



## Pegasus Academy Trust Child Protection Policy

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1** This document is a statement of the aims and strategies for the protection of pupils from harm within The Pegasus Academy Trust. We aim to promote an inclusive, anti-discriminatory culture where racism, and other forms of discriminatory behaviour are recognised, challenged and addressed as part of our safeguarding responsibilities.
- 1.2** The schools, staff, parents, carers, Members of the Academy Councils (MACs) and Directors share a common responsibility to keep our children safe. ["Keeping Children Safe in Education: statutory guidance for schools and colleges"](#) ('KCSiE' –DfE, updated 09/26) and "Working Together to Safeguard Children (updated 12/23)" provide statutory guidance and a framework for enabling schools to fulfil their statutory duties effectively and efficiently in the best interests of children. This policy has been updated in the light of two major pieces of legislation which received Royal Assent in 2026. These are:
- a) The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act and
  - b) The Crime and Policing Act.
- 1.3** There are five key contributions within The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act:
- a) Establishing statutory multi-agency child protection teams, bringing police, and children's social care together for the most serious cases;
  - b) Introducing a single unique identifier for children across services, to help prevent children falling through gaps;
  - c) Placing a duty on local housing authorities to notify schools when a child is placed in temporary accommodation;
  - d) Requiring local authorities to offer family group decision making meetings before applying for a care or supervision order;
  - e) Creating a duty on local authorities to maintain a register of children not in school .
- 1.4** There are five key contributions within The Crime and Policing Act:
- a) Creating a new standalone offence of child criminal exploitation, so it no longer has to be proved through linked offences such as drugs or violence;
  - b) Creating a new offence of 'cuckooing' - taking control of a person's home, including a child's, for criminal purposes;
  - c) Introducing a mandatory duty for staff in education and childcare to report child sexual abuse to the police and children's social care;
  - d) Making grooming a statutory aggravating factor when sentencing for sexual offences against children;
  - e) Removing the supervised volunteer exemption from regulated activity, widening who needs an enhanced DBS and barred list check.

Our schools have a statutory responsibility in the area of child protection to recognise abuse and to refer concerns about abuse to the appropriate agency, i.e. social services/care, police or the NSPCC. We take seriously the responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of the children and young people entrusted to our care.

- 1.5** We recognise that safeguarding against female genital mutilation (FGM), trafficking and sexual exploitation, peer on peer abuse, exposure to domestic violence, voyeurism, on-line abuse, racism, radicalisation and extremism are as important as safeguarding against any other vulnerability. We are aware that poor mental health could be an indicator of abuse, neglect or exploitation. From 2024, the term "exploitation" has been included in KCSiE. The headings reflect the potential for abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The definition of abuse

has expanded to highlight that witnessing the ill-treatment of others, such as domestic abuse, is harmful to children. This policy meets requirements relating to safeguarding and welfare in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

- 1.6** The names of the **designated safeguarding leads (DSLs)** with overall responsibility for child protection are displayed around our schools and are given to any parent or carer requesting the information. The designated leads are also identified at the beginning of the autumn term annually when child protection training is delivered to the whole Trust. Any member of staff, member of an academy council, director or parent should contact one of the designated leads if there is a concern about a particular child. If the suspicions in any way involve one of the designated leads, then the report should be made in the first instance to another designated lead within the Trust.
- 1.7** **Lynne Sampson** is the overall lead for safeguarding within The Pegasus Academy Trust and each school has a lead DSL and deputies.

## **2. Our aims**

- 2.1** This policy is supported by the aims of the Pegasus Academy Trust (PAT) but we strive particularly to provide:
- a)** An ethos in which all children feel safe, secure, valued and respected;
  - b)** A culture where equality of opportunity exists for all;
  - c)** A place where children can feel confident to talk openly and be sure of being listened to;
  - d)** Support for children, parents and staff in difficult situations relating to child protection.

## **3. Ways of achieving these aims**

- 3.1** Children are taught to understand the need for 'being safe' and ways in which they can help to protect themselves.
- 3.2** Children and staff are made aware of the ways in which pupils can be protected when accessing the internet when they are working in school and at home. In line with "KCSiE" (September 2026) we review the effectiveness of our IT systems at least annually. The London Grid for Learning (LGfL) provides our filtering and monitoring services whilst 'Securely' and 'SENSO keystroke alert' are the system we have chosen to monitor children's online activity. These alert DSLs immediately of any inappropriate or concerning on-line search carried out by a child.
- 3.3** During assemblies and in class, children are spoken to about such issues as 'Stranger Danger', etc.
- 3.4** The Trust's behaviour policy encourages positive reinforcement of good behaviour and defines clearly what is, and is not, acceptable behaviour. The policy was most recently reviewed in October 2023.
- 3.5** The Trust follows a personal and social education programme that gives children the opportunity to consider and discuss many aspects of life, helping them to understand the dangers of abuse and how they can be protected. In line with KCSiE (September 2026) we consider how to develop opportunities to teach safeguarding. For example, children are encouraged to voice their feelings and understand that it is right to say 'No' in certain situations. Children are taught about the importance of good "mental health" which is promoted throughout their school life. Classes use 'circle time' as a valuable method of discussing and resolving difficult issues amongst children.

