



Heathfield Community School



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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7	Annual	Yes (statutory)	Nicola Patmore (AHT DSL)	November 2022	September 2023

Ratification

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Chair of Governors			
Head Teacher			

Document Version Control

Date	Version	Details of Policy Updates
01/09/2021		Update and re-written to reflect new statutory guidance issued in 2021.
01/09/2022		Draft new full update, which is the adoption of the new local authority (SSCP) Child Protection Policy model policy, based on KCSiE 2022.
10/10/2022		Draft version with appendices not brought forward from last year
11/10/2022	6	When referring to 'college pupils' this includes all providers of post 16 education as set out in Apprenticeships, Skills and Learning Act 2009: 16 -19 Academies, Special Post 16 institutions and Independent Training Providers.
16/11/2022	7	Final draft version for 2022/23 with additional appendices now added.

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1.1 Definitions & Key Contacts

Safeguarding is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing 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.

Child Protection is defined in the Children Act 1989 (s.47) as when a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. Under statutory guidance and legislation action must be taken to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

Heathfield Community School includes students at the Cedar Centre autism base and the SPACE sixth form (Somerset Performing Arts Centre for Excellence)

Key Contacts (further details in Appendix A)

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Nicola Patmore (Assistant Head, Heathfield Community School)

Head Teacher – Hannah Jones (Heathfield Community School)

Safeguarding Member of the Interim Executive Board (equivalent of Safeguarding Governor) – Gale Webb (contact via Julie Taylor, Heathfield Community School)

Chair of Interim Executive Board (equivalent of Chair of the Board of Governor) – Claire Emery (contact via Julie Taylor, Heathfield Community School)

1.2 Introduction

At Heathfield Community School

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. **Everyone** who encounters children, their families, and carers, has a role to play.
- In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should always consider what is in the **best interests** of the child.
- We take an '**it can happen here**' approach where safeguarding is concerned.
- **Everyone** who encounters children has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action.

- Victims of harm should **never** be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Heathfield Community School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children by:

- The provision of a safe environment in which children and young people can learn.
- Acting on concerns about a child's welfare immediately.
- Fulfilling our legal responsibilities to identify children who may need early help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

All action taken by Heathfield Community School will be in accordance with:

- **Current legislation** (these are summarised within [Working Together to Safeguard Children: statutory framework](#))
- **Statutory, national, and local guidance – this includes:**
 - **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)**, which sets out the multiagency working arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and protect them from harm; in addition, it sets out the statutory roles and responsibilities of schools.
 - **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022)** is statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education which all schools and colleges must have regard to when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- **Local Guidance from the Local Safeguarding Partnership:** around particular safeguarding topics are available on the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership
- **Government guidance in relation to:**
 - **COVID19:** The full collection is available on the [government website](#). Heathfield Community School have created an addendum to this document to reflect changes made during lockdown or in the event of a further lockdown. These are accessible via **[covid related: Appendix F]**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safer Recruitment Policy (Recruitment and Selection)
- Management of Allegations Policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

- Behaviour Policy
- ICT use policies
- Attendance (including the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education)
- Health and Safety policies
- CCTV policy
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy

Low Level Concerns (about staff) is an appendix to this policy [LLCs Appendix x]

Heathfield School expects that the above policies and procedures, adopted by governing bodies and proprietors, are accessible, understood and followed by all staff.

1.3 Equalities Statement

With regards to safeguarding we will consider our duties under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and our general and specific duties under the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#). General duties include:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
3. Foster good relations across all protected characteristics between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Details of our specific duties are published under Heathfield Community School's equality duty statement, which is available from the school office on request.

We adhere to Children and Young People plan 2019 – 2022 Somerset

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/how-the-council-works/children-and-young-peoples-plan/>

Staff are aware of the additional barriers to recognising abuse and neglect in children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This will be in line with our Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy, which is available from the school office on request.

Heathfield Community School also adheres to the principals of and promotes anti-oppressive practice in line of the [United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child](#) and the [Human Rights Act 1998](#).

1.4 Overall Aims

This policy will contribute to the safeguarding of children at Heathfield Community School by:

- Clarifying safeguarding expectations for members of the education setting's community, staff, governing body, learners, and their families.
- Contributing to the establishment of a safe, resilient, and robust safeguarding culture in the setting built on shared values; and that our learners are treated with respect and dignity, taught to treat each other and staff with respect, feel safe, have a voice, and are listened to.
- Supporting contextual safeguarding practice recognising that the setting's site can be a location where harm can occur.
- Setting expectations for developing knowledge and skills within the setting's community (staff, learners, parents/carers) to the signs and indicators of safeguarding issues and how to respond to them.
- Early identification of need for vulnerable learners and provision of proportionate interventions to promote their welfare and safety.
- Working in partnership with learners, parents, and other agencies in the Local Safeguarding Partnership including Early Help.

Heathfield Community School is named as a relevant agency in the Local Safeguarding Partnership (Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership). This policy sets out its statutory duty to co-operate, follow and comply with published arrangements as set out by the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership's professional expectations, roles, and responsibilities

1.5.1 Role of all staff

- All staff will read and understand Part 1 of statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022). Those working directly with children will also read Annex B. [Those who do not work directly with children will have the option of reading Annex A instead]
- In addition to this all staff will be aware of the systems in place which support safeguarding including reading this Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy; the Behaviour Policy; the Staff Behaviour Policy (code of conduct).
- Know who and how to contact the DSL and any deputies, the Chair of Governors (Chair of Interim Executive Board) and the Governor (IEB board member) responsible for safeguarding.
- All staff will be able to identify vulnerable learners and take action to keep them safe. Information or concerns about learners will be shared with the DSL where it includes those:
 - who may need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse or neglect.

- requiring mental health support.
 - may benefit from early help.
 - where there is a radicalisation concern.
 - where a crime may have been committed.
- Be clear as to the setting's policy and procedures about [child on child abuse](#), children missing education and [those requiring mental health support](#), and the [impact of technology in relation to online safety](#).
 - Be involved where appropriate, in the implementation of individual plans to further safeguard vulnerable learners and understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort.
 - Record concerns appropriately and in a timely manner by using the setting's safeguarding systems.
 - To be aware of the need to raise to the senior leadership team any concerns they have about safeguarding practices within the school.

1.5.2 - Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputies (DDSL)

Duties are further outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022)

Details of our DSL and Deputy DSL are available on the Heathfield Community School website, our newsletters, or the notice board in reception.

- The DSL is a senior member of staff who undertakes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the setting.
- The DSL has undertaken the SSCP training to ensure they are compliant with the Local Authority requirement for DSLs.
- The DSL works with the headteacher, and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that learners in need are experiencing or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on learner's attendance, engagement and achievement at school or college.
- Activities include the management of work undertaken by any Deputy DSLs.
- Manages early identification of vulnerability of learners and their families from staff through cause for concerns or notifications. This will ensure detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.
- Manages referrals to local safeguarding partners where learners with additional needs have been identified. These can include those –
 - who need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse or neglect.
 - requiring mental health support.
 - who may benefit from early help.
 - where there is a radicalisation concern.
 - where a crime may have been committed.

The DSL will also:

- Work with others – acting as a point of contact for outside agencies about safeguarding.
- Support and advise other staff in making referrals to other agencies.
- When required, liaise with the case manager and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in relation to child protection cases which concern a staff member.
- Coordinate safeguarding training and raise awareness and understanding to the school community around policies and practice in relation to safeguarding.
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing information about vulnerable learners with relevant staff. This includes ensuring that staff:
 - know who these children are,
 - understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort.
 - Are supported to identify the challenges that children in this group might face.
 - Provide additional academic support or make reasonable adjustments to help children who have **or have had** a social worker to reach their potential.
- Ensure the successful transfer of the Safeguarding/Child Protection File when a learner moves on to a new setting within 5 days for in year transfer or the first 5 days of the start of a new term.
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding cover and availability during term time/ any out of hours/out of term activities managed by the school.

1.5.3 - Role of the Interim Executive Board (equivalent to the Governing Body)

Duties are further outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022)

There is a senior board level lead who takes responsibility for the setting's safeguarding responsibility to ensure that safeguarding and child protection practice, process, and policy (including online safety) is effective and is compliant with legislation, statutory guidance, and Local Safeguarding Partnership arrangements.

