation in this group of children include:

- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children,
- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs,
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges risks that they do not understand that what is happening to them is abuse,
- 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 schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.

The school addresses these additional challenges by considering extra pastoral support for children with SEN and disabilities.

38. Alternative Provision

The vast majority of children engage positively with school and attend regularly. However, in order to flourish, some children require an alternative education offer or may require a modified timetable to support a return to full time education provision. It is recognised that children accessing alternative provision or a reduced or modified timetable may have additional vulnerabilities. Ofsted refer to these as Pupils Missing Out On Education, because they are not accessing their education in school in the 'usual way'.

Where children are educated offsite or in dual placements safeguarding risk assessments are completed.

The school will gain consent (if required in statute) from parents to put in place alternative provision and/or a reduced or modified timetable

The school will ensure that and parents (and the local authority where the pupil has a statement of special educational needs) are given clear information about alternative provision placements and reduced or modified timetables: why, when, where, and how they will be reviewed;

The school will keep the placement and timetable under review and involve parents in the review. Reviews will be frequent enough to provide assurance that the off-site education and/or modified timetable is achieving its objectives and that the pupil is benefitting from it;

The school will monitor and track children attending alternative provision to ensure that the provision meets the needs of the child

The school will comply with regular data returns requested by the Local Authority, regarding all pupils, of statutory school age, attending alternative provision and/or on a reduced or modified timetable.

The school leadership will report to governors of any formal direction of a pupil to alternative provision to improve behaviour.

The school leadership will report to governor's information regarding the use and effectiveness of the use of alternative provision and modified timetables.

Alternative Provision is education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education. Education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed period exclusion; and pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour.

When commissioning Alternative Provision **Ursuline High School** will have regard to statutory guidance:

[Alternative provision - GOV.UK](#) [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Where we place a learner with an alternative provision provider, Ursuline High School continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of the learner and should be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs.

The cohort of learners in Alternative Provision often have complex needs, Ursuline High School's governing board and proprietors of Ursuline High School will be made aware of the additional risk of harm that learners may be vulnerable to.

We will always obtain written information from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at their establishment (i.e. those checks that schools would otherwise perform on their own staff). includes written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform the commissioning school of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e. staff changes), so that the commissioning school can ensure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff.

The DSL will ensure appropriate safeguarding information is shared with the alternative provision provider, in line with information sharing, confidentiality and data protection requirements, so that the child can be safeguarded and supported effectively

39. Children Missing or Absent from Education (CME)

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

The school recognises that children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse and harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Absence from education maybe an indicator of need for early help support (Community Based or Targeted Early Help). Staff should follow procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing or are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions. The Attendance Officer will hold a list of pupils for whom there are known safeguarding issues. The DSL will be made aware of these pupils' absence and they will be reviewed in line with identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable learners.

These should be reported to the DSL and reviewed in line with identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable learners.

Ursuline High School will follow the guidance detailed in [Children Missing Education \(2016\)](#), [Working together to improve school attendance 2024](#) which states; how Ursuline High School must work with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns and [Merton's Good Practice Guidance for Identifying and Safeguarding Children Missing from Education \(CME\)](#). Ursuline High School will comply with submitting attendance returns to the Local Authority within the agreed timescales.

This will include notifying the local authority in which the child lives:

- of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly,
- or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more

Where possible the school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.

The school will ensure that there is a record of joiners and leavers as defined in [Working together to improve school attendance](#)

The school will ensure that there is a record of joiners and leavers as defined in [Working together to improve school attendance](#)

When removing a child's name, the school will notify the Local Authority of:

- (a) the full name of the child,
- (b) the full name and address of any parent with whom the child normally resides,
- (c) at least one telephone number of the parent,
- (d) the child's future address and destination school, if applicable, and
- (e) the ground in regulation 8 under which the child's name is to be removed from the school register.

The school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of a child jointly with the Local Authority, before deleting the child's name from the school register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f) (iii) and (h) (iii) of [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) 2006](#).

The school will:

- Enter pupils on the admissions register on the first day on which the school has agreed, or has been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.
- Notify the Local Authority within five days of adding a child's name to the admission register. The notification must include all the details contained in the admission register for the new pupil.
- Monitor each child's attendance through their daily register and follow the Merton Council procedure in cases of unauthorised absence.
- Remove a child's name from the admissions register on the date that the child leaves the school.
- Notify the Local Authority when they are about to remove a child's name from the school register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the regulations, no later than the date that the child's name is due to be removed.

Where parents notify the school, in writing, of their intention to electively home educate the school will forward a copy of the letter to the Elective Home Education Team / Education Welfare. Where parents orally indicate that they intend to withdraw their child to be home educated and no letter has been received, the school will not remove the child from roll and will notify Education Welfare at the earliest opportunity.

40. Elective Home Education

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

Where a parent/carer expresses their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, Ursuline High School will respond in line with [national Elective Home Education guidance](#), the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and local [Merton guidance](#). **Ursuline High School** will notify the Merton Local Authority of every learner where a parent has exercised their right to educate their child at home.

41. Children who need the support of a Social Worker

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs, such as abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances. These experiences can leave children vulnerable to further harm, as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

In addition to their responsibility with Looked After/ Previously Looked After Children the Virtual School Headteacher has a strategic responsibility for promoting the educational outcomes of children with a social worker. This includes the oversight of attendance, attainment and progress. The Virtual School Headteacher will engage with key professionals to help them understand the role they have in improving outcomes for children.

The local authority should inform the school if a child has a social worker, and the DSL should hold and use this information in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes, such as when decisions are made on:

- Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks
- The provision of pastoral and/or academic support

See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-children-in-need/review-of-children-in-need>

42. Education at Home

Where children are being asked to learn online at home the advice from the government will be followed using the latest version [Safeguarding and Remote Education](#)

43. School Attendance and Behaviour

Additional policies and procedures are in place regarding school attendance and behaviour.

The school recognises that absence from school and exclusion from school may be indicators of abuse and neglect, including the exploitation of children. The DSL will regularly liaise with members of school staff with responsibility for behaviour and attendance to ensure risk is identified and appropriate intervention is in place to protect children from harm.

Children who are absent from education or missing/absconding during the school day can also be a sign of a range of safeguarding concerns including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation.

The school will work in partnership with Merton Police and other partners for reporting children that go missing from the school site during the school day. Staff will be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

44. Restrictive Physical Intervention

We acknowledge that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, when a child is or at immediate risk of harming him/herself or others, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Such events should be fully recorded and signed by a witness.

Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention will be appropriately trained in “Positive Options” techniques. see Positive behaviour policy in Appendices

Staff understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection and/or disciplinary procedures.

We recognise that touch is appropriate in the context of working with children, and all staff have been given ‘Safe Practice’ guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundaries.

When applying disciplinary measures such as physical intervention or isolation for children with SEND the school will consider the risks, given the additional vulnerabilities of these children. (See Appendix B Positive Behaviour Support Policy)

45. Suspensions, permanent exclusions

When the school is considering suspending or permanently excluding a child where an additional vulnerability is identified it is important that the child's welfare is a paramount consideration. The Head Teacher will consider their legal duty of care when sending a learner home. **Ursuline High School** will exercise their legal duties in relation to their interventions. This includes:

- interventions will be consistent with statutory guidance [School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/school-suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions)
- whether a statutory assessment should be considered in line with the principles of [Children Act 1989](#),
- that decisions are made in an anti-discriminatory manner in line with the [Equality Act 2010](#) (including having regard to the [SEND Code of Practice](#))
- and takes into consideration the learner's rights under the [Human Rights Act 1998](#).

School will consider if an assessment of need should be undertaken with multi-agency partners with a view to mitigate any identified risk of harm this is in line with [Merton's Practice Framework :The Right Help – at the right time – in the right place](#)

If the child is subject to a child protection plan or where there is an existing child protection file, we will call a multiagency risk-assessment meeting prior to making the decision to exclude. In the event of a one-off serious incident resulting in an immediate decision to exclude, we must complete a risk assessment prior to convening a meeting of the governing body.

46. Mental Health

School has an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our students. All staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Examples of mental health problems that may develop into safeguarding concerns, including self-harm, suicidal ideation, eating disorders and risk of suicide. Although it is only appropriately trained professionals who can diagnose mental health problems, staff observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing mental health problems or be at risk of developing one including significant changes in behaviour, difficulty sleeping and physical signs of self-harm

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

Potential warning signs could include:

- significant changes in behaviour,
- ongoing difficulty sleeping,
- withdrawing from social situations,
- not wanting to do things they usually like, and

- physical signs of self-harm or neglecting themselves

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by speaking with one of the school's DSLs. School has access to a range of advice to help them identify children in need of extra mental health support; this includes working with external agencies. School has access to [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools Guidance](#)

47. Health (including Mental Health)

Any child with a significant health condition requiring regular medication or treatment will require an Individual Health Care Plan which will be completed with the parent and school nurse. It is vital that parents inform us if their child has a health condition of this nature to enable us to ensure that their child's health needs are managed appropriately whilst they are at school. Information from this plan will be shared with key staff members to ensure that they are alert to the child's individual needs.

48. Lettings

Ursuline High School has a legal duty of care to ensure we maintain a safe environment for children. If we receive an allegation or concern relating to an incident that has happened when an outside individual or organisation are using our school premises, we will ensure that we follow our school's safeguarding and child protection procedures, which includes reporting allegations to the LADO, Children's Social Care and Police if a crime has been committed.

It is the role of the Ursuline High School governing body to ensure any organisation that hires the school premises is compliant with the guidance set out in [Out-of-school settings: safeguarding guidance for providers - GOV.UK](#) In particular we have embedded within our lease agreement with external organisations the standards and expectations for them to provide evidence and assurance of their safeguarding and child protection procedures.

49. Adults who Supervise Pupils on Work Experience

When organising work experience, we will ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect young people from harm. We will consider whether it is necessary for barred list checks to be carried out on the individuals who supervise a pupil under 16 on work experience. This will depend on the specific circumstances of the work experience, including the nature of the supervision, the frequency of the activity being supervised, and whether the person providing the teaching, training, instruction or care or supervision to the child on a work experience placement or activity will be doing so frequently or for more than three days in a 30-day period, or overnight.

If the person working with the child is unsupervised and the same person is in frequent contact with the child, the work is likely to be regulated activity relating to children. If so, we will ask the employer providing the work experience to ensure that the person providing the instruction or training is not a barred person.

50. Pupils Staying with Host Families

Where Ursuline High School plans for pupils to be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to which they are not related (for example, during a foreign exchange visit), we will request enhanced DBS checks with barred list information on those people.

Where Ursuline High School organises hosting arrangements overseas and host families cannot be checked in the same way, we will work with our partner schools abroad to ensure that similar assurances are undertaken prior to the visit.

51. Whistle-blowing and Complaints

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues, poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding arrangements. If it becomes necessary to consult outside the school, they should speak in the first instance, to the LADO in accordance with the Whistleblowing Policy.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about a way a concern is being handled by their school. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Whistle-blowing regarding the Headteacher should be made to the Chair of the Governing Body or the CEO of Sancta Familia, Michael Feely, whose contact details are readily available to staff by contacting the Clerk to the Governors.

52. Complaints procedure

Parents and other complainants are encouraged to raise any safeguarding concerns or complaints directly with the DSL so the matter can be resolved as quickly and informally as possible.

Our complaints procedure will be followed where a parent raises a concern about the handling of the process of dealing with safeguarding. The school's complaints policy is on the school's website. Examples include unfairly singling out a pupil, belittling a pupil or discriminating against them in some way. Complaints are managed by senior staff, the Headteacher and governors.

Complaints from staff are dealt with under the school's complaints and disciplinary and grievance procedures.

APPENDIX A

Further advice on safeguarding and child protection is available from:

Contextual Safeguarding Network <https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/>

[UK Councils support sites](https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis>

Statutory Guidance to Relationships, education and sex education (RSE) and health education (2020) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

OFSTED publication on safeguarding during inspections <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills>

UK Council for Internet safety (UKCIS) guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-a-connected-world>

Additional advice and support

Abuse

- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) – DfE advice
- [Domestic abuse: Various Information/Guidance](#) - Home Office (HO)
- [Faith based abuse: National Action Plan](#) - DfE advice
- [Relationship abuse: disrespect nobody](#) - Home Office website

Bullying

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: <http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#) - DfE advice
- [Cyber bullying: advice for headteachers and school staff](#) - DfE advice

Children missing from education, home or care

- [Children missing education](#) - DfE statutory guidance
- [Child missing from home or care](#) - DfE statutory guidance
- [Children and adults missing strategy](#) - Home Office strategy

Children with family members in prison

- [National Information Centre on Children of Offenders](#) - Barnardo's in partnership with HM Prison and Probation Service

