

LONDON MEED PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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London Meed Primary School Child Protection Policy

Definitions

Child protection is an aspect of safeguarding but is focused on how we respond to children who have been significantly harmed or are at risk of significant harm.

The term **staff** applies to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, in either a paid or voluntary capacity. This also includes parents and governors.

Child refers to all young people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday. On the whole, this will apply to pupils of our school; however, the policy will extend to visiting children and students from other establishments

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults in a parenting role for example adoptive parents, step-parents, guardians and foster carers.

Abuse could mean neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse or any combination of these, as well as children witnessing domestic abuse. Parents, carers and other people can harm children either by direct acts and / or failure to provide proper care. Explanations of these are given within the procedure document.

Principles and Values

- Children have a right to feel secure and cannot learn effectively unless they do so.
- All children have a right to be protected from harm.
- All staff have a key role in prevention of harm and an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may indicate a child is at risk of harm, either in the school or in the community, whilst taking into account any contextual safeguarding.
- We acknowledge that it is essential that we work in partnership with other agencies that protect children and reduce risk and so we will engage in partnership working throughout the child protection process to safeguard children.
- Whilst the school will work openly with parents as far as possible, it reserves the right to contact Children's Social Care or the police, without notifying parents if this is believed to be in the child's best interests.
- All adults working within the school should maintain professional curiosity if they are concerned about a child.

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Leadership and Management

We have established clear lines of accountability, training and advice to support the process of child protection and individual staff within that process.

In this school, any individual can contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or their Deputy (DDSL) if they have concerns about a child or young person.

The **DSL** is Fi Dowley and the **DDSL** are Jake Terrill, Katherine Brayne, Nikki Palethorpe, Susan Stalker and Dorrie Oliver. There is a nominated safeguarding governor, Tricia Eastley, who will take leadership responsibility for safeguarding. The Chair of Governors, Tricia Eastley will receive reports of allegations against the headteacher and act on the behalf of the governing body.

As an employer we follow safer recruitment guidance as set out in KCSiE 2025 including informing shortlisted candidates that online searches will be carried out.

Training

All staff in our school are expected to be aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and must be able to respond appropriately. Training is provided as required - annually on September Inset and termly updates. Separate training is provided to all new staff on appointment as part of their Induction by one of the DSL's in the first week. The DSL will attend training at least every other year to enable them to fulfil their role.

Any update in national or local guidance will be shared with all staff in briefings and then captured in the next whole school training. This policy will be updated during the year to reflect any changes brought about by new guidance. Governor training is provided as required by KCSiE 2025.

Referral

Following any concerns raised, the DSL will assess the information and consider if significant harm has happened or there is a risk that it may happen. If the evidence suggests the threshold of significant harm, or risk of significant harm has been reached, or if it is not clear if the threshold is met, the DSL will contact Children's Social Care and, if appropriate, the police. If the DSL or DDSL is not available or there are immediate concerns, the staff member will refer directly to Children's Social Care and the police if appropriate. We will use the guidance from NPCC to determine when to contact the police.

Generally, the DSL will inform the parents prior to making a referral. However, there are situations where this may not be possible or appropriate, particularly when informing parents, may place the child at further risk. **N.B.** *The exception to this process will be in those cases of known FGM where*

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there is a mandatory requirement for the teacher to report directly to the police. The DSL should also be made aware.

Confidentiality

We maintain that all matters relating to child protection are to be treated as confidential and only shared as per the 'Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners' (DfE 2024) guidance

- There is a lawful basis for child protection concerns to be shared with agencies who have a statutory duty for child protection.
- Information will be shared with individuals within the school who 'need to know'.
- All staff are aware that they cannot promise a child to keep a disclosure confidential.