- 3.6** During the school day children are carefully supervised. Duty teachers and teaching assistants supervise them during playtime, and lunchtime supervisors care for them during their lunch break with duty teachers as support. Each class teacher takes responsibility for their class at the end of the day until every child has left, or passes that responsibility onto another member of staff.
- 3.7** All visitors who come into one of the schools must come through the main entrance and report to the office, signing their name in the visitors' book with their time of arrival and departure.
- 3.8** We pride ourselves on fostering a friendly, welcoming relationship with parents at our schools. The Heads of School have an 'open door' policy whereby parents may come to talk to them about their concerns when the need arises or make an appointment if the Head is not immediately available. If there is an issue concerning child protection, it is hoped they will feel free to talk openly to them or a member of the teaching staff.

#### **4. Signs and symptoms of abuse**

- 4.1** All staff in the Trust and voluntary helpers should be aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse. A referral should be made if there are signs that a) the child is likely to suffer significant harm in the future or b) the child may already have suffered abuse or neglect. "KCSiE" (2026) also states that harm can include witnessing harm to others, for example in domestic abuse. If in doubt, any concern should be raised with one of the Trust's designated leads.
- 4.2** Definitions for referral:
- a)** Abuse and neglect
  - b)** Physical abuse
  - c)** Emotional abuse
  - d)** Sexual abuse

**Appendix A** gives a clear definition of these definitions and explains factors relating to female genital mutilation, trafficking and exploitation, peer on peer abuse, domestic abuse, radicalisation and extremism.

#### **5. Procedures and record keeping**

- 5.1** Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse from a child, or noticing signs or symptoms of possible abuse in a child, will make written notes as soon as possible (e.g. within an hour), writing down exactly what was said or seen, putting the scene into context, and giving the time and location. Staff who have concerns about a child's mental health should also follow our procedures as we are aware of the possible links between mental health and child protection.
- 5.2** Dates and times of events should be recorded as accurately as possible, together with a note of when the record was made. The written note must then be given to one of the designated leads who may ask the member of staff to complete a 'Child Protection expression of concern form, a copy of which is attached to this policy at **Appendix C**.
- 5.3** All hand-written notes will be kept, even if they are subsequently typed up in a more formal report.

- 5.4** It is the responsibility of the DSL to decide whether and when to make a referral to Social Services/Care. Some concerns may need to be monitored over a period of time before a decision to be referred is made.
- 5.5** If, after consultation, a member of staff feels that appropriate action is not being taken s/he may refer directly to Social Services/Social Care, but staff are encouraged to inform one of the Executive Principals that they are doing so.
- 5.6** Any concerns that involve allegations against a member of staff should be referred immediately to one of the DSLs who will contact the LA to discuss and agree further action to be taken in respect of the child and the member of staff.
- 5.7** In line with KCSIE from 2025 all decisions made and reasons for are noted.
- 5.8** KCSIE 2025 also introduced the need to be aware of risks online relation to "misinformation," "disinformation" and "conspiracy theories." [paragraph 13]). The On-line safety policy and the Trust's filtering and monitoring systems are explained in our On-line Safety policy and our Safeguarding policy.

## **6. The child protection register**

- 6.1** DSLs inform members of staff who have direct pastoral responsibility (i.e. class teachers) of children whose names are on the child protection register. These children must be monitored very carefully and the slightest concern should be recorded on an incident sheet and passed immediately to one of the designated leads.
- 6.2** When a child who is on the register leaves one of the schools, a DSL will inform the child's new school immediately and discuss with their designated lead the transfer of any confidential information the school may hold.

