

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2025/26

Cathedral Schools Trust

It is the responsibility of all Cathedral Schools Trust employees and volunteers to familiarise themselves with the contents of all Trust policies and any amendments hereafter.

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1. Policy

1.1 Definitions

Safeguarding is defined as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- 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.

1.2 Introduction

At **CST**

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with 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 consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child.
- We take an '**it can happen here**' approach where safeguarding is concerned.
- **Everyone** who comes into contact with 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.

CST 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 be in need of early help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

All action taken by **CST** will be in accordance with:

- **Current legislation** (these are summarised within [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#))
- **Statutory, national and local guidance – this includes:** new standards on filtering and monitoring, the use of school sites by external organisations, forced marriages, children absent from education, and the need for all staff to be continually vigilant for potential safeguarding issues.
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#), which sets out the multi-agency 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 \(2025\)](#) 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.
- [Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework](#) is statutory guidance which sets standards that school and childcare providers must meet for the learning, development, and care of children from birth to 5
- Local Guidance from the Local Safeguarding Partnership: for **Bristol** particular safeguarding topics are available on the [Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership or relevant partnership Website](#).
- **Specific topical safeguarding issues** – a collection of up-to-date guidance can be found on the Safeguarding in Education Team's guidance page. <https://www.bristolsafeguardingineducation.org/guidance/>

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

- CST Employment Manual
- CST Whistleblowing and Public Interest Disclosure
- CST Anti-Bullying /child on child Abuse
- Behaviour (and Exclusions Policy if a separate document)
- Online Safety
- Self-Harm
- Policy on Supporting Children in Care
- CST Attendance (including the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education)

- Health and Safety

Head teachers/principals will ensure that the above policies and procedures, adopted by governing bodies and proprietors, are accessible, understood and followed by all staff.

1.3 Equalities and Rights 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 specific duties are published under the equality statement and measurable objectives which are accessible via the individual schools' website.

We adhere to both the [Bristol Equality Charter](#) and [Bristol Children's Charter](#) with a view to contribute towards the [One City Plan](#).

Staff are aware of the additional barriers to recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation in children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

CST also adheres to the principles of and promotes anti-oppressive practice in line with 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 **CST** by:

- Clarifying safeguarding expectations for members of the education setting's community, staff, governing body, children and their families;
- Contributing to the establishment of a safe, resilient and robust safeguarding culture in the setting built on shared values; that children 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, children, parents/carers) to the signs and indicators of safeguarding issues and how to respond to them.
- Early identification of need for vulnerable children and provision of proportionate interventions to promote their welfare and safety.
- Working in partnership with children, parents and other agencies in the Local Safeguarding Partnership.
- Ensuring all policies which address issues of power and potential harm, for example anti-bullying, equalities, use of reasonable force, positive behaviour, will be linked to ensure a whole trust approach.

CST is named as a relevant agency in the Local Safeguarding Partnership. This policy sets out its statutory duty to co-operate, follow and comply with published arrangements as set out by the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership or relevant partnership.

1.5 Professional expectations, roles, and responsibilities

Role of all staff

All staff will read and understand Part 1 of statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025). Those working directly with children will also read Annex B.

- 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); safeguarding response to children who go missing from education; and the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Know who and how to contact the DSL and any deputies, the Chair of Governors, and the Governor responsible for safeguarding.
- All staff will be able to identify vulnerable children and take action to keep them safe. Information or concerns about children will be shared with the DSL where it includes those:
 - who need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse, neglect or exploitation
 - 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 with regard to 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 children 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.
- Are aware of the need to raise to the senior leadership team any concerns they have about safeguarding practices within the school.

Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Duties are further outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (Annex C)

Details of our DSL and Deputy DSL are available via the individual schools' website, **our newsletters or the notice board in each schools' reception.**

- The DSL is a senior member of staff who undertakes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the school. This responsibility is explicit in the role holder's job description.
- 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 children in need are experiencing or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children'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 children and their families from staff through cause for concerns or notifications. This will ensure detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns, referrals and the rationale for any decisions made are maintained.
- Manages referrals to local safeguarding partners where children with additional needs have been identified. These can include those –
 - who need a social worker and maybe experiencing abuse, neglect or exploitation
 - 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 with regard to 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 children 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 child 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.
- DSLs will inform the headteacher/principal of enquiries under s.47 of the Children Act 1989 and any police investigations. This includes the need to be aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult. Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - [PACE Code C 2019](#).

Role of the Members/Trustees/Local Governing Bodies/Management Committee

Duties are further outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 2.

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 governing body will ensure that all governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenges to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in the setting are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole setting approach to safeguarding. This training will be regularly updated.
- The appointed Safeguarding Governor for each setting will liaise with the Head Teacher/Principal and the DSL to produce an annual report for governors and complete the mandatory S. 175 (bi-annual safeguarding) audit for the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership;
- 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 the training and learning for the school community is robust and effective.
- Ensure that children 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); and [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

- Ensure they review the [Department for Education filtering and monitoring standards](#) and make sure the setting is compliant with the requirements to meet these duties through discussions with IT staff and service providers.
- 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 (2025, 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 children, this includes having a process to manage low level concerns
- Ensure that systems are in place for children 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.

1.6 Safeguarding training for staff

All staff:

- Trustees, Local Governing bodies and proprietors will ensure that all staff members undergo safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) training at induction.
- Will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online safety incorporating staff responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) 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 are able to comply with the legal expectations under the PREVENT duty.

- Staff training includes clear reference to internal whistleblowing policy and guidance for escalating concerns.

Training for DSLs and deputies:

- Will undergo formal training to provide them with the knowledge and skills (including online safety, which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) 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 Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership or relevant partnership 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.

Other training considerations:

- CST 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 children who are in care.
- The mental health lead has access to appropriate training.
- Training around safeguarding topics in Annex B (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) will be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the overarching safeguarding approach.
- Appropriate colleagues have received appropriate training in relation to use of reasonable force and positive handling.

1.7 Safeguarding in the curriculum

CST is dedicated to ensuring that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety. We recognise that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate for all children, and a more personalised or contextualised approach for more vulnerable children, 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/publications/relationships-and-sex-education-rse-guidance); and [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs-statutory-framework) applicable for their phase
- 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 children can be taught with regard to online teaching and safeguarding.
- The curriculum will be shaped to respond to safeguarding incident patterns in the setting identified by the DSL 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.
- children have the opportunity to inform the curriculum via discussions with the school council and student body.

1.8 Safer recruitment and safer working practice

Safer recruitment

CST pays full regard to the safer recruitment practices detailed in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2025)

- 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), depending on the role and duties performed, including regulated and non-regulated activity.
- In addition, as part of the shortlisting process **CST** will consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the setting might want to explore with the applicant at interview.
- All recruitment materials will include reference to **CST's** commitment to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children.

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 taken into account.
- 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 children and our response to low level concerns can be accessed in section 2.8 Allegations of abuse made against professionals

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 (in the staff handbook, code of conduct, staff notice boards).

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 – Guidance to support children is available [Young witness booklet for 5 to 11 year olds - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) [Young witness booklet for 12 to 17 year olds - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- 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 harm](#):
 - Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
 - Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (also known as teenage relationship abuse.)
 - 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).
 - Up skirting, 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](#)
- Forced Migration

Additional information about key safeguarding areas can also be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025; Annex B); the [NSPCC website - Types of Abuse](#); And for localised resources for education settings [The Bristol Safeguarding in Education website](#).

Part 2 Procedures

2.1 Reporting concerns

All staff are clear about recording and reporting concerns to the DSL or deputies in a timely way. In the case a child is in immediate danger, staff should 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 children on child harm and children who present with a mental health need.

At **CST** children can raise their concerns by speaking to the DSL or deputy DSL (these people are clearly identifiable to the children in all settings) or by speaking to a member of staff they feel comfortable with and they will be treated seriously.