As a school we will educate pupils to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it through:

- The content of the curriculum will be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with SEND
- A school ethos which helps children to feel safe and able to talk freely about their concerns, believing that they will be listened to and valued.
- Every child having access to a 'trusted adult' in the school.
- Children will be taught about how to keep themselves and others safe when on-line

Dealing with concerns and allegations against staff

If a concern is raised about the practice or behaviour of a member of staff, this information will be recorded and passed to the headteacher Fi Dowley. The headteacher will make an assessment to determine if the matter is a 'low level concern' or an 'allegation'. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted for all allegations and the relevant guidance will be followed. If the headteacher needs advice or guidance they will contact the LADO. If the allegation is against the headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will contact the LADO or Chair of Governors directly. (Annex 5)

Dealing with children abusing children

If a concern is raised that a child under 18 is abusing another child under 18, the 'Child on Child Abuse' guidance will be followed (Annex 6)

Policy review

As a school, we review this policy at least annually in line with DfE, WSSCP and WSCC requirements and other relevant statutory guidance.

Date approved by governing body: September 2025

LONDON MEED PRIMARY SCHOOL | POLICY REVIEWED IN SEPTEMBER 2025 BY GOVERNORS |
POLICY REVIEWED ANNUALLY – NEXT REVIEW SEPTEMBER 2026

Bravery.....Community.....Curiosity.....Resilience.....Respect

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Date reviewed by governing body: September 2026

Roles and responsibilities within London Meed Primary school

Staff responsibilities

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

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or have concerns.
- Plan opportunities within the curriculum for children to develop skills they need to recognise, assess and manage risk appropriately and keep themselves safe.
- Attend training in order to be aware of and be alert to the signs of abuse.
- Maintain an attitude of “it could happen here” with regards to safeguarding.
- 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.
- Recognise that abuse, neglect, or other adverse childhood experiences, can have an impact on the mental health, behaviour and education of children.
- Record their concerns if they are worried that a child is being abused and report these to the DSL as soon as practicable that day. If the DSL is not contactable immediately a DDSL should be informed.
- Be prepared to refer directly to social care, and the police if appropriate, if there is a risk of significant harm and the DSL or DDSL is not available.
- Follow the allegations procedures (Annex 5) if the disclosure is an allegation against a member of staff.
- Follow the procedures set out by the WSSCP and take account of guidance issued by the DfE.
- Support pupils in line with their child protection plan.

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- Treat information with confidentiality but never promise to “keep a secret”.
- Notify the DSL or DDSL of any child on a child protection plan or child in need plan who has unexplained absence.
- Have an understanding of ‘Early Help’ and be prepared to identify and support children who may benefit from this intervention.
- Liaise with other agencies that support pupils and provide early help.
- Ensure they know who the DSL and DDSL are and know how to contact them.
- Have an awareness of the Child Protection Policy, the Behaviour Policy, the Staff Behaviour Policy (or Code of Conduct), child on child abuse procedures, the safeguarding response for children who go missing or are absent from education and the role of the DSL.

Senior Management Team responsibilities:

- Contribute to inter-agency working in line with ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 guidance’
- Provide a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified
- Ensure staff are alert to the various factors that can increase the need for early help (*para 18 KCSiE 2024*)
- Working with Children’s Social Care, support their assessment and planning processes including the school’s attendance at conference and core group meetings.
- Carry out tasks delegated by the governing body such as training of staff, safer recruitment and maintaining a single central register.
- Provide support and advice on all matters pertaining to safeguarding and child protection to all staff regardless of their position within the school.
- Treat any information shared by staff or pupils with respect and follow agreed policies and procedures.
- Ensure that allegations or concerns against staff are dealt with in accordance with guidance from Department for Education (DfE) and the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSSCP) procedures.

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- Determine if a concern about a member of staff is a 'low level concern' or an allegation^[1]

Governing body responsibilities

- Ensure the school has effective safeguarding policies and procedures including a Child Protection Policy, a Staff Behaviour Policy or Code of Conduct, a Behaviour Policy and a response to children who go missing from education.
- Ensure WSSCP is informed in line with local requirements about the discharge of duties via the annual safeguarding self assessment.
- Recruitment, selection and induction follows safer recruitment practice, including all appropriate checks.
- Allegations against staff are dealt with by the headteacher. Allegations against the headteacher are dealt with by the Chair of Governors.
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team is appointed as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and has this recorded in their job description.
- Staff have been trained appropriately and this is updated in line with guidance
- Any safeguarding deficiencies or weaknesses are remedied without delay
- A nominated governor for safeguarding is identified.