## **7. The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

- 7.1** The DSL shall ensure that s/he is fully conversant with statutory child protection requirements and will co-ordinate action on child abuse within school, ensuring that staff are aware of their own responsibilities in relation to child protection. Each Head of School has overall responsibility for child protection in their school but may designate some, or all, of these responsibilities to other designated leads.
- 7.2** S/he is responsible for referring individual cases of suspected abuse to social services/care department, and for liaising with that department and other agencies on these and other general issues relating to child protection.
- 7.3** S/he has responsibility for organising training on all aspects of child protection within the Trust and acts as a point of reference on child protection issues for other staff. Lynne Sampson has overall responsibility for ensuring all training materials and policies are up to date.
- 7.4** DSLs in each school will ensure representation at child protection conferences or, failing that, that a report is submitted to the conference from the school/s.
- 7.5** S/he will also ensure that any recommendations made by the conference, which involve school staff, are carried out as agreed at the conference.
- 7.6** Should the alleged perpetrator of abuse be a member of staff, the DSL will consult in line with LA guidelines. In such cases Lynne Sampson would be informed.

## 8. Code of practice

- 8.1** All staff within The Trust, including those working on a supply basis, should take normal precautions not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with relation to child protection. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults. Physical restraint should only be used when a child is endangering him/herself or others and such events should be recorded and signed by a witness.
- 8.2** Staff should never promise a child to keep certain information confidential. It must be explained that staff have certain duties to help keep that child safe, which may involve informing others.
- 8.3** Appendix B "Guidance for Teachers: Handling disclosure of abuse" is useful guidance relating to what to do if you suspect abuse.

## 9. Monitoring and review

- 9.1** The procedures in this policy will be monitored in the light of any new information and guidance which becomes available. It is reviewed at least annually and agreed by the Trust's Board of Directors, who, along with all members of the local academy councils, also receive regularly updated training. It is implemented in all PAT schools. All subsequent changes are reported to the local academy councils, together with a report on training.
- 9.2** The policy is reviewed annually at the start of each academic year by all staff within The Pegasus Academy Trust.

## 10. Revision History

| Date               | Brief description of changes made                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| V14 October 2025   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>References to old 'Executive Headteacher' role changed to 'Executive Principal';</li> <li>Racism included as local risk;</li> <li>Approved by Directors 17<sup>th</sup> October 2025</li> </ul> |
| V15 September 2026 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All updates from revised KCSIE 2026 added;</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                           |

## **Appendix A – Working together to safeguard children**

### **A1 Abuse and Neglect**

- A1.1** Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

### **A2 Physical Abuse**

- A2.1** 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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen syndrome by proxy.

### **A3 Emotional Abuse**

- A3.1** Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

In KCSiE 2026 the definition of emotional abuse now includes persistent criticism, belittling and name-calling and staff should watch for these behaviours from adults towards children as this helps build the chronology needed to evidence the abuse

### **A4 Sexual Abuse**

- A4.1** Sexual abuse involves grooming, forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Grooming is the process that abusive adults use to trick a child or young person into believing that they are trustworthy so that they can eventually sexually exploit them. Sexual exploitation and/or abuse may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, including the extent of premeditation, the degree of threat and coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements. A child's ability to cope with the experience of sexual abuse, once recognised or disclosed, is strengthened by the support of a non-abusive adult carer who believes the child, helps the child understand the abuse, and is able to offer help and protection.
- A4.2** A proportion of adults who sexually abuse children have themselves been sexually abused as children. They may also have been exposed as children to domestic violence and discontinuity of care. However, it would be quite wrong to suggest that most children who are abused will inevitably go on to become abusers themselves.
- A4.3** In KCSiE 2026 the definition of sexual abuse has been widened from "forcing or enticing" to "forcing, causing or inciting," with new lines confirming that children are more likely to know their abuser than not, and that under-13s can never legally consent to sexual activity.

### **A5 Neglect**

- A5.1** Severe neglect of young children is associated with major impairment of growth and intellectual development. Persistent neglect can lead to serious impairment of health and development, and long-term difficulties with social functioning, relationships and educational progress. Neglect can also result, in extreme cases, in death.

## **A6 The concept of significant harm**

**A6.1** The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. The local authority is under a duty to make enquiries, or cause enquiries to be made, where it has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm (s.47). A court may only make a care order (committing the child to the care of the local authority) or supervision order (putting the child under the supervision of a social worker, or a probation officer) in respect of a child if it is satisfied that:

- a)** The child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm; and
- b)** That the harm or likelihood of harm is attributable to a lack of adequate parental care or control (s.31).

**A6.2** There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, and the extent of premeditation, degree of threat and coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements in child sexual abuse. Each of these elements has been associated with more severe effects on the child, and/or relatively greater difficulty in helping the child overcome the adverse impact of the ill-treatment. Sometimes, a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm, e.g. a violent assault, suffocation or poisoning. More often, significant harm is a compilation of significant events, both acute and long-standing, which interrupt, change or damage the child's physical and psychological development. Some children live in family and social circumstances where their health and development, are neglected. For them, it is the corrosiveness of long-term emotional, physical or sexual abuse that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant harm. In each case, it is necessary to consider any ill-treatment alongside the family's strengths and supports.