- The appointed Safeguarding IEB member (Governor) will liaise with the Head Teacher/Principal and the DSL to produce an annual report for IEB (governors) and complete the S. 175 (annual safeguarding) audit for the Somerset Education Safeguarding Service.
- Ensure that the school remedies any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to its attention without delay;
- Ensure that this document is updated annually (or when there are significant updates)

- Ensure that the DSL is an appropriate senior member of setting's senior leadership team and ensure that they have adequate time, funding, training, resources, and support to carry out their role effectively.
- Ensure that they attend Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership training and that safeguarding learning for the school community is robust and effective.
- Ensure that learners are taught about safeguarding on the curriculum including online safety in compliance with statutory guidance [Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education)
- To ensure that teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors have appropriate checks carried out in line with statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022, Part 3).
- Ensure that there are procedures in place to manage safeguarding concerns or allegations against teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors who may not be suitable to work with or pose a risk to learners, this includes having a process to manage low level concerns.
- Ensure that systems are in place for learners to effectively share a concern about a safeguarding issue they are experiencing, express their views and give feedback.
- Ensure that the setting has systems in place to prevent, identify and respond to child on child harm (including sexual abuse and sexual harassment) and mental health concerns, and review the effectiveness of the setting's online safety practices.
- Appoint a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement for children in care and other care arrangements.
- Whilst considering their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, governing bodies and proprietors will be doing all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the school's or college's IT system. As part of this process, governing bodies and proprietors will ensure their school or college has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness. They should ensure that the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified. Governing bodies and proprietors will consider the age range of their children, the number of children, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs verses safeguarding risks

1.5 Safeguarding training for staff

1.6.1 - All staff:

- The IEB (Governing body) will ensure that all staff members undergo the Somerset Safeguarding Child Partnership (SSCP) safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) training at induction. This is currently called 'Basic Awareness' and is lead by the DSL within school.

- Will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) refresher training at least annually (via formal training, email e-bulletins and staff meetings).
- All staff must complete FGM awareness training and will understand their legal duty under the Mandatory Reporting Duty.
- All staff must complete PREVENT awareness training. This is to ensure that they can comply with the legal expectations under the PREVENT duty.
- Staff training includes clear reference to internal whistleblowing policy and guidance for escalating concerns.

1.6.2 - Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies:

- Will undergo formal training provided by the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP) to provide them with the knowledge and skills (including online safety) training required to carry out the role. The training will be updated every two years.
- Deputies will be trained to the same level as the DSL.
- The DSL and any deputies will liaise with the SSCP and Somerset Education Safeguarding Service to ensure that their knowledge and skills are updated via e-bulletins, attend DSL network meetings, and take time to read and digest safeguarding bulletins.

1.6.3 - Other training considerations:

- The IEB (governing body) will ensure that at least one person on any appointment panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training, in line School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009.
- Members of the senior leadership team will make themselves aware of and understand their role within the local safeguarding arrangements. This will ensure that those who have responsibility for the management of behaviour, inclusion, Special Educational Needs, attendance, and exclusions will carry out their duties with a safeguarding consideration.
- The Designated Teacher for Children in Care will undergo appropriate training to fulfil their role to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are in care.
- The mental health lead has access to appropriate training.
- Training around safeguarding topics in Annex B (including online safety) will be integrated, aligned, and considered as part of a whole school safeguarding approach.
- Appropriate colleagues have received appropriate training in relation to use of reasonable force and positive handling.
- The IEB (governors) receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection at induction

1.6 Safeguarding in the curriculum

Heathfield Community School is dedicated to ensuring that learners are taught about safeguarding, including online safety. We recognise that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate for all learners, and a more personalised or contextualised approach for more vulnerable learners, victims of abuse and some SEND children might be needed. This is part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

This includes:

- Working within statutory guidance in respect to [Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education);
- Personal Development (also known as Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE)) education, to explore key areas such as self-esteem, emotional literacy, assertiveness, power, building resilience to radicalisation, e-safety and bullying.
- Appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to ensure that 'over-blocking' does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what learners can be taught about online teaching and safeguarding.
- The curriculum will be shaped to respond to safeguarding incident patterns in the setting identified by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and safeguarding team (e.g., to respond to an increase in bullying incidents).
- Providing engagement opportunities with parents and carers to consult on key aspects of the curriculum.
- Learners can inform the curriculum via discussions with the school council and pupil voice.

1.7 Safer recruitment and safer working practice

1.8.1 - Safer recruitment

Heathfield Community School pays full regard to the safer recruitment practices detailed in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2022;)

- This includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history, and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. References are always obtained, scrutinised and concerns resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.
- It also includes undertaking appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the barred list checks and prohibition checks (and overseas checks if appropriate), dependent on the role and duties performed, including regulated and non-regulated activity.
- Applicants must provide an application form and Curriculum Vitae will not be accepted as a stand-alone.

- As a setting we will consider online searches as part of our due diligence checks on short listed candidates.
- All recruitment materials will include reference to Heathfield Community School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of learners.

1.8.2 - Use of reasonable force

'Reasonable force' refers to the physical contact to restrain and control children using no more force than is needed.' The use of reasonable force is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and will be determined by individual circumstances and the vulnerability of any child with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) will be considered.

- The use of reasonable force will be minimised through positive and proactive behaviour support and de-escalation and will follow government guidance ([Use of Reasonable Force in Schools 2013](#); [Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention, 2019](#)).
- There is robust recording of any incident where positive handling or restraint has been used. Further review of the incident is carried out to reflect on how the incident could be avoided, this will involve the child and their family.

The process around how the setting manages concerns where a professional may pose a risk to learners and our response to low level concerns can be accessed in section [2.8 Allegations of abuse made against professionals](#).

1.8.3 - Whistleblowing procedures

Staff are aware of the following whistleblowing channels for situations where they feel unable to raise an issue with the senior leadership team or feel that their genuine concerns are not being addressed:

- General guidance can be found at: Advice on whistleblowing <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>.
- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available [here](#) for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. 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.
- The above channels are clearly accessible to all staff.

1.9 Key safeguarding areas

These topics are themes that can impact on children and families, there are specific areas of safeguarding that the setting has statutory responsibilities to address which are hyperlinked:

- Children in the court system
- Children affected by parental offending/imprisonment.
- [Children missing from education](#) – including persistent absence.
- [Child Exploitation](#) (including both Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation and county lines, modern day slavery and trafficking)
- Cybercrime
- [Domestic Abuse](#)
- Homelessness
- So-called Honour based Abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage),
- [Online Safety](#)
- [Mental health](#)
- [Child on child abuse:](#)
 - Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
 - Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers.
 - Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).
 - Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;(this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).
 - Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
 - 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 sharing of nudes 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; and
 - 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).
- [Preventing Radicalisation \(The Prevent Duty\)](#)
- [Serious Youth Violence](#)
- Substance Misuse
- [Private Fostering](#)
- [Young Carers](#)

Additional information about key safeguarding areas can also be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022; Annex B); the [NSPCC website - Types of Abuse](#); And for localised resources for education settings Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership

PART 2: Procedures

2.1 Reporting concerns

All staff are clear about recording and reporting concerns to the DSL/DSL deputies in a timely way. In the case a learner is in immediate danger, staff should immediately seek support from the Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher who may decide to phone the police.

All staff are aware of and follow the procedures to respond to a concern about a child detailed in [Appendix B](#). This includes responses to child-on-child harm and learners who present with a mental health need.

At Heathfield Community School learners can raise their concerns via any member of staff and they will be treated seriously.

2.2 Information Sharing

Heathfield Community School is committed to have due regard to relevant data protection principles which allow for sharing (and withholding) personal information as provided for in the Data protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulations. This includes how to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information which is sensitive and personal and should be treated as 'special category personal data'.

Staff at the setting are aware that:

- 'Safeguarding' and 'individuals at risk' is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data.
- Practitioners will seek consent to share data where possible in line with [Information Sharing for Safeguarding Practitioners 2018](#).

There may be times when it is necessary to share information without consent such as:

- To gain consent would place the child at risk,
- by doing so will compromise a criminal investigation,
- It cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent,
- or, if by sharing information it will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner, but it is not possible to gain consent.

There are also times when Heathfield Community School will not provide pupil's personal data where the serious harm test under legislation is met, (by sharing the information the child may be at further risk). When in doubt Heathfield Community School will seek legal advice.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

2.3 Identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable learners.

The DSL and Deputy DSL will regularly review and monitor those students who have been identified as vulnerable. This can include reviewing attendance data, behaviour data, attainment data and safeguarding records. This is to ensure that:

- Proportionate and early interventions can be taken to promote the safety and welfare of the child and prevent escalation of harm.
- Information about vulnerable learners is shared with teachers and school and college leadership staff to promote educational outcomes.
- Learners who currently have, or have had, a social worker will have their academic progress and attainment reviewed and additional academic support will be provided to help them reach their full potential.
- Reasonable adjustments are made in relation to school-based interventions – for example responding to behaviour.