DSL responsibilities *(to be read in conjunction with DSL role description in KCSiE)*

In this school the DSL is Fi Dowley

The Deputy DSL are Jake Terrill, Katherine Brayne, Nikki Palethorpe, Susan Stalker and Dorrie Oliver.

In addition to the role of all staff and the senior management team, the DSL will

- Refer cases to social care, and the police where appropriate, in a timely manner avoiding any delay that could place the child at more risk.

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- Assist the Governing Body in fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities set out in legislation and statutory guidance.
- Attend appropriate training and demonstrate evidence of continuing professional development to carry out the role.
- Ensure every member of staff knows who the DSL and the Deputy are, have an awareness of the DSL role and know how to contact them.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and their responsibility for referring any concerns about a child to the DSL and concerns about an adult to the headteacher.
- Ensure that those staff that need to know, are aware of those children who have experienced, or are experiencing abuse in order to promote their educational outcomes and provide the appropriate support.
- Ensure whole school training occurs regularly with at least annual updates so that staff and volunteers can fulfil their responsibilities knowledgeably.
- Ensure any members of staff joining the school outside of the agreed training schedule receive induction training prior to the commencement of their duties.
- Keep records of child protection concerns securely and separate from the main pupil file and use these records to support the assessment and likelihood of risk.
- Ensure that safeguarding records are transferred accordingly (separate from pupil files) and in a timely fashion when a child transfers school, including in-year transfers.
- Ensure that when a pupil transfers school and is on a child protection plan or is a child looked after, their information is passed to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed. Consideration is given to a transition meeting prior to moving if the case is complex or on-going.
- Be aware of the training opportunities and briefings provided by WSSCP to ensure staff are aware of the latest local guidance on safeguarding.
- Develop, implement and review procedures in the school that enable the identification and reporting of all cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Meet any other expectations set out for DSLs in KCSiE 2025

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London Meed Primary School Child Protection Procedures

Overview

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

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

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

All staff are aware that very young children, those with disabilities, special needs, certain medical conditions or with language deficit/English as a second language may have more difficulty in communicating concerns or feelings. They may be more likely to communicate concerns with behaviours rather than words. Additionally, staff will question the cause of knocks and bumps in children who have limited mobility, which will include children (for example younger siblings) visiting the site in addition to pupils.

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

1. Make an initial record of the information
2. Report it to the DSL immediately
3. The DSL will consider if there is a requirement for immediate medical intervention. Urgent medical attention should not be delayed if the DSL is not immediately available
4. Make an accurate record (which may be used in any subsequent judicial proceedings) as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the occurrence. Include everything that has happened, including details of:

- Dates and times of observations

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- Dates and times of any discussions in which they were involved
- Any injuries
- Explanations given by the child / adult
- What action was taken
- Any actual words or phrases used by the child

The records must be signed and dated by the author with an equivalent procedure in place for electronic based records

5. In the absence of the DSL or their Deputy, be prepared to refer directly to Children's Social Care (and the police if appropriate) if there is the potential for immediate, significant harm.

Following a report of concerns the DSL must:

1. Decide whether or not there are sufficient grounds for suspecting significant harm, in which case a referral must be made to Children's Social Care and the police if it is in keeping with the National Police Chiefs Council ["When to call the Police"](#) guidance. The rationale for this decision should be recorded by the DSL
2. Normally the school should try to discuss any concerns about a child's welfare with the family and where possible seek their agreement before making a referral to Children's Social Care. However, in accordance with DfE guidance, this should only be done when it will not place the child at increased risk or could have an impact on a police investigation. Where there are doubts or reservations about involving the child's family, the DSL should clarify with Children's Social Care or the police whether the parents should be told about the referral and, if so, when and by whom. This is important in cases where the police may need to conduct a criminal investigation. The child's views should also be considered when appropriate.
3. If there are grounds to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm the DSL (or Deputy) must contact Children's Social Care via [Request support or raise a concern about a child - West Sussex County Council](#) making a clear statement of:
 - the known facts

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- any suspicions or allegations
- whether or not there has been any contact with the child's family.