2.2 Information Sharing

CST 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 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 2024](#).
- It is recommended that staff should read the [Department for Education Data Protection Guidance for Schools](#).

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 **CST** will not provide a child'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 **CST** will seek legal advice.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and 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 children.

The DSL and Deputy DSL will regularly review and monitor those children 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 children is shared with teachers and the settings leadership staff to promote educational outcomes.
- children 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 setting-based interventions – for example responding to behaviour.
- **CST** can support children who may have intersecting protected characteristics. **CST** recognises those with protected characteristics are likely to be more vulnerable to negative experiences of discrimination both explicitly and or systemically.
- **CST** will work in the **best interests of the child** in compliance with their equality and human rights legal duties.

2.4 Multi-agency working

CST is a relevant agency in the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership or relevant partnership and 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 2023](#).

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 is in need of 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. The list of safeguarding contact and other key agencies are listed in [Appendix B](#).

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 the Hope Virtual School.

We will cooperate with any statutory safeguarding assessments conducted by children's social care: the setting will ensure representation at appropriate inter-agency meetings such as integrated support plan meetings initial and review child protection conferences and core group meetings.

Additional considerations:

- Where a child and/or their family is subject to an inter-agency child protection plan or a multi agency 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 a part time timetable, the school will consult with the Hope Virtual School following local procedures. [Attendance and exclusions of children in care](#)
- If a crime has been suspected or committed that involved the bringing of an offensive weapon onto the school site, the setting will liaise with the Local Authority Violence Reduction Unit (Safer Connections) 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 your [r/Neighbourhood Policing Team](#).
- In the rare event that a child death occurs or a child is seriously harmed, **CST** will notify the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership or relevant partnership as soon as is reasonably possible.

2.5 Suspensions, permanent exclusions, and commissioning of Alternative Provisions

When the school is considering excluding a child, (either fixed term or permanently), where additional vulnerability is identified it is important that the child's welfare is taken into consideration. The head teacher/principal will consider their legal duty of care when sending a child home and should be alert to the need for early help for a child who:

- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from school or college or is in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit

CST 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 children's rights under the [Human Rights Act 1998](#).
- Interventions will be consistent with statutory guidance [School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

2.5.1 Actions to take

- An assessment of risk should be undertaken with multi-agency partners with a view to mitigate any identified risk of harm in line with [2.3 Identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable children](#).
- If the child is subject to a child protection plan or where there is an existing child protection file, we will call a multi agency risk-assessment meeting prior to making the decision to exclude.
- In the event of a one-off serious incident resulting in an immediate decision to exclude, 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 **CST** commissions an alternative provision, the local [Alternative Learning Provision process](#) will apply and guidance will be followed to ensure clear agreement of roles and responsibilities to maintain safeguarding arrangements for children who are not taught on site. The Department of Education has issued two pieces of statutory guidance to which the setting must also have regard to when commissioning a provision:

- [Alternative Provision](#)
- [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school](#)

CST will continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of the child and will make necessary checks on the provider to meet the needs of the child. Reviews will be undertaken regularly to provide assurance that any child in the provision is regularly attending and that the

placement continues to be safe and meets the child's needs. 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 child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse, neglect or exploitation or maybe an indicator of need for early help support.

Staff should follow the setting's 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 children](#)

CST will follow the guidance detailed in [Children Missing Education \(2016\)](#) and [Bristol City Council Education Welfare Service – Children Missing Education](#)

CST will inform the local authority in which the child lives:

- of any child 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

CST will notify the Local Authority of every child where a parent has exercised their right to educate their child at home. Safeguarding files should be shared with the Local Authority Elective Home Education service and consideration of whether additional support from children's social care should be made in line with the Children Act 1989.

2.7 Respond to incidents of child-on-child harm.

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

All staff should recognise that children can harm other children (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 a child require process and records to be kept on the child's safeguarding/child protection file.