2.4 Multi-agency working

Heathfield Community School will work together with appropriate agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children including identifying and responding to their needs. This is in compliance with statutory guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#).

Occasions that warrant a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989:

- If the child is in need under s.17 of the Children Act 1989 (including when a child is a young carer and or subject to a private fostering arrangement).
- Or if the child needs protection under s.47 of the Children Act 1989 where they are experiencing significant harm, or likely to experience significant harm.

Referrals in these cases should be made by the DSL (or Deputy DSLs) to Children's Social Care in the Local Authority in which that child resides.

Where the child already has a social worker, the request for service should go immediately to the social worker involved or, in their absence, to their team manager. If the child is a child in care, notification should also be made to Somerset's Virtual School.

Heathfield Community School will co-operate with any statutory safeguarding assessments conducted by children's social care: this includes ensuring representation at appropriate inter-agency meetings such as integrated support plan meetings initial and review child protection conferences and core group meetings.

2.4.1 Additional considerations:

- Where a learner and/or their family is subject to an inter-agency child protection plan or a multiagency risk assessment conference (MARAC) meeting, the setting will contribute to the preparation, implementation, and review of the plan as appropriate.
- In situations where a child in care may be put on to part time timetable, the school will consult with relevant agencies and the virtual school.
- If a crime has been suspected or committed that involved the bringing of an offensive weapon on to the school site, the setting will liaise with the Police who will consider a proportionate response.
- If there is a risk of harm, the police should be called via 999. For other concerns of criminality, the non-statutory guidance ['When to Call the Police' from the NCPCC](#) can be helpful or contact the local PCSO/School Police Beat Officer/School Officer.
- In the rare event that a child death occurs, or a child is seriously harmed, Heathfield Community School will notify the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership as soon as is reasonably possible.

2.5 Suspensions, Expulsions, and commissioning of Alternative Provisions - (To be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy)

When the setting is considering a fixed term exclusion (suspension) or permanently excluding a learner where additional vulnerability is identified it is important that the learner's welfare is a paramount consideration. The head teacher will consider their legal duty of care when sending a learner home.

Heathfield Community School will exercise their legal duties in relation to their interventions. This includes:

- 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](#).

- Interventions will be consistent with statutory guidance [School suspensions and expulsions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/school-suspensions-and-expulsions)

2.5.1 - Actions to take

- An assessment of need should be undertaken with multi-agency partners with a view to mitigate any identified risk of harm this in line with [2.3 Identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable learners](#).
- If the child is subject to a child protection plan or where there is an existing child protection file, the school will liaise with multiagency partners, in particular the allocated social worker, and consider a risk assessment, prior to making the decision to exclude.
- In the event of a one-off serious incident resulting in an immediate decision to exclude, the risk assessment *must* be completed prior to convening a meeting of the governing body.

2.5.2 - Commissioning Alternative Provisions

In the event where Heathfield Community School commissions an Alternative Provision we will ensure clear agreement of roles and responsibilities to maintain safeguarding and daily monitoring of attendance arrangements for learners who are not taught on site.

Heathfield Community School will continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that learner and will make necessary checks on the provider to meet the needs of the learner. Written confirmation from the Alternative provider will be obtained of the checks on staff that we would otherwise perform for our own staff.

2.6 Children Missing from Education (To be read in conjunction with the Attendance Policy)

A learner missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, or maybe an indicator of need for early help support. Staff should follow procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. These should be reported to the DSL and reviewed in line with [2.3 Identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable learners](#).

Heathfield Community School will follow the guidance detailed in [Children Missing Education \(2016\)](#) and Somerset Education Safeguarding Policy for Children Missing Education

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, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority.

2.6.1 - Elective Home Education

Heathfield Community School will notify the Local Authority of every learner where a parent has exercised their right to educate their child at home. Safeguarding concerns should be shared with the Education Safeguarding Service and consideration of whether additional support from children's services should be made in line with the Children Act 1989.

2.7 Responding to incidents of child-on-child abuse & harm.

(There is flow diagram in [Appendix B](#) that illustrates this section)

All staff should recognise that children can abuse their peers (including online). It is important that incidents of abuse and harm are treated under safeguarding policy in conjunction with the behaviour policy. However, concerns regarding the welfare of learners requires process and records to be kept on the child's safeguarding/child protection file.

Further examples of child-on-child harm this can be found under section [1.9 Key Safeguarding Areas](#). It is recognised that child-on-child abuse can happen inside and outside of school/college or online.

At Heathfield Community School

- We have a 'zero tolerance' approach to abuse. Incidents are taken seriously. These will never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter,' just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up.' Banter and teasing can and should be acknowledged and recognised as bullying behaviour and may require proportionate intervention.
- Even with a zero-tolerance approach, we take steps to educate and take action ensure to mitigate the risk of contributing to a culture of unacceptable behaviours or a culture that normalises abuse.
- It is understood that child on child harm may reflect equality issues in terms of those who may be targeted are more likely to have protected characteristics.
- Early identification of vulnerability to child-on-child harm is made by reviewing attendance, behaviour, attainment, and safeguarding records at least on a termly basis.

There are clear systems in place (which are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible) for learners to confidently report abuse knowing their concerns will be treated easily as reflected in section [2.1 Reporting a concern](#) of this policy. Heathfield Community School will handle initial reports of harm by:

- Securing the immediate safety of learners involved in an incident and sourcing support for other young people affected.
- Listening carefully to the child, being non-judgmental, being clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed, not asking leading questions and only prompting the child where necessary with open questions – where, when, what, etc.

- ensuring that victims will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. They will never be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Ensuring the child's wishes are taken into consideration in any intervention and any action is taken to ensure safety of the target and other members of the wider peer cohort.
- Not promising confidentiality as it is highly likely that information will need to be shared with others.

2.7.1 Actions to take in relation to sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) guidance should be made in relation to taking protective action. Heathfield Community School will take the following actions when responding to incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment:

- Incidents will be reported immediately to the DSL/ Deputy DSL who will undertake further assessment of what action should be taken proportionate to the factors that have been identified. [The Brook - Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Assessment Tool](#) should be utilised to inform assessment of risk and what actions to subsequently take. This may include seeking specialist advice and guidance from the education psychology team or Education Safeguarding Team.
- Support and undertake GIFT work as an early intervention when requested.
- DSLs/Deputies will take **proportionate** action and consider whether a case can be managed internally, through early help, or should involve other agencies as required in line with the section [2.4 - Multi-Agency Working section](#).
- When an incident involves an act of **sexual violence** (rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault) the starting point is that this should be passed on to police **regardless** of the age of criminal responsibility (10 years old). This must be reported directly via 101 for recording purposes and accountability. A concurrent referral to social care must also be made.
- When the children involved require a statutory assessment either under s.17 or s. 47 of the Children Act 1989 a referral to social care should be undertaken.
- Where the report includes an online element, the setting will follow [Searching, screening and confiscation at school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). The key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child. The highlighted advice provides more details on what to do when viewing an image is unavoidable.
- Risk assessments and or safety plans will be developed for individual children who have been involved in an incident. This should be reviewed regularly or every time there is an occurrence of an incident. These should involve the child and parents/carers and address contextual risks.

- It is important that schools and colleges consider sexual harassment in broad terms. Sexual harassment (as set out above) creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.

2.7.2 - Contextual safeguarding approach to child-on-child harm:

Heathfield Community School will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by taking a contextual approach to safeguarding by increasing safety in the contexts of which harm can occur – this can include the school environment itself, peer groups and the neighbourhood.

Following any incidents of child-on-child harm, the DSL/Deputies will review and consider whether any practice or environmental changes can be made in relation to any lessons learned. This can include making changes to staffing and supervision, making changes to the physical environment and considering the utilisation and delivery of safeguarding topics on the curriculum.

Further information can be found in the school's Child-on-Child Abuse policy.

2.8 Responding to allegations of abuse made against adults working in the setting , including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors.