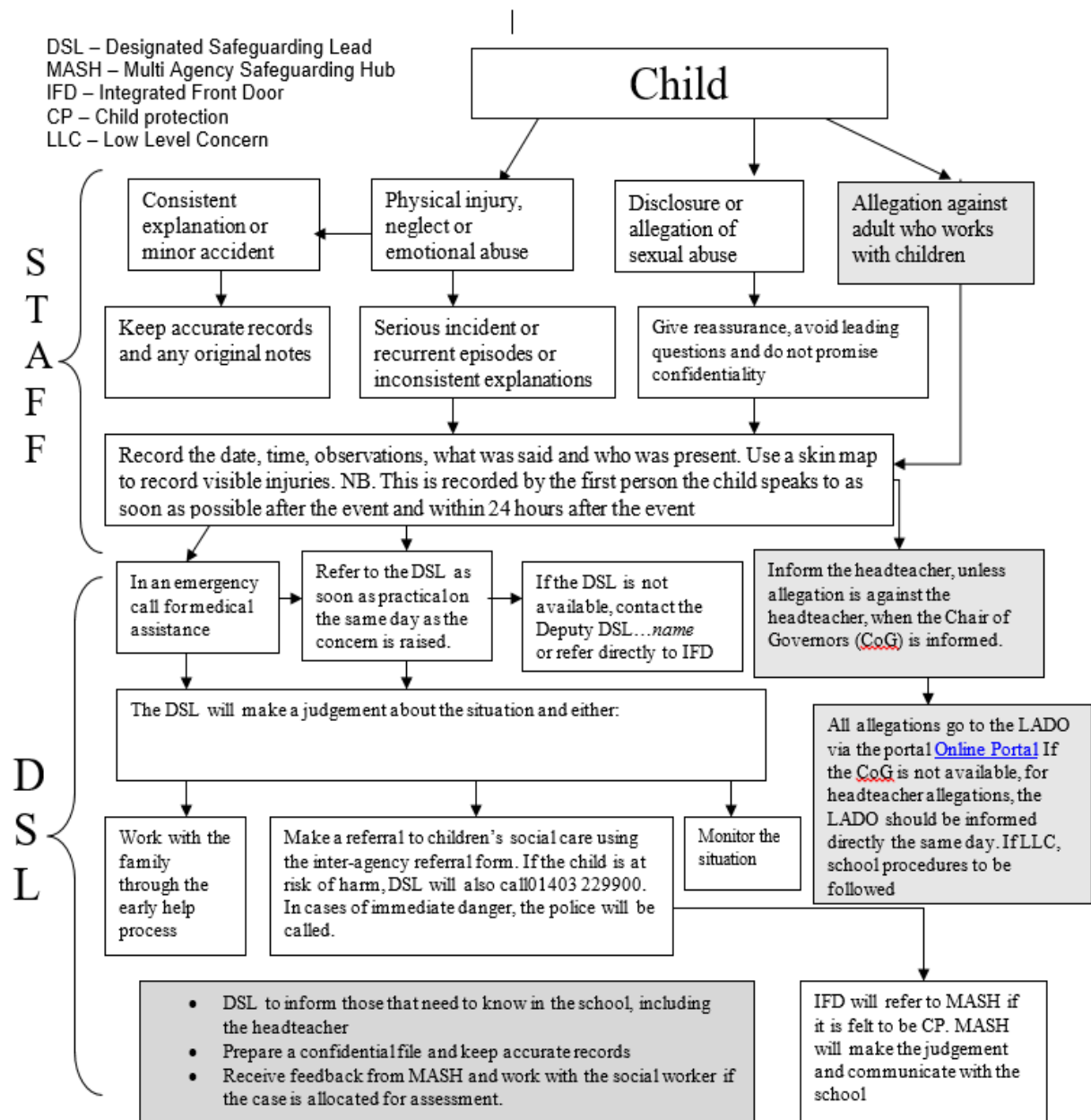
If there is indication that the child is suffering significant harm, a call will also be made to Integrated Front Door on 01403 229900