**A6.3** To understand and establish significant harm, it is necessary to consider:

- a)** The family context.
- b)** The child's development within the context of their family and wider social and cultural environment.
- c)** Any special needs, such as a medical condition, communication difficulty or disability that may affect the child's development and care within the family.

## **A7 "Good enough" parenting**

**A7.1 Basic physical care.** Including adequate food and rest, protection from danger, etc.

**A7.2 Affection.** Physical contact, cuddling, patience, allowing for annoying behaviour, approval, etc.

**A7.3 Security.** Consistent patterns of care and daily routine, a predictable environment, etc.

**A7.4 Stimulation of innate potential.** By praise, encouragement, responsiveness to child's questions and play, etc.

**A7.5 Guidance and control.** To teach adequate social behaviour, discipline within child's comprehension, positive role modelling, etc.

**A7.6 The development of 'responsibility'.** Age/developmentally appropriate self-care, decision making, allowing mistakes which the child may learn from, etc.

**A7.7 Age appropriate development of independence.** Providing increasing opportunities for the child to take steps out from the family and into society; the development of the child as a separate person.

## **A8 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

**A8.1 Definition.** FGM also known as female genital cutting and female circumcision, is the ritual removal of some or all of the external female genitalia.

**A8.2 Possibility of risk.** There are a number of factors in addition to a girl's or woman's community or country of origin that could increase the risk that she will be subjected to FGM. Any girl born to a woman who has been subjected to FGM must be considered to be at risk of FGM as must other female children in the extended family. Any girl who has a sister who has already undergone FGM must be considered to be at risk of FGM, as must other female children in the extended family. Any girl withdrawn from Personal, Social and Health Education or Personal and Social Education may be at risk as a result of her parents wishing to keep her uninformed about her body and rights. The age at which girls undergo FGM varies enormously according to the community. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is newborn, during childhood or adolescence, at marriage or during the first pregnancy. However, the majority of cases of FGM are thought to take place between the ages of 5 and 8 and therefore girls within that age bracket are at a higher risk.

### **A8.3 Indications that FGM may be about to take place**

FGM happens to British girls in the UK as well as overseas (often in the family's country of origin). Girls of school age who are subjected to FGM overseas are thought to be taken abroad at the start of the school holidays, particularly in the summer holidays, in order for there to be sufficient time for her to recover before returning to her studies. There can also be clearer signs when FGM is imminent.

- a) It may be possible that families will practise FGM in the UK when a female family elder is around, particularly when she is visiting from a country of origin;
- b) You may hear reference to FGM in conversation, for example a girl may tell other children about it;
- c) A girl may confide that she is to have a 'special procedure' or to attend a special occasion to 'become a woman';
- d) A girl may request help from a teacher or another adult if she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk;
- e) Parents state that they or a relative will take the child out of the country for a prolonged period;
- f) A girl may talk about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent

### **A8.4 Indications that a girl or woman has already been subjected to FGM**

She may:

- a) Have difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may even look uncomfortable;
- b) Spend longer than normal in the toilet due to difficulties urinating;
- c) Spend longer periods of time out of the classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems;
- d) Have frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems;
- e) Have prolonged or repeated absences from school or college with noticeable behaviour
- f) Changes e.g. withdrawal or depression on her return;
- g) Be particularly reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations

- h) Confide in a professional;
- i) Ask for help, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear;
- j) Talk about pain or discomfort between her legs.

## **A9 Radicalisation and extremism**

**A9.1 Definition.** Radicalisation is defined as the act or process of making a person more radical or favouring of extreme or fundamental changes in political, economic or social conditions, institutions or habits of the mind. Extremism is defined as the holding of extreme political or religious views. Staff are reminded to suspend any professional disbelief that instances of radicalisation 'could not happen here' and to refer any concerns as outlined in section five of this policy.

**A9.2** All schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty. The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools' and colleges' wider safeguarding obligations (The Prevent Duty, June 2015).

**A9.3 Possibility of risk.** It is recognised that children with low aspirations are more vulnerable to radicalisation and therefore we strive to equip our pupils with confidence, self-belief, respect and tolerance as well as setting high standards and expectations for themselves. In line with requirements of KCSiE 2026 we are aware that not only are there children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation but there are also many others who may be susceptible and so the utmost vigilance is essential.