Staff must report any concerns or allegations about a professional's behaviour (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors) where they may have:

- 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 may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

2.8.1 - Immediate action must be taken:

- Do not speak to the individual it concerns.
- Allegations or concerns about colleagues and visitors must be reported directly to the Head Teacher who will follow guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022, Part four: Allegations of abuse made against teachers and other staff).
- If the concern relates to Head Teacher it should be reported to the Chair of the IEB (Governors), who will liaise with the [Local Authority Designated Officer \(LADO\)](#) and they will decide on any action required.
- If there is a conflict of interest which inhibits this process of reporting, staff can report directly to the LADO via sdinputters@somerset.gov.uk
- If allegations are regarding a member of supply staff, the school will take the lead and progress enquiries with the LADO, whilst continuing to engage and work with the employment agency.

- Allegations regarding foster carers or anyone in a position of trust working or volunteering with children should be referred to the LADO on the day that the allegation is reported. The allocated social worker should also be informed on the day. The school should not undertake any investigation unless the LADO advises this.

2.8.2 - Low level concerns

This should be read in conjunction with the staff code of conduct and Keeping children Safe in Education (2022,). A low-level concern is not insignificant. This process should be used in events where a concern about professional conduct does not meet the threshold set out at the beginning of this section.

The setting provides a clear procedure for sharing low level concerns. These will be shared with the Head Teacher

- Reports should be made to the Head Teacher. The school creates an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer where they have found themselves in a situation.
- The Head Teacher will address unprofessional behaviour and support the individual to correct it at an early stage providing a responsive, sensitive, and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised.
- Review and correct any deficits in the setting's safeguarding system.

2.9 Mental health and wellbeing. (A flow diagram is available in [Appendix B](#) to illustrate this section)

Schools and colleges have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their learners. 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, and or may require early help support.

Heathfield Community School will commit to undertake the following.

- The appointment of a senior mental health lead who can support the development of knowledge and act as a point of expertise to promote the wellbeing and mental health of learners. This colleague will have sufficient training in mental health and safeguarding for them to carry out their role effectively.
- Early identification of vulnerability to mental health problems by reviewing attendance, behaviour, attainment, and safeguarding records at least on a termly basis.
- Ensure that learners can report and share concerns in line with section [2.1 Reporting a concern](#) of this policy.
- Staff will follow a safeguarding process in terms of reporting concerns outlined in [Appendix B](#) so the DSL/Deputy DSLs (and wider members of the safeguarding team such as the SENDCo) can assess whether there are any other vulnerabilities can be identified and proportionate support considered.

- Staff will ensure the immediate health and safety of a learner who is displaying acute mental health distress. This may require support from emergency services via 999 if the learner is at risk of immediate harm.
- DSLs/Deputies will consider whether a case can be managed internally, through early help, or should involve other agencies as required in line with section [2.4 - Multi-Agency Working](#).
- The setting will communicate and work with the learner and parents/carers to ensure that interventions are in the best interests of the child.
- DSLs will liaise with staff to ensure reasonable adjustments are made and develop ways to support achieving positive educational outcomes.
- Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem – DSLs, the school Mental Health lead and the senior leadership team should be able to access specialist advice through targeted services.

2.9.1 - Contextual safeguarding approach to mental health

Heathfield Community School will ensure that preventative measures in terms of providing safeguarding on the curriculum will provide opportunities for learners to identify when they may need help, and to develop resilience.

The setting will take a 'whole school approach' to:

- deliver high quality teaching around mental health and wellbeing on the curriculum.
- having a culture that promotes mental health and wellbeing;
- having an environment that promotes mental health and wellbeing;
- making sure pupils and staff are aware of and able to access a range of mental health services;
- supporting staff wellbeing
- And being committed to pupil and parent participation

2.10 Online Safety

Online safety is an integrated and interwoven theme with other safeguarding considerations. The DSL liaises with the appropriate curriculum leaders and Personal Development lead to ensuring that interventions are in place and are effective. This means coordinating support and engaging with other colleagues in the setting who may have more technological expertise such as the IT manager.

Heathfield Community School is committed to addressing online safety issues around content, contact, conduct and commerce. This includes:

- Ensuring that online safety is considered in relevant policies and procedures.
- Online safety is interwoven in safeguarding training for staff and safeguarding on the curriculum for learners.

- Acknowledging that child on child abuse can happen via mobile and smart technology between individuals and groups. This should be approached in the same process outlined in section [2.7 Responding to incidents of child on child harm](#) and read in conjunction of Heathfield Community School's policies on the use of IT.
- Provision of education via remote learning will comply with governmental advice [Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- The effectiveness of the setting's ability to safeguarding learners in respect to filtering and monitoring, information security and access management alongside the above will be reviewed annually.
- Preparing children with information for any online challenges and hoaxes, sharing information with parents and where to get help.

Appendices

Appendix A – Details of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy/Deputies

Name	Designation	Contact details
Hannah Jones	Headteacher	HJones@heathfieldcommunityschool.co.uk
Ian Grant	Deputy Head	IGrant@heathfieldcommunityschool.co.uk
Nicola Patmore	Assistant Head (DSL)	NPatmore@heathfieldcommunityschool.co.uk
Kate Berryman	Deputy DSL	KBerryman@heathfieldcommunityschool.co.uk
Tara Smith	Safeguarding Support Officer & CLA Representative	TSmith@heathfieldcommunityschool.co.uk
Sarah Kew	Safeguarding Support Officer	skew@@heathfieldcommunityschool.co.uk
Samm Barge	Safeguarding Admin	SBarge@heathfieldcommunityschool.co.uk
Jennifer Saunders	The SPACE – Safeguarding	Jennie.Saunders@thespacesomerset.co.uk
Jenny Bowley	The SPACE – Safeguarding	Jenny.Bowley@thespacesomerset.co.uk
Mel Hoare	Mental Health Lead	MHoare@heathfieldcommunityschool.co.uk
Claire Emery	Chair of IEB (governors)	Via Jtaylor@heathfieldcommunityschool.co.uk
Gale Webb	Safeguarding IEB member (Governor)	Via Jtaylor@heathfieldcommunityschool.co.uk

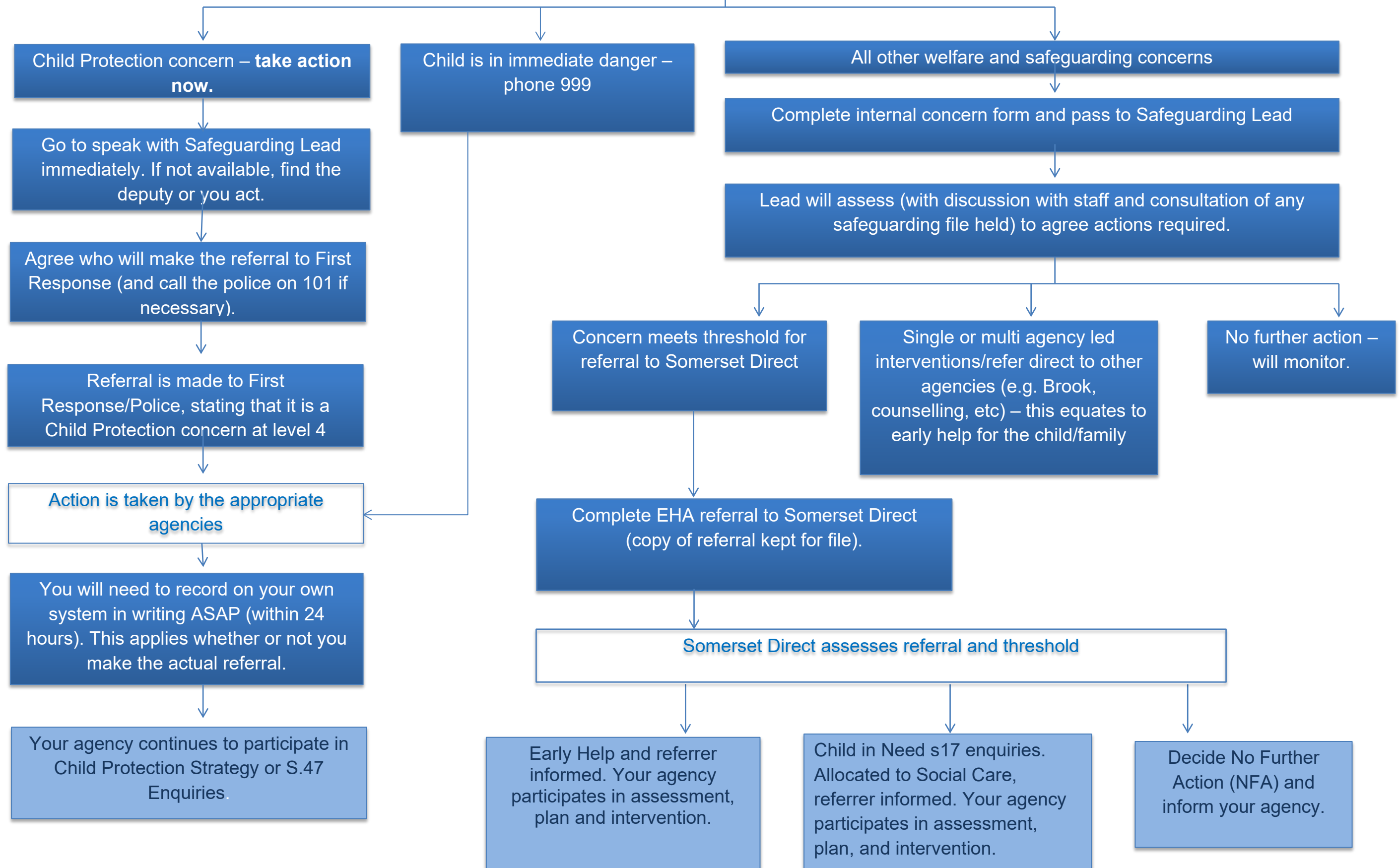
Children’s Social Care and/or the Police should be contacted out of normal office hours (i.e. evenings and weekends).