Child Exploitation

- [Trafficking: safeguarding children](#) - DfE and HO guidance

Drugs

- [Drugs: advice for schools](#) – DfE and ACPO advice
- [Drug strategy 2017](#) - Home Office strategy
- [Information and advice on drugs](#) - Talk to Frank website
- [ADEPIS platform sharing information and resources for schools: covering drug \(& alcohol\) prevention](#) - Website by Mentor UK

“Honour Based Abuse” (so called)

- [Female genital mutilation: information and resources](#) - Home Office guidance
- [Female genital mutilation: multi agency statutory guidance](#) - DfE, DH, and HO statutory guidance

Health and Well-being

- [Fabricated or induced illness: safeguarding children](#) - DfE, DH, HO
- [Rise Above: Free PSHE resources on health, wellbeing and resilience](#) - Public Health England
- [Medical-conditions: supporting pupils at school](#) - DfE statutory guidance
- [Mental health and behaviour](#) - DfE advice

Homelessness

- [Homelessness: How local authorities should exercise their functions](#) - Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government guidance

Online

- [Sexting: responding to incidents and safeguarding children](#) - UK Council for

Internet Safety

Private fostering

- [Private fostering: local authorities](#) - DfE statutory guidance

Radicalisation

- [Prevent duty guidance](#)- Home Office guidance
- [Prevent duty: additional advice for schools](#) and childcare providers - DfE advice
- [Educate Against Hate website](#) - DfE and Home Office advice
- [Prevent for FE and Training](#) - Education and Training Foundation (ETF)

Upskirting

- [Upskirting know your rights](#) – UK Government

Violence

- [Gangs and youth violence: for schools and colleges](#) - Home Office advice
- [Ending violence against women and girls 2016-2020 strategy](#) - Home Office strategy
- [Violence against women and girls: national statement of expectations for victims](#) - Home Office guidance
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#) - DfE advice
- [Serious violence strategy](#) - Home Office Strategy

Advice for governing bodies/proprietors and senior leaders

- [Childnet](#) provide guidance for schools on cyberbullying
- [Educateagainsthate](#) provides practical advice and support on protecting children from extremism and radicalisation
- [London Grid for Learning](#) provides advice on all aspects of a school or college's online safety arrangements
- [NSPCC](#) provides advice on all aspects of a school or college's online safety arrangements
- [Safer recruitment consortium](#) "guidance for safe working practice", which may help ensure staff behaviour policies are robust and effective
- [Searching screening and confiscation](#) is departmental advice for schools on searching children and confiscating items such as mobile phones
- [South West Grid for Learning](#) provides advice on all aspects of a school or college's online safety arrangements

- [Use of social media for online radicalisation](#) - A briefing note for schools on how social media is used to encourage travel to Syria and Iraq
- UK Council for Internet Safety have provided advice on [sexting-in-schools-andcolleges](#) and [using-external-visitors-to-support-online-safety-education](#)

Remote education, virtual lessons and live streaming

- [Case studies](#) on remote education practice are available for schools to learn from each other
- [Departmental guidance on safeguarding and remote education](#) including planning remote education strategies and teaching remotely
- [London Grid for Learning](#) guidance, including platform specific advice
- [National cyber security centre](#) guidance on choosing, configuring and deploying video conferencing
- [National cyber security centre](#) guidance on how to set up and use video conferencing
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) guidance on safe remote learning

Support for children

- [Childline](#) for free and confidential advice
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) to report and remove harmful online content
- [CEOP](#) for advice on making a report about online abuse
- [Home - Shore](#) - online resource which offers a confidential chat service that supports young people who are concerned about their own or someone else's sexual thoughts and behaviours.

Parental support

- [Childnet](#) offers a toolkit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, to set boundaries around online behaviour and technology use, and to find out where to get more help and support
- [Commonsensemedia](#) provide independent reviews, age ratings, & other information about all types of media for children and their parents
- [Government advice](#) about protecting children from specific online harms such as child sexual abuse, sexting, and cyberbullying

- [Government advice](#) about security and privacy settings, blocking unsuitable content, and parental controls
- [Internet Matters](#) provide age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls on a range of devices, and a host of practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world
- [Let's Talk About It](#) provides advice for parents and carers to keep children safe from online radicalisation
- [London Grid for Learning](#) provides support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online, including tips to keep primary aged children safe online
- [Lucy Faithfull Foundation StopItNow](#) resource can be used by parents and carers who are concerned about someone's behaviour, including children who may be displaying concerning sexual behaviour (not just about online)
- [National Crime Agency/CEOP Thinkuknow](#) provides support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) provides support for parents and carers from the NSPCC and O2, including a guide to social networks, apps and games
- [Parentzone](#) provides help for parents and carers on how to keep their children safe online
- [Parent info](#) from Parentzone and the National Crime Agency provides support and guidance for parents from leading experts and organisations
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) provide tips, advice, guides and other resources to help keep children safe online

APPENDIX B - Positive Behaviour Support Policy

Aim

This policy aims to outline how staff can promote positive relationships amongst students, avoid challenging behaviour and if necessary, manage behaviour that poses a risk to a student, or themselves and should be used in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy.

Context

We recognise the need to adopting a whole school approach to building relationships in order to best support positive behaviour and that challenging behaviour can be an expression of underlying needs, which should be addressed with appropriate support. Appropriate touch is a necessary part of school life, in creating a safe environment where student develop their emotional health and wellbeing and physical intervention may be needed **as a last resort, with the least amount of force, for the least amount of time necessary**, to ensure the safety of students. Any use of restrictive physical interventions should only be used by staff who have restraint training (SLT). All forms of physical punishment are strictly forbidden and there should be no physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of restraint. Any searching or confiscation of prohibited items is undertaken in line with our Prohibited Items Policy and can be carried out by the Headteacher or by the associate Headteacher accompanied by a female staff member.

Staff Guidance

To avoid misunderstandings, staff are advised when speaking to a student on their own, to use rooms with glass panels or have the door ajar, have another adult present where possible and on no account be in a locked room with a student.

If physical contact is appropriate, be clear that is a response to the student's needs and no more and would be understood as appropriate by an observer. When administering medical treatment, unless in an emergency, the door must be open and must always be treated by a female member of staff and if a student is required to remove clothing from, or provide access to, any part of the body normally considered private, then an adult chaperone must be present. Staff must not make unnecessary comments, which may be construed as having sexual connotations, in line with the Staff Code of Conduct. If a member of staff feels their actions have been or may be misconstrued, they should discuss the matter urgently with the Headteacher and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Before physical intervention, staff will:

- Remain calm and attempt to engender calm
- Tell the student to stop and explain to them what will happen if they do not
- Use a range of non-physical interventions aimed at calming or defusing situations in order to prevent further escalation

Whilst physical intervention, staff with restraint training will:

- Use the minimum amount of force required to achieve the desired outcome
- Tell the student that physical restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary
- Continue to use a range of non-physical interventions aimed at calming or defusing situations in order to prevent further escalation.