**A9.4** Children are regularly taught about how to stay safe when using the internet and are encouraged to recognise that people are not always who they say they are online. They are taught to seek adult help if they are upset or concerned about anything they read or see on the Internet. (See e-safety policy for further clarification)

**A9.5 Indications of risk.** Signs of possible radicalisation can include people suddenly changing their style of dress or personal appearance to fit in with a particular cause and losing interest with other friends. Staff should be aware of individuals:

- a) using derogatory terms for rival groups and even showing "technical expertise" in areas such as survival skills and chemicals;
- b) spending increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists;
- c) changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group;
- d) day-to-day behaviour becoming increasingly centred on an extremist ideology, group or cause;
- e) loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause;
- f) possession of materials or symbols associated with an extremist cause;
- g) attempts to recruit others to the group/cause;
- h) communications with others that suggests identification with a group, cause or ideology;
- i) increase in prejudice-related incidents which may include:
  - i. physical or verbal assault
  - ii. provocative behaviour
  - iii. damage to property
  - iv. derogatory name calling
  - v. possession of prejudice-related materials
  - vi. prejudice related ridicule or name calling

- vii. inappropriate forms of address
- viii. refusal to co-operate
- ix. attempts to recruit to prejudice-related organisations
- x. condoning or supporting violence towards others.

**A9.6** Honour-based abuse encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

## **A10. Trafficked and exploited children**

**A10.1 Definition.** Child sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse which essentially involves children and young people receiving something e.g. accommodation, drugs, gifts or affection as a result of them performing sexual activities, or having others perform sexual activities on them. It can occur without physical contact, when children are groomed to post sexual images of themselves on the internet.

**A10.2** Child trafficking is a form of child abuse in which children are recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Trafficked children are often subject to multiple forms of exploitation including:

- a) sexual exploitation
- b) benefit fraud
- c) forced marriage
- d) domestic servitude such as cleaning, childcare, cooking
- e) forced labour in factories or agriculture
- f) criminal activity such as pickpocketing, begging, transporting drugs, working on cannabis farms, selling pirated DVDs, bag theft.

**A10.3** Many children are trafficked into the UK from abroad, but children can also be trafficked from one part of the UK to another. Children who are criminally exploited must be treated as victims. It is not possible for a child to consent to be exploited, abused or trafficked. Children may not recognise that it is happening to them.

**A10.4 Categories of sexual exploitation.** The three broad categories are

- a) inappropriate relationships;
- b) 'boyfriend' model of exploitation and peer exploitation; perpetrators target children posing as boyfriends', showering them with attention and gifts to cause infatuation. They initiate a sexual relationship with the child, which the child is expected to return as 'proof' of her/his love or as a way of returning the initial attention and gifts.
- c) organised/networked sexual exploitation or trafficking.

**A10.5 National Referral Mechanism.** The NRM is the UK's framework for identifying and supporting victims of exploitation and modern slavery and recognises that:

- a) Children who may be victims of exploitation or modern slavery should be referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) by relevant agencies
- b) Exploitation and modern slavery are child abuse. Child protection procedures must still be followed alongside any NRM referral
- c) Children referred into the NRM may also have access to an Independent Child Trafficking Guardian (ICTG)
- d) ICTGs provide advocacy for children and help promote and support their recovery

## **A11 Domestic Abuse**

**A11.1 Definition** The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

- a) Physical or sexual abuse;
- b) Violent or threatening behaviour;
- c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
- d) Economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services); and
- e) Psychological, emotional or other abuse.

**A11.2** People are 'personally connected' when they are, or have been married to each other or civil partners; or have agreed to marry or become civil partners. If the two people have been in an intimate relationship with each other, have shared parental responsibility for the same child, or they are relatives.

**A11.3** The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person.

**A11.4** Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

**A11.5** KCSiE 2026 brings greater clarity to teenage relationship abuse which now explicitly includes:

- a) Physical, sexual and emotional abuse;
- b) Stalking;
- c) Criminal exploitation, including financial exploitation.

## **A12. Child on Child sexual violence and sexual harassment**

**A12.1 Definition.** We recognise that children are capable of abusing other children. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up". Downplaying such behaviour can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, misogyny, an unsafe environment for children and potentially normalised abuse where children stop reporting it.