4. If a child is in immediate danger and urgent protective action is required, the police must be called. The DSL must then notify Children's Social Care of the occurrence and what action has been taken.
5. When a pupil needs *urgent* medical attention and there is suspicion of parental abuse causing the medical need, the DSL or their Deputy should take the child to the nearest hospital with an accident and emergency facility and inform Children's Social Care. Advice should be sought from Children's Social Care about informing the parents, remembering that parents should normally be informed that a child requires urgent hospital attention.
6. If there is not a risk of significant harm, the DSL will either actively monitor the situation or consider the Early Help process.
7. In cases of allegations against staff or low level concerns, the WSSCP procedure or the school Low Level Concerns (LLC) procedure will be followed.

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Annex 1 - Flowchart for child protection procedures

Annex 1 - Flowchart for child protection procedures{ XE "Flowchart for Child Protection Procedures: Annex 2" }



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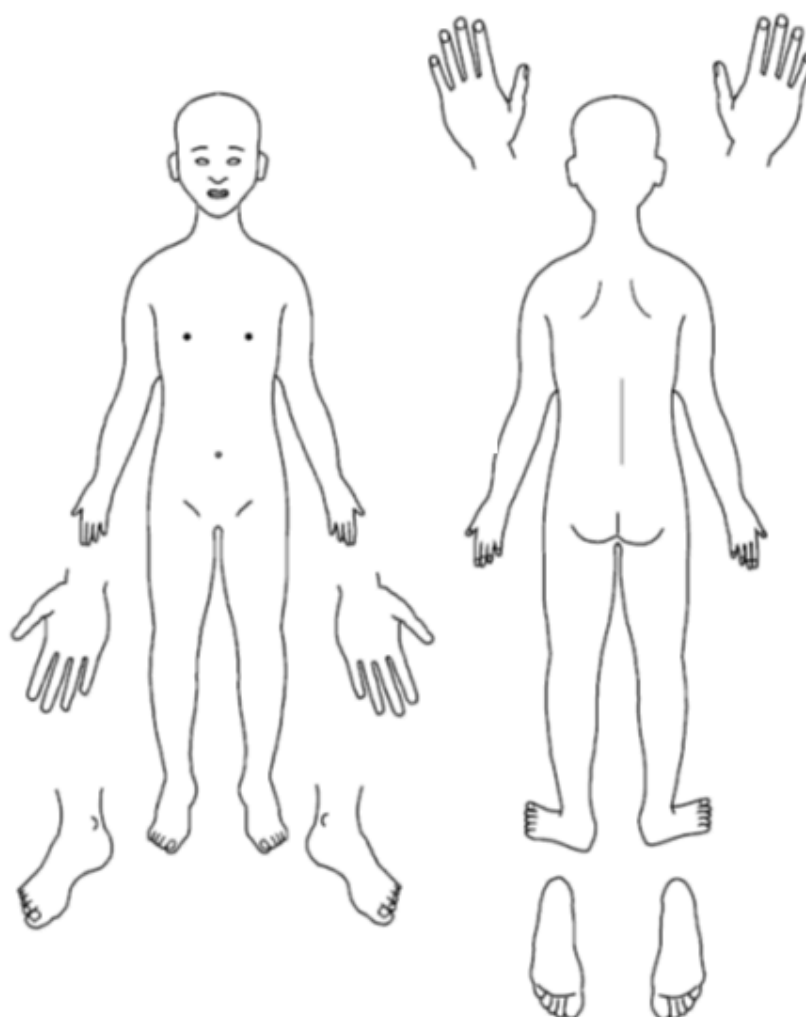
** In the cases of known FGM, the teacher who was made aware will also make contact with the police*