Reasonable force

The degree of force employed by staff must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent. Staff are not permitted to act in a way that might cause injury.

Training

All teaching and support staff have training on building positive behaviour management in the classroom or around school, as part of annual whole staff INSET, as well as ongoing input throughout the year. The Senior Leadership Team have further training on physical intervention and reasonable force, so they can support staff in challenging situations.

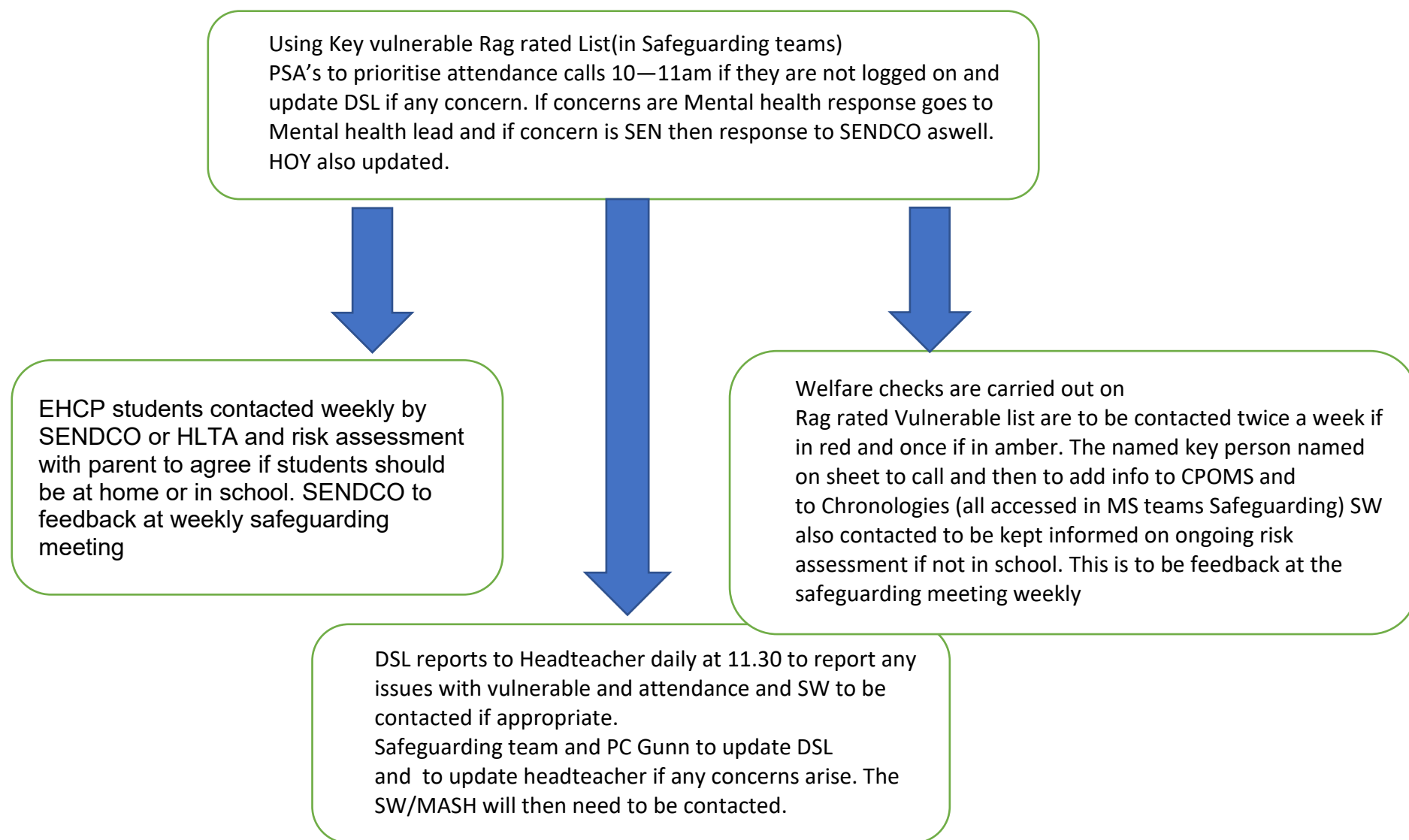
Recording incidents

All incidents where physical restraint has been necessary are recorded within one working day using the template provided by Merton (See Appendix C in full policy) and the Headteacher is informed immediately. Statements from students concerned are taken and parents/carers are informed. (See Appendix C in full policy).

Complaints

In line with our complaints procedure, any concerns expressed by parents will be dealt with in the first instance with informal discussion with the Headteacher. If dissatisfied, the parent may then submit a formal complaint to the Headteacher, in writing, explicitly stating that it is a formal complaint and specifying the nature as exactly as possible. If the parent is still dissatisfied with the response, we ask parents to refer the matter to the Governing Body via the clerk. (See Complaints Procedure and Safeguarding Policy).

APPENDIX C
Safeguarding School Closure



- Safeguarding team have access to safeguarding overview with social worker details
- Attendance to CP/CIN/LAC conferences to be attended via dial or webconference
- HOY and have met with students to go through support (trusted adult, kooth, OTR, CAMHS/social worker numbers if appropriate etc) if school closure.

Esafe

- Possible large increase of esafe if many students using laptops.
- Wellbeing co-ordinator has laptop and phone
- Wellbeing co-ordinator have DSL number
- Wellbeing co-ordinator will ring parents for high alert concerns and log on CPOMS
- Wellbeing co-ordinator would email parents of lower concerns and ask they discuss with daughter. Will log action on CPOMS
- A summary of this will be presented at the Safeguarding meeting weekly.

Communication with students and parents

- DDSL to email all students with reminder of Kooth online support
- Leaflet for parents and families for wellbeing during self-isolation
- Mental Health Lead will send an email every week regarding Physical and emotional wellbeing to staff and students.

APPENDIX D

Proposed training calendar Ted talks schedule 2026

INSET 1st Sept- KCSIE updates and school procedure reminders

Staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings) as required, but at least annually.