Appendix B – Reporting concerns

- Reporting Concerns Flow Chart – **Somerset**
- Process flow chart responding to incidents of child-on-child incidents and Mental Health Problems – [Click here](#)
- Safeguarding contacts Poster – Multi-agency contacts in Somerset – [Click here](#)

B. Reporting Concerns Flow Chart

You have concerns about a child



No matter what the outcome, keep monitoring, re-refer or escalate as appropriate. Participate in all assessments and plans. Chase referrals if not kept informed – this is our responsibility.

Safeguarding Response to Mental Health and Child on Child Abuse

All staff should be 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 (KCSIE, 2021)

All staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. All staff should be clear about their settings's policy and procedures with regard to child on child abuse (KCSIE, 2022)

There is a concern about a learner's mental health

You are made aware of an incident or pattern of child on child abuse

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. (KCSIE,)

Secure the safety of the learner(s) involved and source support for any other young people affected

Record the concern/incident in line with your setting's safeguarding and child protection policy, DSL and deputies are notified

The concern is reviewed by the DSL and safeguarding team. Information should be cross-referenced with attendance, behaviour records, attainment and any safeguarding and child protection concerns.

Possible examples of peer on peer abuse

- Bullying (and cyberbullying)
- Physical abuse
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Upskirting
- Sexting (youth produced sexual imagery)
- Initiation/hazing type violence and

Additional guidance used to respond to the concern:

- *Mental health and behaviour in schools* ([link](#))
- *Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing* ([link](#))

Additional guidance used to respond to the concern

- *Advice for Schools and Colleges on Responding to Sexting Incidents* ([link](#))
- *Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool* ([link](#))
- *GIFT work*
- *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* ([link](#))
- *NSPCC: When to call the police* ([link](#))

Concern and need reviewed alongside learner and family

Concern can be managed internally through setting-based early help, support and signposting.

Concern requires additional support from a targeted agency or Primary Mental Health Specialist.

Child protection concern that requires a referral to social care for an assessment under s.17 or s.47 of the Children's Act 1989. School may also refer directly to CAMHs.

Concerns managed internally through pastoral support, contextual safeguarding, restorative approaches, RSE/PSHE. Setting informs parents/carers of incident and actions.

Outcomes

Outcomes

Repeat incidents or that of moderate concern – Setting liaises with parents/carers. Consider seeking consent and advice for targeted/specialist services to support all learners involved in the incident(s).

Clear child protection concerns/criminal issue. Make a referral to social care and/or the police for consideration of a statutory assessment.

All actions, risk assessments and responses should be recorded on the Safeguarding/Child Protection file. Plans/risk assessments should be reviewed every 2 months or on any occasion another concern is raised.

A> Multi-Agency Contacts for Safeguarding in Education.

If you have concerns about a child/young person in Somerset

If a child is at immediate risk call the POLICE	POLICE 999	
To make an URGENT referral, i.e., a child is likely to suffer or is suffering significant harm, call Somerset Direct.	Somerset Direct 0300 123 2224 Out of Office Hours, Call the Emergency Duty Team on 0300 123 2327	
To make a NON-URGENT referral, complete an Early Help Assessment and send to	sdinputters@somerset.gov.uk	
To raise concerns and ask for advice about radicalisation (also contact Somerset Direct).	PREVENT DUTY - 01278 647466 PreventSW@avonandsomerset.police.uk	
To liaise with the specialist Safeguarding Police unit	Lighthouse Safeguarding Unit – Avon and Somerset police 01278 649228	
DSL Consultation Line 0300 123 3078	Early Help Hub 01823 3555803	Critical Incident Support EPS SSE 01823 357000

If you have concerns about a professional working with a child...

To raise concerns and ask for guidance in relation to the conduct of someone who works with children	Local Authority Designated Officer - (LADO) Anthony Goble 0300 123 2224
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For information, advice, and guidance in relation to safeguarding policy and procedures.

Education Safeguarding Service ESS@somerset.gov.uk		
Service Manager Toby Jenkins	Team Manager East Jane Weatherill	Team Manager West Jane Weatherill
Child sexual exploitation & child criminal exploitation	Operation Topaz (Avon and Somerset Police) https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/forms/vul	

Child Missing from Education	Somerset County Council
Children affected by Forced Marriage	Forced Marriage Unit T: (0) 20 7008 0151 E: fmu@fco.gov.uk
Online Safety Advice	Professional Online Safeguarding Helpline T: 0344 381 4772 E: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
Reporting online sexual abuse and grooming	Child Exploitation and Online Protection command https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/
FGM advice	NSPCC FGM Helpline T: 0800 028 3550 E: fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk
Domestic Abuse Helpline	0800 6949999
Young Carers – advice and support.	0300 123 2224 YoungCarersmailbox@somerset.gov.uk
Whistleblowing professional policy	NSPCC Whistleblowing hotline T: 0800 028 0285 E: help@nspcc.org.uk
Primary Mental Health Specialists (advice) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Cyp@somerset.org	
Advice around harmful sexualised behaviour.	DSL consultation line 0300 123 3078
	Brook Traffic Light Tool https://legacy.brook.org.uk/brook_tools/traffic/index.html?syn_partner=

Appendix C - Dealing with a disclosure of abuse

When a child tells me about abuse they have suffered, what must I remember?

- Stay calm.
- Do not communicate shock, anger or embarrassment.
- Reassure the child. Tell them you are pleased that they are speaking to you.
- Never promise confidentiality. Assure them that you will try to help but let the child know that you may have to tell other people in order to do this. State who this will be and why.
- Encourage the child to talk but do not ask "leading questions" or press for information. Use 'Tell Me, Explain to me, Describe to me' (TED) questioning.
- Listen and remember.
- Check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you.
- Praise the child for telling you. Communicate that they have a right to be safe and protected.
- It is inappropriate to make any comments about the alleged offender.
- Be aware that the child may retract what they have told you. It is essential to record all you have heard.
- At the end of the conversation, tell the child again who you are going to tell and why that person or those people need to know.
- As soon as you can afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's own language. Include any questions you may have asked. Do not add any opinions or interpretations.
- **If the situation needs immediate and urgent response, go directly to the DSL/DDSL and report to them in person and without delay. Staff in the school SafeHub will be able to locate the DSL/DDSL if you cannot**
- In all cases, record the information on CPOMS the same working day.

NB It is not education staff's role to seek disclosures. Their role is to observe that something may be wrong, ask about it, listen, be available and try to make time to talk.

- The 5 'R's are helpful in understanding what professional's duties are in relation to responding to an incident.

Recognise – Respond – Reassure – Refer - Record

Appendix D - Types of abuse and neglect

The Department for Education's Tackle Child Abuse campaign has accessible videos to watch <https://tacklechildabuse.campaign.gov.uk/>

Abuse and neglect are defined as the maltreatment of a child or young person whereby someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

All school and college staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another. For children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) additional barriers can exist when identifying abuse and neglect, these include:

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

To address these additional challenges, schools and colleges should consider extra pastoral support for children with SEND (KCSIE, 2022).