**A12.2** We also recognise the gendered nature of child on child abuse. However, all child on child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. Child on child abuse can include (but is not limited to): bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers; physical abuse such as hitting, discriminatory behaviour, including racism, faith based abuse, and other prejudice-based incidents, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

**A12.3** Children and young people can be sexually abused by others, whether they are the same age, younger or older. It is important to recognise that children do engage in sexual play and experimenting, which is usually age appropriate, and not to criminalise behaviour that is a perfectly normal and healthy part of growing up. However, the idea that children

can sexually abuse others must not be ignored and sexual behaviour between children should not always be dismissed as normal or harmless behaviour.

**A12.4** KCSIE 2026 and the separate guidance 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges' sets out how schools and colleges should respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment.

**A12.5** We recognise that even if there are no reported cases of child on child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported. Any concerns raised by children will be treated seriously, recorded and investigated in line with Trust procedures. Appropriate support will be offered to all affected.

**A12.6 Sharing nudes and semi-nudes (previously known as 'sexting')**

In cases where nudes or semi-nudes have been shared, we follow guidance given to schools and colleges by the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS): Sharing nudes and semi-nudes (December 2020). Images now explicitly includes photographs, videos and live stream and may be:

- a) Self-generated by the child
- b) Taken or created by another person
- c) Digitally altered or wholly generated using AI, including 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes'

**A12.7 Indications of risk.** The presence of one or more of the following points in situations where there has been sexual activity between children should always trigger some concern:

- d) There is an age difference of two years or more between the children;
- e) One of the children is significantly more dominant than the other;
- f) One of the children is significantly more vulnerable than the other e.g. in terms of disability, confidence, physical strength;
- g) There has been some use of threats, bribes or coercion to secure compliance or to maintain secrecy. procedures to minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse;

**A13 Children with SEND**

**A13.1 Definition.** We recognise that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in relation to children with SEN and Disabilities. Additional challenges for children with SEN and Disabilities include:

- a) Awareness that behaviour, mood and injury may related to possible abuse and not just their SEN or disability;
- b) Higher risk of peer group isolation;
- c) Disproportionate impact of bullying;
- d) Difficulties with communication.

**A14. Voyeurism**

**A14.1 Definition.** The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 criminalises the act of 'up skirting'. The Criminal Prosecution Service (CPS) defines 'up skirting' 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." Upskirting can be used for sexual gratification or to cause the victim humiliation, distress and alarm.

## **A15. Serious Violence**

**A15.1 Definition.** KCSIE 2026 contains a clearer definition of serious violence which may involve physical assault, carrying, threatening with or using weapons and is often linked to peer conflict, bullying or criminal exploitation. Any concern about a child carrying or using a weapon must be reported to a DSL.

Children may be at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime. Indicators of this may include;

- a)** Increased absence from school;
- b)** A change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups;
- c)** A significant decline in performance;
- d)** Signs of self-harm or a significant change in well-being;
- e)** Signs of assault or unexplained injuries

**A15.2** Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

## **A16. Children missing or absent from education**

**A16.1** Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of safeguarding. Missing/being absent from school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about others safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

**A16.2** We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay. Our safeguarding policy outlines our procedures when concerns arise.

## **A17. Mental Health**

Although Trust staff cannot make diagnoses they should be well placed to notice warning signs of concern with regards to children's mental health

Staff should be aware of significant changes in children's behaviour, reporting on-going difficulties in sleeping, withdrawing from social situations and children not wanting to do things they usually enjoy.

## **A18. Family Help**

**A18.1** From 2026 the term "Early Help" is now termed "Family Help.". The same legal routes exist but with new terminology

**A18.2** New Risk Indicators are additional signs a child may need support before statutory intervention and include:

- a)** Being repeatedly removed from the classroom;
- b)** Experiencing multiple suspensions from school;
- c)** Education on a part-time timetable;
- d)** Being pregnant and/or a parent themselves;
- e)** Having exhibited early signs of abusive, violent and/or harmful behaviours.

**A 18.3** All relevant staff should be aware of the legal routes relating to Family Help which are:

- a) Sections 10 and 11 , Children Act 2004 (targeted Family Help)
- b) Section 17 Children Act 1989 (children in need)
- c) Section 47 Children Act 1989 (significant harm)
- d) Section 31 Children Act 1989 (care and supervision orders)
- e) Section 20 Children 1989 (duty to accommodate)

#### **A19. Children who are LGB or gender-questioning**

Rather than treating gender identity purely as an issue of equality or inclusion, KCSiE 2026 follows the findings and recommendations in the Cass Review into NHS gender identity services for children and has placed gender-questioning students firmly under a safeguarding umbrella, setting out a structured framework for how schools must respond to children questioning how they feel about being a boy or a girl. Guidance that schools should follow maintains that:

- a) The school must not initiate social transition unless a decision has been made led by the DSL and almost always after the child's parents or carers have been involved;
- b) Our schools recognise that parental engagement is a priority;
- c) Social transition is an active intervention and may have significant effects on a child's psychological functioning. In our schools, which are all primary phase, we exercise particular caution and acknowledge that support for full social transition is rare;
- d) Facility rules are absolute and pupils are not allowed into toilets, changing rooms or any residential accommodation (such as on School Journey) designated for the opposite biological sex. Where a gender-questioning child does not wish to use designated facilities we consider alternative provision.