There will also be other training opportunities over the course of the year for example:

- Reminder of SG policy and procedures
- Staff code of conduct
- Multi agency work and family help/early help and prevention
- Mental health and school procedures
- Dealing with Sexual H and Violence
- Online safety and online harms
- Contextual SG at UHS
- Revisiting abuse
- Risk factors
- Prevent
- Case studies and revisiting procedures

- Revisiting attendance and children missing from school
- Equality and protected characteristics supported in school
- Summary and review of SG concerns and feedback on surveys
- Mental health and spotting sign in students
- LGBTQI And safe space
- Domestic Violence awareness
- Child on child abuse
- Concerns about colleagues and managing allegations
- Dealing with disclosures and reporting
- Resistant families and engagement
- Self harm and suicidal ideation
- Drug education

APPENDIX E

Dealing with concerns or disclosures regarding a child or young person

1. If you are concerned a pupil has been subjected to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) you must report this directly and immediately to the police. Also inform your DSL.

You have a concern about a child / young person's wellbeing, based on:

- a) Something the child / young person / parent has told you
- b) Something you have noticed about the child's behaviour, health, or appearance
- c) Something another professional said or did

Even if you think your concern is minor, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) may have more information that, together with what you know, represents a more serious worry about a child. - **It is never your decision alone how to respond to concerns – but it is always your responsibility to share concerns, no matter how small.**

2. **Decide whether you need to find out more** by asking the child / young person, or their parent to clarify your concerns, being careful to use open questions: beginning with words like: how, why, where, when, who?
3. **Let the child / young person / parent know what you plan to do next** if you have heard a disclosure of abuse or you are talking with them about your concerns. Do not promise to keep what s/he tells you secret. You may say for example, *"I am worried about your bruise and I need to tell Miss Jones so that she can help us think about how to keep you safe"*
4. **Inform the DSL immediately.** If the DSL is not available, inform their Deputy. If neither is available, speak to the Headteacher or other member of the Senior Leadership Team. **If there is no other member of staff available, you must make the referral yourself. Anyone can make a referral, but where you make a referral without reference to the Designated Safeguarding Lead first, they must be informed as soon as possible.**
5. **Make a written record** as soon as possible after the event on CPOMS, noting:
 - a) Name of child
 - b) Date, time and place
 - c) Who else was present
 - d) What was said / What happened / What you noticed speech, behaviour, mood, drawings, games or appearance
 - e) If child or parent spoke, record their words rather than your interpretation
 - f) Analysis of what you observed and why it is a cause for concern
6. **The DSL may take advice** from Children's Services /Social Care /First Response Team (020 8545 4226/4227) or other Children Social Care Team supporting schools safeguarding, such as the Vulnerable Children Team (020 8545 3343).
7. **The DSL makes the referral** to Social Care The referral will note all previous intervention by the school with the child, any relevant history relating to the child, their siblings or the family. It is not the role of the DSL or other staff in school to investigate or attempt to resolve a safeguarding/child protection concern.
8. **The DSL shares information** with other relevant professionals, recording reasons for sharing information and ensuring that they are aware of what action the other professionals will take as a result of information shared
9. **The DSL informs parent that they have made a CP referral**, if the parent does not already know, and if there is no reason not to let them know. There are a number of scenarios where the Social Care/First Response Team may suggest a delay in informing the parent where informing the parent might put the child at further risk or in order to prevent the child being harmed or intimidated (and retracting their disclosure). Such scenarios may be in cases of suspected sexual abuse or cases of suspected Fabricated or Induced Illness by proxy.
10. **The DSL remains in close communication** with other professionals around the child / young person and with the family, in order to share any updates about the child / young person
11. **If a child protection investigation is pursued**, the DSL and other key school staff will:
 - a) Work closely and collaboratively with all professionals involved in the investigation, to keep the child / young person safe

- b) Attend a child protection conference when invited and provide updated information about the child
- c) Attend any subsequent child protection review conferences.
- d) Attend core group meetings and take an active role in the implementation of the protection plan.

APPENDIX F

Confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential; however, a member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a pupil.

Where there is a child protection concern it will be passed immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or to Children's Social Care.

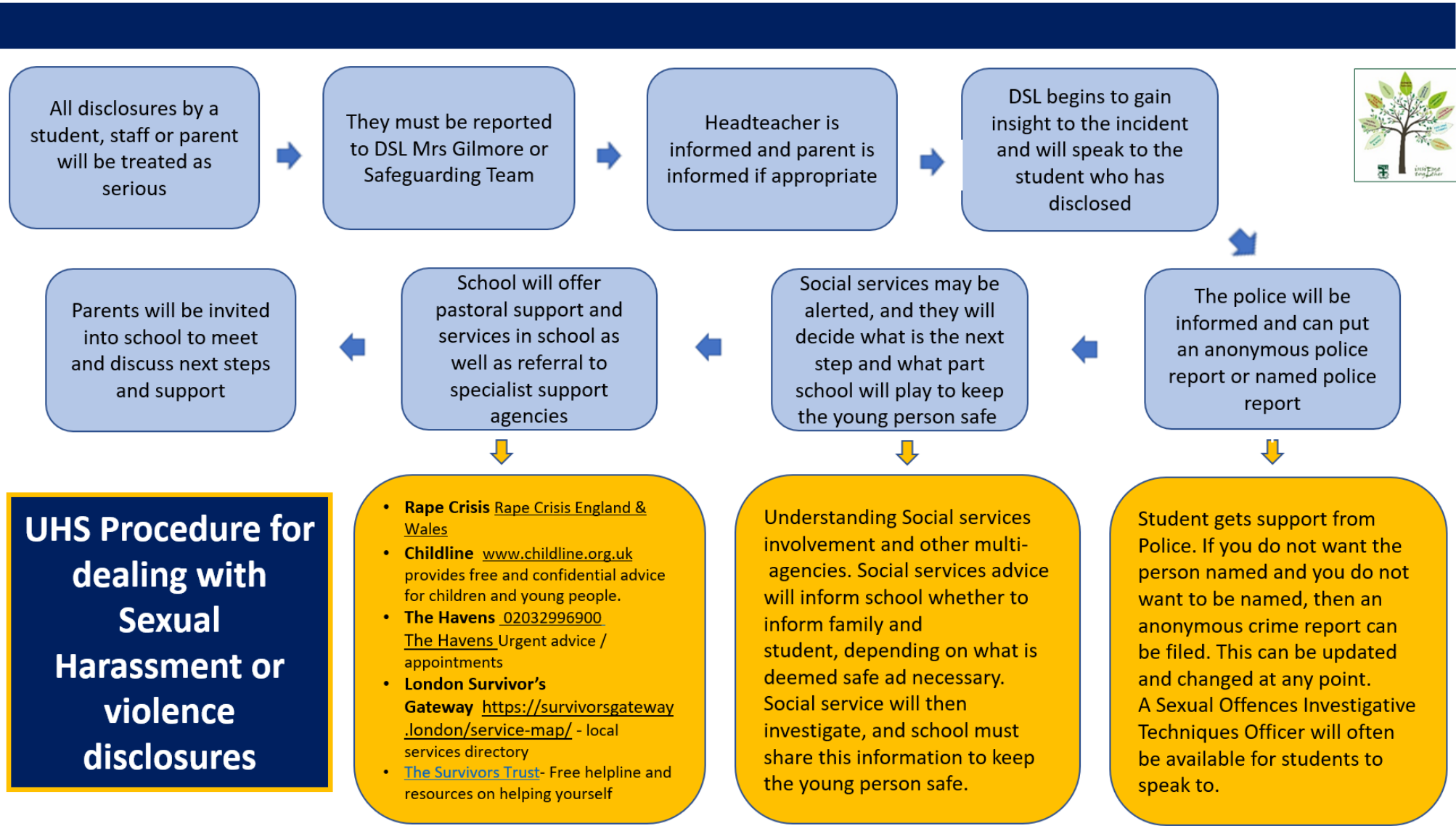
The head teacher or Designated Senior Person will disclose personal information about a pupil to other members of staff, including the level of involvement of other agencies, only on a 'need to know' basis.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