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Annex 2 - Example Recording form

Annex 2 - Example Recording form

Annex 3 - Skin map{XE "Skin Maps:Annex 4"} }



Name of Child: _____

Date of birth: _____ Date of recording: _____

Name of person completing: _____

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Annex 3 - Skin map



Any additional information:

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Annex 4 - Dealing with disclosures

All staff should

Members of staff who are approached by a child should maintain a positive attitude and try to reassure them. They should not promise complete confidentiality and should explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe. The degree of confidentiality should always be governed by the need to protect the child.

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

All staff should know who the DSL is and who to approach if the DSL is unavailable. Ultimately, all staff have the right to make a referral to the police or social care directly and should do this if, for whatever reason, there are difficulties following the agreed protocol, e.g. they are the only adult on the school premises at the time and have concerns about sending a child home.

Guiding principles, the Three R's

Recognise

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is said and take it seriously
- Make a note of what has been said as soon as practicable
- Reassure the pupil, but only so far as is honest and reliable
- Don't make promises you may not be able to keep e.g. 'I'll stay

with you' or 'everything will be alright now' or 'I'll keep this confidential'

- Do reassure e.g. you could say: 'I am listening to you', 'I am glad you came to me', 'I am sorry this has happened', 'We are going to do something together to get help'

Respond

- Respond to the pupil only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether you need to refer this matter, but do not interrogate for full details
- Do not ask 'leading' questions i.e. 'did he touch your private parts?' or 'did she hurt you?' Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later court proceedings
- Do not ask the child why something has happened
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator; the pupil may care about them, and reconciliation may be possible

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- Do not ask the pupil to repeat it all for another member of staff. Explain what you have to do next and to whom you need to talk. Reassure the pupil that it will be a senior member of staff in confidence.

Report

- Share concerns with the DSL as soon as possible
- If you are not able to contact your DSL or the Deputy, and the child is at risk of immediate harm, contact the children's services social care department directly.
- If possible, make some very brief notes at the time, and write them up as soon as possible
- Keep your original notes on file
- Record the date, time, place, persons present and noticeable nonverbal behaviour, and the words used by the child. If the child uses sexual 'pet' words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into 'proper' words
- Complete a body map to indicate the position of any noticeable bruising or marks
- Record facts and observable things, rather than your 'interpretations' or 'assumptions'.
- Support the child: listen, reassure, and be available
- Complete confidentiality is essential. Share your knowledge only with appropriate professional colleagues
- Try to get some support for yourself if you need it.
- All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell somebody that they are being abuse, exploited or neglected and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful.

Consideration

- Has the action taken provided positive outcomes for the child?
- Did the procedure work?
- Were any deficiencies or weaknesses identified in the procedure? Have these been remedied?
- Is further training required?

What happens next?

It is important that concerns are followed up and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they are. The member of staff should be informed by the DSL what has happened after the report being made. If they do not receive this information, they should be proactive in seeking it out.

If a staff member believes that their concerns have not been dealt with effectively or that the child remains at risk, they should initially ask the DSL to reconsider ensuring that the risks are understood. If this does not result in a satisfactory outcome, or the DSL rationale appears to miss the risk to the

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child, then the Whistleblowing procedures of the school should be followed. If the DSL is unhappy with the response from Children Social Care, they should consider following the WSSCP escalation protocol, beginning with a manager to manager conversation.

Receiving a disclosure can be upsetting for the member of staff and schools should have a procedure for supporting them after the disclosure. This might include reassurance that they have followed the procedure correctly and that their swift actions will enable the allegations to be handled appropriately. For some staff, use of an employee-based counselling service may be appropriate.

Annex 5 - Allegations against adults who work with children

There is now a requirement to produce a Lower Level Concern (LLC) policy and process to be set out in your existing Codes of Conduct/Safeguarding Policy.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) states that organisations should have clear policies for dealing with allegations against people who work with children. Those policies should make a clear distinction between an allegation, a complaint or a concern about the quality of care or practice.