The following are the definition of abuse and neglect as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) however, the ultimate responsibility to assess and define the type of abuse a child or young person may be subject to is that of the Police and Children's Services – our responsibility is to understand what each category of abuse is and how this can impact on the welfare and development of our children and where we have concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of abuse and neglect (one or more categories can apply) to take appropriate action as early as possible.

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Neglect: 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 caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

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

Appendix E Specific actions to take on topical safeguarding issues

General or national guidance will not be included here. A summary of specific duties are in [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 Annex B](#) and Access to local guidance can be found in [Appendix A](#) of this document.

In recognition that the threshold of child protection is 'likely to suffer' significant harm, Heathfield Community School may need to make a referral to children's social care. Where possible, this will involve notifying the parent/carer if it does not place the learner at further risk of harm. In all other circumstances information will be shared in line with section [2.2 Information Sharing](#).

It is also important to recognise the importance of liaising with other education settings who may have siblings attending. It is likely that they may hold additional information which will support early identification of harm and in turn develop your assessment of need.

Child Exploitation – both Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Heathfield Community School will ensure that early help intervention is provided as soon as a concern of exploitation is identified. Discussion and advice will be sought from targeted services to consider what support may be available. The learner and their families will be part of any planning and interventions.

- If the learner is at risk of CSE or there is intelligence which indicates that the learner or peer group are at risk of CSE, Heathfield Community School will share information with Operation Topaz (the police). This information will support proactive activity to disrupt criminal activity in relation to sexual exploitation.
- If the learner is at risk of CCE information should be shared with Somerset's Violence Reduction Unit - The VRU can advise and support settings to manage risk. Targeted support maybe available to disrupt learners from getting involved with criminality.
- Agencies will share 'Missing persons' notifications (which a learner is reported missing from home or care) with education settings with a view to support them to take proactive action and reasonable adjustments in relation to behaviour management and achieving positive educational outcomes. These should be stored securely on the learner's Safeguarding/Child Protection file.

Domestic Abuse

Operation Encompass is a national operation where local police forces notify when the police are called to an incident to domestic abuse. Avon and Somerset have their own version of this and will notify education settings through the Education Safeguarding Service whenever they have responded to a domestic abuse incident. This will enable the education setting to take proactive action and reasonable adjustments in relation to behaviour management and achieving positive educational outcomes. When a setting is concerned about the amount of police notifications they receive or disclosures of domestic abuse they should consider seeking further advice and completing an Early Help Assessment or DASH to support the family.

Female Genital Mutilation

Mandatory reporting duty: [Click here for government guidance](#)

This is a legal duty for all professionals undertaking teaching work to report known cases of FGM to the police via 101. This is when they:

1. are informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
2. observe physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on

These cases must be referred to the DSL who will support them to carry out their duty. It is also advised any referrals made to the police under the mandatory reporting duty is followed up with children's social care, so an assessment of need and support is concurrently considered.

Online Safety

- **Paragraph 132 and 139 of Keeping Children Safe in Education highlights additional actions schools should take to keep learners safe online.**
- For concerns around individual cases where a child has been harmed through online mediums, advice and guidance can be made through the **Professional Online Safeguarding Helpline**, T: 0344 381 4772, E: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk

- Where there have been established cases of online abuse or grooming, the school settings should alert - **Child Exploitation and Online Protection command (CEOPS)**
<https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/>

Mental health – [linked to section within main body of this policy](#)

Child on Child Abuse - [linked to section within main body of this policy](#).

Serious Youth Violence

To be read in conjunction with the above section around Child Criminal Exploitation. There has been local guidance issued on the issue of '[Offensive Weapons in Education Settings](#)'.

It is important to note that should a weapon be used or there is threat of use, the police should be called immediately.

- The same day a weapon is found the school should call for a multi-disciplinary assessment of risk.
- Whilst it is acknowledged that the decision to exclude remains with the Headteacher it is recommended that consultation with other agencies to ensure there is no further risks
- Alternatives to exclusions should be considered first in recognition that by doing so a learner it may be at further risk of harm out in the community.
- Police must be notified

Preventing Radicalisation - The Prevent duty

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counterterrorism 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".¹¹⁰ This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools' and colleges' wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads and other senior leaders should familiarise themselves with the revised [Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales](#), especially paragraphs 57-76, which are specifically concerned with schools (and also covers childcare).

The guidance is set out in terms of four general themes:

- risk assessment,
- working in partnership,
- staff training, and
- IT policies.

Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child:

- under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled)

- by someone other than a parent or close relative (*Close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.)
- with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

Cases of private fostering arrangements must be reported to children's social care to ensure that needs are adequately made.

Statutory guidance states that this should be done at least 6 weeks before the arrangement is due to start or as soon as you are made aware of the arrangements. Not to do so is a criminal offence.

Further support and reasonable adjustments should be made by the education setting to promote achievement of positive educational outcomes.

Young Carers

A young carer is a person under 18 who regularly provides emotional and/or practical support and assistance for a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally unwell or who misuses substances.

Appendix F – COVID 19 Addendum Policy in the event of lockdown.

School to add own arrangements

Appendix F(a) – COVID-19 Addendum in the Event of a Lock-Down

Addendum 1 - January 2021

This addendum outlines the safeguarding arrangements for remote learning and also a summary of any key COVID-19 Mitigation Planning, safeguarding and child protection changes

All leaders and including Governors will ensure that they will also keep up to date with changing National and Local arrangements: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

1. Vulnerable Children/reporting concerns

Vulnerable children have been identified by the safeguarding and pastoral teams, as defined by the latest government guidance found here: [Children of critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/children-of-critical-workers-and-vulnerable-children-who-can-access-schools-or-educational-settings)

A list is held by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All students identified as vulnerable have been offered a place in school. If this has been declined, school has liaised with additional services (e.g. Children's Social Care and Family Intervention Service). In addition these students have an increased level of regular home contact if they are working from home.

2. Maintaining contact

All students not in school are being seen at least weekly in live lessons or contacted via phone at least fortnightly (or weekly if not seen in live lessons/tutor time).

We have aimed to adopt an approach of maintaining contact with children and their families who are not in school, managing a balance of reaching out to children and families when in school and to those not in school, and any new arrangements for pastoral provision e.g.- live tutor sessions are running, along with weekly assemblies.

3. Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy) Arrangements

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and two Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL) are present on the school site on a rota which covers the week and which has been published to all staff and is readily available. There are at least 2 members of the safeguarding team on site each day (this is half of our practitioners on site with about 10% of the school's students on site). The rest of the safeguarding team are working remotely due to Covid restrictions, but are available to come into school at any time if needed.

4. Children with a Social Worker

We expect that our vulnerable children who have a social worker and children with an EHCP will attend our school so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at severe risk.

Where a parent/carer does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will agree with the Social Worker who will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent and wherever possible encourage attendance. This will include children with EHCP plans and we will liaise with the SEND Team. Any discussions will be communicated to the Social Worker.

If we must close our provision and we have children attending with a Social Worker, we will liaise with other provision in our area to see if they are open and if the child/ren can attend. We will then update the Social Worker and use contingency arrangements for information sharing and recording whilst the child is in the alternative setting.

We will ensure where possible that we have joint discussions with the Social Worker around reasons for any non-attendance and the risk this poses to the safeguarding and welfare of the child. Through this discussion we can plan any next steps to try and ensure the welfare of the child.

5. Home Educated Children

When parents/carers are considering Home Education and or have taken a decision to remove the child from our roll, we encourage an open line of communication and will arrange a discussion with the family. In doing this we will inform them of their legal duties and that they will be expected to provide a full-time suitable education. We will also explain that as part of the procedure for wanting to pursue Home Education, we will notify the Local Authority of their decision and the Local Authority will need to make further enquiries directly with them.

If this decision relates to COVID-19 and there are concerns about the physical or mental health of the child or other family member, we will try and continue to offer reassurances about the measures we have taken to protect their health and wellbeing.

The DfE has published advice for parents/carers considering Elective Home Education (EHE). It sets out clearly, the implications of withdrawing children from school for the purposes of home education. We will in our discussion with parents/carers hand out information and provide this link where the option of EHE is explored:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/elective-home-education>

6. Remote Learning

This School/College is operating a mixture of In-School and Home Learning. In teaching face to face or in a virtual classroom it is important that we take steps to ensure children are protected.

Safeguarding and Child Protection remains as important in this environment as anywhere else, and our School will apply the School's Safeguarding and E-Safety Guidance to Remote Learning, just as they would to classroom working. Staff who become aware of any Child Protection concerns will continue to follow the school's safeguarding procedures and the local Somerset Childrens Safeguarding Procedures.