APPENDIX G: All allegations against an adult who works with children must be reported to the Headteacher for safeguarding in school who will then progress the



Appendix H- UHS Procedures Reporting sexual Harassment flow diagram



Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in school and colleges Guidance Summary

Sexual violence or sexual harassment can occur between 2 children of any sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. The guidance defines the following terms:

Sexual violence includes:

- rape
- assault by penetration
- sexual assault - intentionally touching another person in a way that is sexual.

Sexual Harassment:

The guidance defines sexual harassment as 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. Sexual harassment is likely to:

- violate a child's dignity, and/or
- make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or
- create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Harmful Sexual Behaviors:

- The guidance describes harmful sexual behaviours as problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviours that are developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if 1 of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than 2 years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. Children displaying harmful sexual behaviours have often experienced their own abuse and trauma.

Children who experience sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find it stressful and distressing. It is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and more likely that sexual harassment will be perpetrated by boys. Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can be especially vulnerable.

School's legal responsibility:

Schools have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the students at their school. As part of this duty, schools are required to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

The guidance states that schools should:

- consider the makeup of their own student body, including the gender and age range of its pupils, and whether additional support for students with protected characteristics - who are potentially at greater risk - is appropriate

- consider what they can do to foster healthy and respectful relationships between boys and girls including through relationship and sex education (RSE) and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE)
- ensure that their response to boy on boy and girl on girl sexual violence and sexual harassment is equally robust as it is for sexual violence and sexual harassment between students of the opposite sex.

A whole school approach safeguarding and child protection

A whole school approach to preventing child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment means involving everyone in the school, including the governing body, all the staff, all the students and their parents or carers.

The school's approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment should reflect and be part of the broader approach to safeguarding. Safeguarding procedures with regard to sexual violence and sexual harassment should be transparent, clear and easy to understand for staff, pupils, parents and carers.

Schools can play an important role in preventative education. Through PSHE and SRE - which may tackle such issues as:

- healthy and respectful relationships
- what respectful behaviour looks like
- gender roles, stereotyping, equality
- body confidence and self-esteem
- prejudiced behaviour
- that sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong
- addressing cultures of sexual harassment.

Managing the disclosure

The school's initial response to a disclosure from a child is important. It is essential that victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

The guidance outlines effective safeguarding practice including:

- not promising confidentiality at this initial stage as it is very likely a concern will have to be shared further
- listening carefully to the child, being non-judgmental, being clear about boundaries and how the disclosure will be progressed
- only recording the facts as the child presents them.
- informing the DSL, as soon as practically possible.

Risk Assessment

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the DSL should make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The risk and needs assessment should consider the:

- victim
- alleged perpetrator
- both other students and, if appropriate, staff at the school.

Actions:

The DSL is likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to decide on the school's initial response. In all cases, schools should follow general safeguarding principles outlined in [Keeping children safe in education](#).

The guidance includes advice on students sharing a classroom following a report of sexual violence, sexual harassment and during a criminal investigation.

APPENDIX I

Working at The Ursuline- Safeguarding Children and Young People Safe Working Practice Agreement

All adults working at Ursuline High School have a **duty of care** for the physical and mental well-being of all children here. For the purposes of child protection, a young person is recognised as a child up to the age of 18 years or over 18 and still accessing education at the Ursuline. Ursuline High School's Child Protection Policy is available to all working here, and to parents. The staff code of conduct gives clarity to the measures needed to ensure that all employees and students can work within and enjoy being part of a safe and caring environment.

All adults working here must report concerns about a child, however insignificant that concern might be.

Section A Reporting- Guidance on how staff should report a concern

Keeping children and yourself safe when responding to disclosures

Staff are encouraged to be professionally curious as it is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect. They should try to understand the daily life of the child and explore any indicators of abuse and neglect to fully assess any potential risk by having a holistic view and understanding and this means not taking things at face value by exercising respectful uncertainty.

1. Disclosure:

If a child discloses something to you, follow these guidelines:

1. Receive

- Keep calm
- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief

- Take what is being said to you seriously

2. Respond

- Reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing in talking to you
- Be honest and do not make promises you cannot keep e.g. "It will be alright now"
- Do not promise confidentiality; you have a duty to refer
- Reassure and alleviate guilt if the pupil refers to it e.g. "you're not to blame"
- Reassure the child that information will only be shared with those who need to know

3. React

- React to the pupil only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer the matter, but do not interrogate for full details
- Do not ask leading questions; "Did he/she....?" Such questions can invalidate evidence.
- Do ask open "TED" questions; Tell, explain, describe
- Do not ask the pupil to repeat it all for another member of staff
- Explain what you must do next and who you must talk to

4. Record

- Make some brief notes at the time on any paper which comes to hand and write them up as soon as possible
- Do not destroy your original notes
- Record the date, time, place, any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child. Always ensure that as far as possible you have recorded the actual words used by the child.
- Record statements and observable things rather than your interpretations or assumptions. Sign and date.

5. Report

- Report the disclosure in person to the DSL or a member of the safeguarding team
- Record the disclosure on CPOMS

6. Support

- Seek support for yourself if needed.