Allegations as defined by KCSiE should be reported to the LADO. Complaints or concerns can be managed independently by the school or college under internal procedures.

Complaints could include: -

- Breaches of the code of Conduct
- Any breach of data protection or confidentiality
- Poor behaviour management
- Inappropriate use of social media
- Misadministration of medication

Concerns could include: -

- Inappropriate use of language, shouting or swearing
- Discussing personal or sexual relationships with, or in the presence, of pupils
- Making (or encouraging others to make) unprofessional comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate children, or might be interpreted as such.

Lower Level Concerns LLC's, which do not reach the allegations harm threshold (or complaints criteria) should be dealt with under a school LLC procedure.

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Procedure for Allegations that meet the harm threshold.

This procedure should be used in all cases when it is alleged a member of staff, supply staff, volunteer, Governor, or another adult who works with children has either:

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

When considering allegations of suitability, (the fourth criteria above) the LADOs would consider the following situations:

Parents of children who are placed on a CIN plan or are receiving Early Help;

Arrests for offences against adults;

Presentation to other professionals around mental health, domestic abuse and/or substance misuse;

Extreme political or religious viewpoints which could be considered Hate Crime;

Concerns about behaviour in their private lives which may impact on children

In any of these situations the LADO criteria for intervention will be assessed against the likelihood and impact of transferable risk to children.

In line with our referral process:

- Staff will report any concerns about the conduct of any member of staff, supply staff or volunteer to the headteacher as soon as possible.
- If an allegation is made against the headteacher, the concerns need to be raised with the Chair of Governors as soon as possible. If the Chair of Governors is not available, then the LADO should be contacted directly.

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- There may be situations when the headteacher or Chair of Governors will want to involve the police immediately, if the person is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence.
- Once an allegation has been received by the headteacher or Chair of Governors, they will contact the LADO via the portal [Online Portal](#) or as soon as possible and before carrying out any investigation into the allegation.
- Inform the parents of the allegation unless there is a good reason not to

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

When receiving information from outside agencies about school staff, the LADO will assess the potential for transferable risk and make a disclosure to the school where there is the likelihood of transferable risk to children and there is a pressing need.

If the matter is investigated internally, the LADO will advise the school to seek guidance from their personnel/HR provider in following procedures set out in Part 4 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2025) and the WSSCP procedures.

Supply Staff

While supply staff are not employees of the school, it is still required that the school report the allegation to the LADO.

If the matter requires an internal investigation, this will be carried out by the school in liaison with an HR rep (acting as the employer) from the supply agency.

Lower Level Concerns (LLCs)

The LLC policy is part of the whole school approach to safeguarding. The purpose of the policy is to encourage an open and transparent culture, which enables the school or College to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour at an early stage. It should also empower staff to share LLCs with the DSL. LLCs will be managed independently by the school or college under internal procedures. Examples of LLCs include, but is not limited to:-

- being over friendly with children;

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- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door;

or,

- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

The LLC policy will:-

- Ensure that staff are clear about what constitutes appropriate behaviour, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others;
- Empower staff to share any low-level safeguarding concerns with the DSL
- Address unprofessional behaviour and support the individual to correct this at an early stage.
- Provide a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised.
- Help identify any weakness in the school or college safeguarding system.

In line with the LLC policy:-

- All LLCs will be shared responsibly with the DSL, recorded in writing and dealt with in an appropriate and timely manner.
- All LLCs will be reviewed, so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.
- If LLCs are found to be escalating and are reaching the harm threshold, A referral will be made to the LADO.

If there is any doubt about the level at which behaviour needs to be addressed, LADO advice will be taken.

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Annex 6 - Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges

Child on child – Model Policy.