When staff work remotely, we will ensure that the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is adhered to, and the Managing Allegations Against Staff, Carers and Volunteers policy is followed.

Updated National Guidance provided by the DfE can be found on the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19#virtual-lessons-and-live-streaming>

Safeguarding our Children at a Time of Significant Demand

What Do We Know?

Between March and September 2020, many children and young people were not seen in their day care or school settings. We know that the lived experiences of children, young people and their families throughout the lockdown period may have been very different to normal; greater contact with family members and household pressures such as employment, financial concerns, home schooling and health, potentially contributing to an increase in domestic abuse and other concerns such as parental mental health and substance abuse and family breakdown.

Children and young people are also likely to have had increased access to the internet, prompting concerns about an increase in online abuse and exploitation.

As children and young people begin to return to day care or school settings there is an understandable anxiety that significant concerns may come to light about their experiences over the last six months, and there is a need to ensure that children and families are able to access the appropriate level of help for their needs.

The messages from the data we have collected and analysed are clear; demand on all services will increase and all services must identify how they will respond, both individually and in coordination with other agencies.

Responding to Emerging Concerns – Essential Questions to Ask

Circumstances for children and young people can be complex. Key to decision making will be your analysis of what you know and whether any new information which has been shared by the child, young person or about them raises specific concerns about abuse or neglect.

- Have you reviewed the threshold document and clarified all the information available to you, from your records and from your work with other agencies, to decide how serious the situation is for the child or young person?
- In all possible cases, have you discussed your concerns with the designated or named safeguarding lead in your organisation? This is an essential chance to reflect on what has been learnt and whether early help may be needed, or the situation is so serious that urgent action is required.
- If the situation does not require a referral to social care, what other services are available which could provide early and appropriate support?
- What action can/should you/your agency take which is appropriate to the identified needs of the child and family, by reference to the Threshold Guidance (e.g. Early Help, direct action from your agency or working alongside another agency).

You can also use the specific sections of the SSCP Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership Safeguarding Procedures to guide you through the process of making a referral.

Nicola Patmore
4th January 2021

Addendum 2 - March 2021

This addendum outlines the safeguarding arrangements for the return to full school opening following a period of national lockdown

Schools reopen nationally on Monday 8th March 2021

Temporary Policy Addendum:

COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Heathfield Community School

This Policy addendum is effective from 8th March 2021

School Name: Heathfield Community School

Policy owner: Nicola Patmore – Designated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy Head

Date: 09/03/21

Date shared with staff & Governing Body: 10/3/21

Approved by the Governing Board:

Context

On Monday 22nd February 2021, The Prime Minister announced the government's roadmap to cautiously ease lockdown restrictions in England. This included a direction that from 8 March 2021, all pupils should attend school.

Heathfield Community School will continue to have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance keeping children safe in education (as amended, Jan 2021).^[1]

We will ensure that where we care for children on site, we have appropriate support in place for them.

We will take advice and work with the local safeguarding partners.

We will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of coronavirus.

This addendum of the Heathfield Community School Safeguarding and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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Key contacts

Remain as per the School Safeguarding Policy.

Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989^[2], including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child;
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan;
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children’s social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
 - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children’s social care services or in the process of being referred to children’s services
 - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
 - those at risk of becoming NEET (‘not in employment, education or training’)
 - those living in temporary accommodation
 - those who are young carers
 - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
 - care leavers
 - others at the provider and local authority’s discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health.

Heathfield Community School will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be: Nicola Patmore – Safeguarding Lead / Deputy Head.

In circumstances where a parent is hesitant about or does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and Heathfield Community School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, Heathfield Community School or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England. Heathfield Community School will encourage all pupils to attend a school.

Attendance monitoring

We expect all pupils to attend school.

Parents or carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of the illness and inform us of the reason for absence so that the correct attendance codes can be used in every case of absence.

We expect parents or carers to make contact to make us aware of the status of any COVID-19 tests that have become necessary and to update the school on the welfare of the pupil.

From 8th March 2021, we will record attendance in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)^[3] for all pupils.

A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice to self-isolate because they:

- have symptoms or have had a positive test result
- live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive and are a household contact
- are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

The advice for pupils who have been confirmed as clinically extremely vulnerable is to shield and stay at home as much as possible until further notice. They are advised not to attend school while shielding advice applies nationally.

For children self-isolating or quarantining or shielding – we will use code X.

In compliance with the Remote Education, Temporary Continuity Direction^[4] will provide remote education to pupils who are unable to attend school because they are complying with government guidance or legislation around coronavirus (COVID-19).

Also, we will offer pastoral support to pupils who are:

- self-isolating

- shielding
- vulnerable (and off-school)

The Department for Education expects schools to grant applications for leave in exceptional circumstances. This should be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.

Where pupils are not able to attend school, as they are following clinical or public health advice related to coronavirus (COVID-19), the absence will not be penalised.

Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy, this includes making a report via CPOMS, which can be done remotely via this website www.heathfieldcommunity.cpoms.net Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay. If staff are concerned about the immediate safeguarding of a student please speak in person with one of the safeguarding team, either by visiting the SafeHub or phoning one of the safeguarding team (see phone numbers on school list, Samm Barge is safeguarding administrator and can be reached on 01823 428926 (internal number 5926).

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern directly to the headteacher.

Safeguarding Training and induction

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). The DSL will communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter Heathfield Community School, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

Upon arrival, all new staff must work through the induction app, which includes reading the safeguarding & child protection policy, confirmation of school processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

When recruiting new staff, Heathfield Community School will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) (as amended, Jan 2021).

Where Heathfield Community School are utilising volunteers for the purpose of testing, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE.

Under no circumstances will a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity. [\[5\]](#)

Volunteers

Heathfield Community School may use volunteers to assist in handing out and securing COVID-19 test kits to students and staff members. Other duties may be required such as building test kits, cleaning down areas and directing people.

Volunteers who, on an unsupervised basis provide personal care on a one-off basis in Heathfield Community School, will be in regulated activity. This means that if a volunteer is administering a COVID-19 test whilst un-supervised, they will be in regulated activity and therefore require an Enhanced DBS with Barred List check.

Existing volunteers in regulated activity do not have to be re-checked if they have already had a DBS check (which includes barred list information).

Supervision must be:

- by a person who is in regulated activity.
- regular and day to day; and
- reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children.

In appointing volunteers, the school will continue to follow safer recruitment processes.

Children and online safety away from school and college

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made via the DSL/deputy dSL to children's social care and as required, the police.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the school's code of conduct.

Heathfield Community School will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Below are some things to consider if there are virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- No 1:1s, groups only
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.

- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by our IT network manager / provider to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Further details about recording live lessons and retention of such recordings can be found in our GDPR and online learning policy and procedure documents.

Supporting children not in school as they are following clinical or public health advice related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Heathfield Community School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children and Young people.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, school should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

The communication plans can include remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded. Heathfield Community School will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

Heathfield Community School recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers.

Teachers at Heathfield Community School need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Supporting children in school

Heathfield Community School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Heathfield Community School will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish.

Heathfield Community School will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing^[6] and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID-19.

Heathfield Community School will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Heathfield Community School will ensure that appropriate support is offered and signposted to all students with respect to their mental health.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

Heathfield Community School will encourage parents to send their children to school, particularly those who are vulnerable.

Where an application is made, Heathfield Community School will consider whether a parent's decision to educate at home gives greater cause for concern compared to remaining in school.

Where we feel that there is additional cause for concern the designated safeguarding lead will then consider making a referral to the local authority in line with existing procedures. This will happen as soon as Heathfield Community School becomes aware of a parent's intention, or decision, to home educate.

Heathfield Community School will work with local authorities and, where possible, coordinate meetings with parents to seek to ensure EHE is being provided in the best interests of the child.

If a parent wants to admit their child to Heathfield Community School, we will follow our normal processes for in-year admissions applications.

Contingency planning

Heathfield Community School will ensure that for individuals or groups of self-isolating pupils and pupils who are shielding, we follow government guidance related to coronavirus (COVID-19), remote education plans.

Heathfield Community School will continue to operate as normally as possible. In the event that restrictions in schools are needed to help contain the spread of the virus, we will refer to the contingency framework^[1], which has been updated and outlines how schools should operate in the event of any restrictions.