2. Concerns:

If you are worried about a child it is your professional duty to report your concerns. Your concern might be owing to some form of child abuse. You do not need to make a judgement but you do need to share your concerns. There are four official categories of child abuse:

Physical abuse (possible signs are: bruises, burns, cuts, marks, frequent 'accidents', unexplained injuries, aggressive play and behaviour)

- **Neglect** (possible signs are: hunger, poor hygiene, inadequate clothing, frequent lateness, poor attendance, tiredness, untreated medical problems, appearing withdrawn, loss of weight/being constantly underweight, poor relationships with peers, low self-esteem or withdrawn presentation, compulsive stealing and/or scavenging, rocking, hair twisting or thumb sucking, poor achievement, poor appearance)

Emotional abuse (possible signs are: mood swings, poor relationships, excessive fear or anxiety, low self esteem, withdrawn, very passive, dominating behaviour)

Sexual abuse (possible signs are: inappropriate sexual behaviour with others, inappropriate sexual language, self harm, recurrent pains or headaches, needing the toilet a lot, difficulty sitting, difficulty concentrating, secretive online behaviour)

In addition to the 4 official categories be aware of:

Online abuse. It's important to remember that emotional and sexual abuse can also happen virtually (possible signs are: spending more time online or offline, more emotional responses to being online, signs of sexual abuse, being secretive about their phone or what they do online, unsupervised time on devices)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) concerns to be aware of include: hacking and scams, 'deepfake' pornography, fake news and misinformation, AI-generated child sexual abuse images, 'catfishing' and extortion.

Domestic Abuse : 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. Exposure to domestic abuse is very harmful for children (what they see, hear or experience). These can include mental health difficulties, physical symptoms, emotional difficulties and social difficulties.

An emerging problem(s) that indicates a child may need some Family Help/Early Help support.
Concerns might amount to no further action needed or they could lead to something significant.

3. Report to the Headteacher (or in the case of an allegation concerning the Head teacher to the Chair of Governors or the CEO of Sancta Familia as soon as possible

- If you have concerns about a member of staff (including trainee teachers and supply staff), volunteer or visitor
-
- Any behaviour or situation which may give rise to complaint, misunderstanding or misinterpretation against yourself
- Any difficulties you are experiencing, for example, coping with a student presenting particularly challenging behaviour, situations where you anticipate that you may not be sufficiently qualified, training or experienced to deal with or handle appropriately
- Any behaviours of another student in the school which give you cause for concern or breach of this code of conduct or other school policies and procedures

4. FGM

In a circumstance in which you believe that FGM may have been carried out on a pupil it is your responsibility to inform the police immediately via 101, and the DSL. This is part of the mandatory reporting duty.

5. Reporting and Referral procedure:

All concerns must be shared with the Headteacher or an appropriate person Ursuline High School depending on the nature of the concern:

Safeguarding Team :



Sixth Form Safeguarding Team:



- Or another member of the Senior Leadership Team.

- Make sure you pass on all written notes or statements with the time and date they were written.
- If you are reporting concerns, make sure you follow this up by recording the incident via CPOMS and alerting the safeguarding team in person if concerns is significant. CPOMS is not a reporting system – safeguarding concerns needs to be reported in person.
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO 0208 545 3179)

Section B Staff Code of Conduct

Ursuline High School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that students are cared for appropriately and safeguarded from any harm, and their duty to promote the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community.

The staff code of conduct gives clarity to the measures needed to ensure that all employees and students can work within and enjoy being part of a safe and caring environment.

It is acknowledged that the vast majority of employees behave appropriately whilst working with our students. Whilst it is recognised that the individual members of an organisation may hold differing values and opinions, adults working in a school are in a position of trust and their conduct is, therefore, governed by specific laws and guidance and the policies and procedures agreed by the Headteacher and Governing Body.

Staff occasionally express uncertainty as to what is and is not acceptable and seek guidance regarding those behaviours which, whilst most probably innocent, may be perceived by others as inappropriate.

The following is, therefore, a code of appropriate conduct for all adults working in or on behalf of the school, including those involved in home visits or any out of school activities. Adherence to this code should ensure that both students and adults are safe from misconduct or unfounded allegations of misconduct.

All staff must:

- Adhere to all school policies, many of which are specifically written with safeguarding in mind. For example: Safeguarding policy 2026-2027, Positive Mental Health, Self-harm Protocol, Behaviour, Low level concerns policy, Anti Bullying, Diversity & Equality, LGBTQI Guidance, Health and Safety, Online safety and GDPR policy.
- Behave in a mature, respectful, tolerant, safe, fair and considered manner at all times.
- Provide a good example and 'positive role model' to the students.
- Observe other people's right to confidentiality (unless you need to report something to the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead e.g. concerns about a child protection issue).
- Treat all students equally; never confer favour on particular students, or build 'special relationships' with individual students, except where one to one working is part of a plan agreed with your manager (e.g. for counselling, tuition, mentoring or other purpose).
- Report any concerns that they have about the conduct of an adult working or visiting the School which may place a child, the member of staff concerned, another member of the community or the reputation of the School at risk, you have a duty to report it.
- Work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way including self-reporting if their conduct or behaviour falls short of these guiding principles.
- Ensure there is a culture of vigilance which will help to ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the School are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the School.
- Always encourage a culture of transparency and accountability, and open communication with no secrets both between staff and between staff and students.
- Safeguard students by ensuring that there is an understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour and a willingness to raise concerns about adult behaviour which is inappropriate or misguided.
- Follow the guidance for reporting low-level concerns.
- Never give the impression of having favourites. Generally, only give gifts to a student as part of an agreed reward system. When giving gifts (say, Christmas chocolates for the class), ensure that these are of insignificant value and given to all students equally.
- Always self-report to the DSL if they are unsure about any of their actions and how they could potentially be mis-construed to mis-interpreted.
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Ensure that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

You should never:

- Behave in a manner that could lead a reasonable person to question your conduct, intentions or suitability to care for other people's children.
- Touch students in a manner which is or may be considered sexual, threatening, gratuitous or intimidating.
- Discriminate either favourably or unfavourably towards any students.
- Give personal contact details, text, email or telephone except for agreed work purposes using work IT, or make arrangements to contact, communicate or meet students outside of work.
- Develop one to one 'personal' or sexual relationships with students, or with students that have left the school within 3 years of being a student.
- Push, hit, kick, punch, slap, throw missiles at or smack a student or threaten to do so.
- Be sarcastic, embarrass or humiliate, make remarks or 'jokes' to students of a personal, racist, discriminatory, intimidating or otherwise inappropriate or offensive nature.
- Allow, encourage or condone students to act in an illegal, improper or unsafe manner e.g. smoking or drinking alcohol.
- Behave in an illegal or unsafe manner, for example, whilst transporting students exceeding the speed limit, being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, driving a vehicle which is known to be un-roadworthy or otherwise unsafe or not having appropriate insurance, using a mobile phone whilst driving, fail to use seatbelts and drive in a safe manner at all time.
- Undertake any work with students when you are not in a fit and proper physical or emotional state to do so. For example, under the influence of medication which induces drowsiness; with a medical condition which dictates that you should not be caring for students; under extreme stress which is likely to impair your judgement.