#### **A20. Operation Encompass**

There is now a statutory duty on the police to notify schools where there are reasonable grounds that a child is a victim of domestic abuse. This applies whether or not the child was present at the incident.

#### **A21. Online Safety**

This is covered more explicitly in our E-Safety policy but included here as KCSiE now explicitly includes the '4Cs of Online Safety and references potential harm to children from AI generated images and Cybercrime.

##### **A21.1** The 4 Cs of online safety are defined as:

- a) Content: Exposure to harmful materials, now includes misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories;
- b) Contact: Harmful interactions with other users or with generative AI applications simulating this;
- c) Conduct: Online behaviour that causes harm, including making, sending or receiving images, including those generated using AI;
- d) Commerce: Risks such as online gambling, phishing and financial scams.

##### **A21.2** KCSiE describes Cybercrime as one of the most significant and rapidly evolving threats in the UK crime landscape:

- a) Offences under the Computer Misuse Act have risen substantially;
- b) Young people may drift into cyber-dependent crime without understanding the legal implications;
- c) DSLs can consider referral to the Cyber Choices programme.

## **A22. Prejudice-based harm**

**A22.1** All staff should recognise that children may experience prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-based prejudice, and other forms of discrimination. Such experiences may affect a child's welfare, wellbeing, mental health and willingness to seek help. Staff should be alert to the signs and impact of prejudice-based harm and ensure that concerns are considered within safeguarding practice where appropriate <sup>i</sup>

## **A23 Equality**

**A23.1 Definition.** Some children have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face. We give special consideration to children who:

- a)** Are young carers
- b)** Are persistent absentees and are missing education
- c)** May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- d)** Have English as an additional language
- e)** Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- f)** Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, honor-based violence, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- g)** Are at risk of sexual violence or sexual harassment
- h)** Are asylum seekers or refugees
- i)** Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- j)** Are at risk due to domestic violence
- k)** Are looked after or previously looked after
- l)** Are homeless
- m)** Have members of their family in prison
- n)** Are at risk of child criminal exploitation including county lines, gang violence

## **Appendix B - Guidance for staff: Handling disclosure of abuse**

### **B1 The perspective**

**B1.1** To state clearly at the outset, not all children are subjected to abuse. This guidance should be used to assist all staff in enabling children to keep themselves safe and to be more self confident, assertive and communicative about things that are hurtful to them or make them feel uncomfortable.

- a)** Child abuse is a phenomenon that currently affects many children, irrespective of culture and economic group. It can take many forms and can have far-reaching affects on children's growth and development;
- b)** Teachers have a vital role to play in both the prevention and detection of abuse;
- c)** Teachers are in a unique position to observe children's behaviour over time, and they often develop close and trusting relationships with the pupils in their tutor groups;
- d)** Teachers may well be the first to suspect that something is amiss when an individual behaves atypically, withdraws from social contacts with others, shows anxiety or stress symptoms in school or appears unusually distressed, confused or disturbed;
- e)** The psychological symptoms of sexual or emotional abuse are more difficult to identify but no less real than obvious physical signs of abuse such as bruising or burn marks.;
- f)** Teachers and other adults in school should have their suspicions aroused, for example, if a child suddenly starts to steal in school, conveys a knowledge or experience of abusive acts through language, drawings or play, or discloses information;
- g)** None of these things, by themselves, can be taken to mean that a child is definitely being abused, but they should signal to the teacher that further enquiries should be made. This is especially the case where there are reasons to believe that a family situation is vulnerable;
- h)** Teachers may also find themselves being sought out by a child, a parent or relative, neighbour or family friend, as the focus for disclosure of abuse;
- i)** It is absolutely critical that all teachers are aware of the procedures adopted by the school, key staff to be informed, and the LA's Child Protection Procedures when disclosures are made.