Context

This policy is about how staff should respond to all reports and concerns of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of school or college premises, and or online. All staff are advised to maintain an attitude of “It could happen here”

Schools and colleges not recognising, acknowledging or understanding the scale of harassment and abuse, and /or downplaying some behaviours relating to abuse can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in a worst-case scenario a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This can adversely affect their educational attainment as well as their emotional well-being. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. It is also important to recognise that some perpetrators may themselves also be victims.

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage. It is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made to ensure their education is not disrupted. It is also important that other children and young people including school and college staff are supported and protected as appropriate.

Policy

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

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers and this will be dealt with under our child protection policy and in line with KCSiE (2025)

This policy is underpinned by the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. We are clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.

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

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Prevention:

- Taking a whole school approach to safeguarding and child protection
- Providing training to staff
- Providing a clear set of values and standards, underpinned by the school's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, and by a planned programme of evidence-based content delivered through the curriculum
- Engaging with specialist support and interventions.

Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment:

- Children making a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be taken seriously, kept safe and be supported.
- Understanding that our initial response to a report from a child is incredibly important and can encourage or undermine the confidence of victims of sexual violence and harassment to report or to come forward in the future.
- If the report includes an online element, staff will be mindful of the Searching, Screening and Confiscation: advice for schools (DfE 2022): [Searching, Screening and Confiscation \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance) guidance.
- Staff taking the report will inform the DSL or their Deputy as soon as practicably possible but at least within 24 hours.
- Staff taking a report will never promise confidentiality.
- Parents or carers will normally be informed (unless this would put the child at greater risk).
- If a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care (01403 229900).

Risk Assessment:

Following a report, the DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment on a case-by-case basis.

The risk assessment will consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support.
- The alleged perpetrator, their support needs, and any disciplinary action.
- All other children at the school.
- The victim and the alleged perpetrator sharing classes and space at school.

The risk assessment will be recorded and kept under review.

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

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Action: The DSL will consider: -

- The wishes of the victim.
- The nature of the incident including whether a crime has been committed and the harm caused.
- Ages of the children/young people involved.
- Developmental stages of the children/young people.
- Any power imbalance between the children/young people.
- Any previous incidents.
- On-going risks.
- Other related issues or wider context.

Options: The DSL will manage the report with the following options: -

- Manage internally
- Refer to Early Help
- Refer to Children's Social Care
- Report to the police (generally in parallel with a referral to Social Care)

Ongoing Response:

- **All** concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and addressed.
- The DSL will manage each report on a case-by-case basis and will keep the risk reduction plan under review.
- Where there is a criminal investigation into a rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, the alleged perpetrator should be removed from any classes they share with the victim during that investigation.
- The DSL will consider how best to keep the victim and perpetrator apart on school premises and transport where appropriate.
- Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, the school will take suitable action. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view, that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the same school or college would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other pupils and students).
- Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, the school or college will, if it has not already, consider any suitable sanctions in light of their behaviour policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion. Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the school or college, the principle of keeping the victim and perpetrator in separate classes where possible should be maintained and continued. Consideration would be given to the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school and college

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premises and transport. The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.

- The victim, alleged perpetrator and other witnesses (children and adults) will receive appropriate support and safeguards on a case-by-case basis.
- When ongoing support is required by the victim, the victim should be asked whether they would find it helpful to have a designated trusted adult to talk about their needs. The choice of any such adult should be made by the victims (as far as reasonably possible) and this choice should be supported.
- The school will take any disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator in line with behaviour and discipline in the school.
- The school recognises that taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions and will occur at the same time if necessary.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious reports

- If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the designated safeguarding lead should consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and whether this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate.
- If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school or college should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per their own behaviour policy.

Physical Abuse

While a clear focus of child-on-child abuse is linked to sexual abuse and harassment, physical assaults and initiation violence and rituals from pupils to pupils can also be abusive.

These are equally not tolerated and, if it is believed that a crime has been committed, will be reported to the police.

The principles from the anti-bullying policy will be applied in these cases, with recognition that any police investigation will need to take priority.

References: –

KCSiE (DfE 2025)

[1] See Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 Part 4 section 1 paragraph 359