Relationships with students and ex-students

- Staff must not (including visiting staff, coaches and volunteers) develop a relationship with a former student where the relationship is based on the abuse of trust fostered through a normal staff - student relationship. For this reason, the School strongly advises staff that they should not embark on a sexual relationship with a former student unless it can be demonstrated that there is no imbalance of power within the relationship.
- Staff should always be aware that a sexual relationship with a former student, regardless of the time since they have left school, is likely to provoke questions regarding their integrity.
- Our school requests that our staff continue to regard students as students for at least three years from leaving school and avoid forming friendships with students during this time (which includes via social media and virtual means). When contacting former students within this timeframe you should use School channels of communication, such as your school email address.
- Inevitably, there will be times when we meet ex-students in more informal circumstances. We are required to act with the same degree of care and integrity as we would with a student at the School.

- The relationship between a teacher and an ex-student is still one of a role model/mentor and will have developed as a result of your contact with the student at school and the trust between a teacher and a student. If you are concerned about relationships with ex- students, discuss it with a senior colleague for clarification and advice. Contact between yourself and ex-students should still be via formal means such as school email
- If you are going to meet ex-students you should inform the Headteacher and or the DSL before the meeting to discuss arrangements and so that the meeting is logged.

Social contact outside of school

- We should not establish or seek to establish social contact with students for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Social contact with students should only ever be in the context of a **formal school activity** or as the result of a relationship between families. Even if a young person seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, we must maintain our professionalism and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.
- Report and record any situation which may place a child at risk or compromise the School or your own professional standing. Sending personal communications such as personal letters of condolence, birthday or faith cards should be recorded and, where possible, should be discussed with a senior colleague beforehand.
- If you are also a parent of children at the School you will inevitably have social contact with other students; this is necessary and normal. You should generally be alert to any comments or actions which may be overheard or misconstrued, even in your own home.
- Restricting social contact to formal school activity means that you should never just go for a drink with student/s without making formal arrangements and ensuring that the School knows and parents are informed. Going to social venue with students informally is unacceptable unless the contact is the result of family relationships outside of school and the DSL is aware.
- It is difficult to imagine any situation for staff who are professionally responsible for young people, where it would be acceptable to drink alcohol or be under the influence of alcohol. Social occasions arranged by/in school should have at the very least non-alcohol drinks available.

Communication and Social Media

- We should not give our personal details such as home/mobile phone number; home or personal email address to students or their families unless the need to do so is agreed with a member of the SLT. Any involvement with students through social media must be discussed with a member of SLT immediately.
- When communicating with students remotely then only use official UHS channels, such as our Office 365 accounts.

- Ensure that **personal** social networking sites are set at private and students are never listed as approved contacts or friends.
- Do not use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to a student. Internal email and Office 365 tools are the appropriate ways to communicate with students and should be used in accordance with school policy which includes proper policing.
- Social media such as Facebook groups and Twitter feeds may be a good way to disseminate information. A member of the SLT should always be informed about such communication or the establishment of groups and should be a member of them.
- They should be closed or private groups and it is the responsibility of the member of staff who administers the group to add and remove members of the group. Remember that comments you post should remain professional and appropriate to the context of the group and you have a duty to manage the content of that group.
- Remember (and assume) that your personal online profile is public (despite privacy settings) and may be tagged or shared by friends. Never post pictures or comments which could be used to question your professionalism or suitability to work with children.
- When using School Office 365 communication tools ensure they are used in a professional manner. Be mindful of the manner in which references to students, parents and staff are made, and be conscious that these communications may need to be shared should a subject access request be made.

APPENDIX J – Early Help

All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit Community Based Early Help or Family Help. Family Help (previously known as Early help) means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life.

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

- Is disabled
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education health and care (EHC) plan)
- Is a young carer
- Is bereaved
- Has exhibited early signs of abusive, violent or harmful behaviours
- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including being affected by gangs and county lines and organised crime groups and/or serious violence, including knife crime
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, care or home
- Is at risk of exploitation, modern slavery, trafficking including sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- Is at risk of being radicalised into terrorism
- Is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate online content (for example, linked to violence), or developing inappropriate relationships online
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol
- Is suffering from mental ill health
- Has returned home to their family from care
- Is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage
- Is a privately fostered child
- Has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending

- Is missing education, or persistently absent from school, or not in receipt of full-time education
- Has been repeatedly removed from the classroom, experienced multiple suspensions, is on a part-timetable, is at risk of or has been permanently excluded
- Is pregnant and/or is a parent themselves

Staff, volunteers and governors must follow the procedures of reporting a safeguarding concern as detailed in section 10 of the policy and in the staff code of conduct

Appendix K

Making a referral to Children's Services and/or requesting support.

What children and young people need to know and do to report safeguarding concerns (abuse neglect and exploitation)

What you can do to report concerns:

- You can speak to any member of staff of your choice. Those staff will listen and support you, and we have a team of DSL / DDSL in our school who have a specific role to support children and therefore it is likely that the staff members will talk to them or arrange for you to.

The DSL may seek advice, and / or refer to
[Children and Families Hub](#) for consultation and /or request for service: candfhub@merton.gov.uk

Where a referral is urgent,
please call on 020 8545 4226 / 4227 and
ask to speak to a duty social worker.

[Request for Service Form](#)

The Children and Families Hub is open between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday (working days only). Referrals received outside of those hours will not be considered until the next working day.

The out of hours Children's Emergency Duty Team should be contacted on 020 8770 5000, outside of core working hours.

If you are being abused, neglected or exploited you can call Children and Families Hub:
020 8545 4226 / 4227.

If you are in immediate danger and/or think a crime has/is being committed, you can call the Police on **999**.

You can contact the NSPCC Helpline by calling 0808 800 5000 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

All our staff at Ursuline High School are expected to be familiar with the wide range of policies and procedures we have to keep our children safe and promote their wellbeing at all times.

Appendix L – Safer Recruitment

Safer Recruitment practices which are followed include:

1. SCR fully is maintained.
2. References obtained before appointment.
3. Teacher prohibition checks completed.
4. Overseas checks completed where required.
5. Section 128 checks completed.
6. Agency assurances obtained.
7. Volunteer DBS checks completed.
8. Governor DBS and Section 128 checks recorded