### **B2 Some dos and don'ts**

#### **B2.1 Do:**

- a)** Reassure the child or adult that it is the right thing to do to tell a trusted person;
- b)** Attempt to ascertain the facts (who, where, when);
- c)** Tell the child that you believe them;
- d)** Tell the child that you will need to involve others in ensuring that the child will, in the future, and explain who needs to be involved and why and what will happen next.
- e)** Offer ongoing support;
- f)** Choose a place to talk where you will not be interrupted. This allows you to give your undivided attention and confirms for the child that what they have to say is important.
- g)** Follow the schools internal policy for Child Protection in terms of communication both within school and to other agencies. Follow the Area Child Protection Procedures and the Authority's Child Protection Procedures;
- h)** Record facts objectively and accurately (time, date, signature);
- i)** Look after yourself by ensuring that you can talk to someone about your feelings; Dealing with child abuse is stressful and distressing;
- j)** A 'quick guide' to child protection procedures at PAT is available in the 'blue filing cabinets' in each of our staff rooms and is always shared with those new to the school – e.g. supply teachers;

## **B2.2 Do not**

- a)** Promise confidentiality that you cannot keep. The child has already experienced a breach of trust from the adult who abused them;
- b)** Make false promises or reassurances to the child about what will happen next. Children cope best with honesty, and again should not be exposed to further breaches of trust.
- c)** Interrupt or stop the child during a disclosure. Let them finish talking before you attempt to inform or involve others;
- d)** Ask leading questions or sympathise inappropriately. Children should not be pressed to tell more than they choose or be questioned any more than is strictly necessary. It is for others to further the investigation;
- e)** Discuss your concerns with anyone other than one of the designated leads.

## **B3 Information Sharing**

- a)** Explicit in KCSIE 2026 is the statement that there should be no barriers to sharing information
- b)** Early information sharing is vital, whether concerns are just emerging or a child is already known to children's social care
- c)** Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will act
- d)** Data protection laws do not prevent sharing information to keep a child safe
- e)** If in doubt about sharing information staff should speak immediately to one of the DSLs.
- f)** Fears about sharing information must not stand in the way of a child's safety.

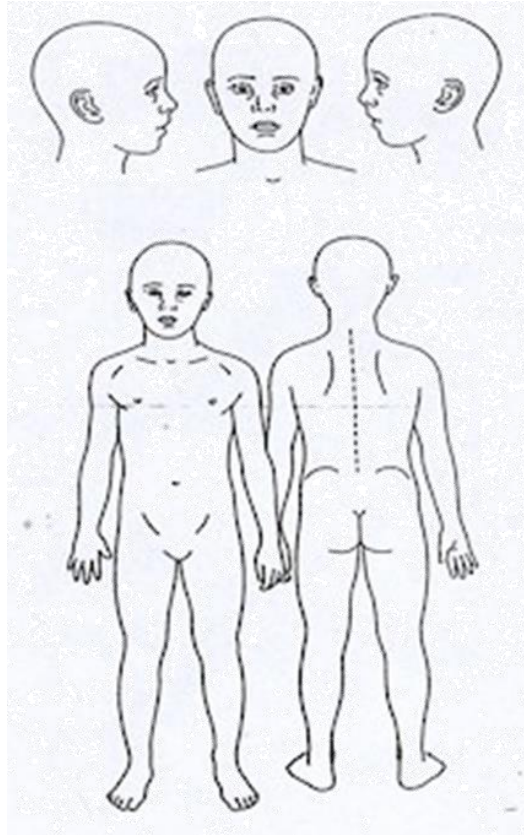


## **Appendix C**

### **Child Protection expression of concern form**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Pupil's name:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                       |
| <b>Year group/ D.O.B:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Date and time:</b> |
| <b>Reported by:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Role:</b>          |
| <b>Disclosure made?</b> <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                       |
| <b>between:</b> _____ <b>and</b> _____                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                       |
| <b>Cause for concern?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Concern raised</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                       |
| <b>By:</b> _____                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                       |
| <b>Person(s) present</b> <i>(including their role e.g. pupil, teacher, lunchtime supervisor etc.):</i>                                                                                                                                                                                    |                       |
| <b>Circumstances:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                       |
| <b>Please write a factual account of what has happened:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure account is <u>factual</u> and does not include any assumptions or opinions</li> <li>indicate any <u>exact</u> phrases spoken with speech marks</li> </ul>                       |                       |
| <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-end;"> <div>           Print<br/>name _____         </div> <div>           Sign _____         </div> <div>           Date: _____         </div> </div> <p>(complete skin map on next sheet if necessary)</p> |                       |

**Use the skin map below (if necessary) to record any visible injuries to the child. You can make additional annotations if needed. *NOTE: under no circumstances must anyone ask the child to undress***



**Report/ Action** *(to be completed by a Designated Child Protection Teacher):*