^[1]

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/954314/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2020_-_Update_-_January_2021.pdf

^[2] <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/17>

^[3] <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made>

^[4] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/923539/Remote_Education_Temporary_Continuity_Direction_-_Explanatory_Note.pdf

^[5] Paragraph 183. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) (as amended, Jan 2021)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/954314/Keeping children safe in education 2020 - Update - January 2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/954314/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2020_-_Update_-_January_2021.pdf)

^[6][https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963541/Schools coronavirus operational guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963541/Schools_coronavirus_operational_guidance.pdf)

^[7] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-contingency-framework-for-education-and-childcare-settings/contingency-framework-education-and-childcare-settings-excluding-universities>

Appendix G – What is Child on Child Sexual Abuse?

Child on Child Abuse has recently been renamed by the government, having previously been termed Peer-on-Peer Abuse. This change was made to reflect that effected children could be of different ages and not necessarily 'peers'. Some documents will still have the term 'Peer-on-peer' for example the NSPCC and Ofsted reports, but they mean the same as Child-on-Child abuse.

NSPCC Protecting children from peer-on-peer sexual abuse – **Last updated : 16 April 2021**

[Protecting children from peer-on-peer sexual abuse | NSPCC Learning](#)

Introduction

- Peer-on-peer sexual abuse is sexual abuse that happens between children of a similar age or stage of development. It can happen between any number of children and can affect any age group (Department for Education (DfE), 2018).
- It can be harmful to the children who display it as well as those who experience it.
- Children can experience peer-on-peer sexual abuse in a wide range of settings, including:
 - At school.
 - At home or in someone else's home.
 - In public spaces.
 - Online.

(NSPCC, 2018)

It can take place in spaces which are supervised or unsupervised. Within a school context, for example, peer-on-peer sexual abuse might take place in spaces such as toilets, the playground, corridors and when children are walking home (Contextual Safeguarding Network, 2020).

As children develop healthily, it's normal for them to display certain types of sexualised behaviour. It's important that adults who work or volunteer with children can identify if any sexualised behaviour has become harmful or abusive and respond proportionally to keep all the children involved safe.

We've put together some principles of best practice to help you recognise and respond to peer-on-peer sexual abuse. It includes information on:

- what peer-on-peer sexual abuse looks like.
- how to respond appropriately and proportionately to concerns or instances of peer-on-peer sexual abuse.
- how you can help prevent peer-on-peer sexual abuse occurring.
- an overview of the legislation and guidance to help practitioners recognise and respond to peer-on-peer sexual abuse across the UK.

This information will be helpful for anyone who works or volunteers with children and young people - including in schools, healthcare, youth clubs, community groups and childcare

Protecting Children from Child on Child Sexual Abuse

[Protecting children from peer-on-peer sexual abuse | NSPCC Learning](#)

Children's understanding of peer-on-peer sexual abuse

Children may not always understand that they have experienced or carried out peer-on-peer sexual abuse. This might be because:

- they don't understand what constitutes appropriate, inappropriate, problematic or abusive sexualised behaviour.
- they have experienced sexual abuse themselves and don't realise that what happened to them was wrong.
- they don't know whether consent was given.
- the abuse happened between friends or partners.
- the abuse took place online.
- they blame themselves for the abuse they received.
- younger children lack knowledge of sex and sexuality as they are less likely to have received any relationships and sex education.

Protecting all the children involved

You should balance the duty to safeguard the child who has experienced abuse with the need to support the child who has displayed harmful sexual behaviour.

Children who witnessed the abuse or are friends of those involved may also be affected and need support. Each incident of or concern about peer-on-peer abuse will be different: you should gather all the facts, assess any risks and make decisions on a case-by-case basis. This will help you understand who needs to be involved to make sure all children are appropriately protected and supported.

Any child who has experienced or been involved in sexual abuse in a school setting can contact our [Report Abuse in Education Helpline](#) on [0800 136 663](tel:0800136663) or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk.

> [Read our information about best practice on managing allegations made against a child](#)

Preventing Child on Child Sexual Abuse

Organisations and individuals that work with children have a responsibility to keep them safe. It's important to create a healthy and safe environment for all children and young people and challenge societal norms that may allow peer-on-peer sexual abuse to take place.

Policies, procedures and codes of conduct

Your safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures should include information about peer-on-peer sexual abuse. You should share these with everyone in your organisation, as well as parents and carers. This will help adults understand what they need to do to prevent and tackle peer-on-peer sexual abuse.

You might find it helpful to create a version of your policies and procedures that are suitable for children and young people.

Sharing this information may:

- help children and young people understand that any incidents of peer-on-peer sexual abuse will be taken seriously and responded to effectively.
- help them know how to report anything upsetting that may happen.
- encourage them to speak out if they are worried about their own or someone else's behaviour.

You should also have codes of conduct which clearly set out what behaviour is and is not appropriate for adults and children. This will help make sure young people know what behaviour is suitable for your setting and what the consequences will be if they breach the rules.

Helping children speak out

Children might not feel able to talk to adults about peer-on-peer sexual abuse. But there are things you can do to make it easier.

- Children may feel more confident speaking out if they have a positive, trusting relationship with a trusted adult. This can be done by encouraging them to share their thoughts and opinions, responding to their concerns, and respecting and listening to them.
- If children can see a culture within your organisation that challenges inappropriate behaviour, they may feel more confident that any concerns they raise will be responded to appropriately.
- Having specialist staff in pastoral care or counselling roles can make it easier for children to share their concern.

Safe environments

(Contextual Safeguarding Network, 2020)

You should think about how you can make your organisation's environment safe for children and young people. To start with, you could identify any locations where there are concerns about peer-on-peer sexual abuse taking place. This might include toilets, unsupervised corridors and areas that are poorly lit or hidden from adult view. Think about what you can do to make these places safer – for example, increasing supervision levels in certain areas or improving lighting.

[> Find out about creating safer environments for children and young people](#)

Talking with children about abuse and harassment

It's important to talk with children and young people about peer-on-peer sexual abuse. It's good practice for all organisations that work with children to have discussions about sex and healthy relationships. In schools, lessons on relationships, sex and sexuality are a good way of helping children learn about topics such as appropriate sexual behaviour, trust, consent, boundaries and responsibility.

Topics you can discuss include:

- what healthy sexual activity and respectful relationships look like (both online and offline).
- gender stereotypes and perceptions of gender roles.
- pornography and how it presents sexual behaviour.
- consent and withdrawing consent.

(Department for Education (DfE), 2018; DfE, 2020).

Explain what peer-on-peer sexual abuse is and what it may look like. This may help children understand if they have seen or experienced abuse. Make sure they know who they can talk to if they are concerned about anything or have experienced something upsetting.

Childline has produced age-appropriate information and advice for children and young people about sexual abuse, which includes information about peer-on-peer sexual abuse. You may want to signpost children to Childline for support or use some of these examples to help start a conversation.

> [Childline's information about sexual abuse for children and young people](#)

> [Read our advice on how to have difficult conversations with children](#)

> [Find out more about how to promote healthy relationships, from early years through to older children](#)

Training

Make sure all the adults in your organisation are trained to recognise and respond to peer-on-peer sexual abuse. This will help them understand what is normal, inappropriate or abusive sexual behaviour and what action to take.

Support resources for students

Resources for student victims Support from specialist sexual violence sector organisation	Recommended by DfE via Document - Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges. May 2018	Home Rape Crisis England & Wales The Survivors Trust
Resources for student victims Support from specialist sexual violence sector organisation		NSPCC helpline* can be contacted on 0800 136 663 , or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk . Helpline for people who have experienced sexual abuse in education settings launched 2021 – on school website
Resources for school staff Support from specialist sexual violence sector organisation	Recommended by DfE via Document - Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges. May 2018	The Anti-Bullying Alliance has developed guidance for schools about preventing and responding to sexual bullying. Preventing sexual bullying Anti-Bullying Alliance -
Resources for student victims		SARSAS 0808 801 0456* HOPELINEUK is a confidential support and advice service for children and young people under the age of 35 who are experiencing thoughts of suicide, or anyone concerned that a young person could be thinking about suicide. or 0808 801 0456 0808 801 0464 Email: support@sarsas.org.uk Providing support to anyone who has experienced rape or any kind of sexual assault or abuse at any time in their lives.
Resources for student victims		Papyrus Trust Call: 0800 068 4141 Text: 07860 039 967 Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org Papyrus Trust runs HOPELINEUK which is a confidential support and advice service for children and young people under the age of 35 who are experiencing thoughts of suicide, or anyone concerned that a young person could be thinking about suicide.