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

At **CST**:

- 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 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 and 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 children to confidently report abuse knowing their concerns will be treated easily as reflected in section [2.1 Reporting a concern](#) of this policy. **CST** will handle initial reports of harm by:

- Securing the immediate safety of children 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 any form of abuse, neglect or exploitation, sexual

violence, or sexual harassment. They will never be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

- All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful.
- It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children which facilitates communication.
- 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 child's cohort or the settings community.

- Not promising confidentiality as it is highly likely that information will need to be shared with other professionals.

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

Reference to [Keeping Children Safe In Education \(2025\)](#) should be made in relation to taking protective action. **CST** 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.
- 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 must be reported to the police **regardless** of the age of criminal responsibility (10 years old). This must be reported directly via 101 for recording purposes and accountability. This is on the understanding that the police will take a welfarist approach rather than a criminal justice one. A concurrent referral to social care must also be made for **all children directly involved**. A strategy can be requested where education can voice explicit concerns of criminalisation in a multi-agency context.
- 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 2022 - 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 including any bystanders. This should be reviewed at least every 3 months or every time there is an occurrence of an incident. These should involve the child and parents/carers and address contextual risks.

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

CST 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 abuse, 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.

2.8 Responding to allegations of abuse made against professionals.

CST has processes and procedures in place to manage any safeguarding allegation, or concern (no matter how small), about staff members (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors).

Staff must report any concerns or allegations about a professional's behaviour that indicate that they may pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in regular or close contact with children in their present position, or in any capacity with children in a setting.

Examples of this include 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.

Immediate action that must be taken

- **Do not** speak to the individual it concerns.
- Allegations or concerns about colleagues, supply staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors must be reported directly to the Head Teacher/Principal who will follow guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025, Part four: Safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, including supply teachers, volunteers, and contractors.)
- If the concern relates to Head Teacher/Principal it should be reported to the Chair of 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.

- In the event that 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.

2.8.1 Low level concerns

This should be read in conjunction with the staff code of conduct and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025). A low level concern is not insignificant. If staff have a safeguarding concern or an allegation about another member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers, or contractors) that does not meet the harm threshold, then this should be shared in accordance with CST's low-level concerns procedures.

- Reports should be made to the Head/Principal who will discuss with the DSL.
- CST creates an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer where they have found themselves in a situation.
- The Head/Principal or DSL 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 children. 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.

CST 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 children. 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 children 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 that can be identified and proportionate support considered.

- Staff will ensure the immediate health and safety of a child who is displaying acute mental health distress. This may require support from emergency services via 999 if the child 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 child 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 and the senior leadership team should be able to access specialist advice through targeted services or through their local [Primary Mental Health Specialists](#).

Contextual safeguarding approach to mental health

CST will ensure that preventative measures in terms of providing safeguarding on the curriculum will provide opportunities for children to identify when they may need help, and also 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 children and staff are aware of and able to access a range of mental health services
- supporting staff wellbeing
- being committed to child and parent participation

2.10 Online Safety

Online safety is an integrated and interwoven theme with other safeguarding considerations. It is essential that the DSL takes a lead on ensuring that interventions 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.

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

- Ensuring that online safety is concerned with relevant policies and procedures.

- Online safety is interwoven in safeguarding training for staff and safeguarding on the curriculum for children.
- 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** with **CST's** policy on the use of mobile smart technology
- Provision of education via remote learning will comply with current governmental advice [Providing remote education: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).
- The effectiveness of the setting's ability to safeguard children in respect to filtering and monitoring, information security and access management alongside the above will be reviewed annually in line with the digital and technology standards in schools and colleges [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

3 Changes

Version	Date	Amended by	Recipients	Purpose
1	22 Jan 2019	CST Trustees	Members of CST, every Trustee, each Local Governor, all Cathedral Schools Trust employees and volunteers and others at the discretion of the Chairman of the Trustees of CST. CST Website updated.	Annual review - updated alongside BSCB Policy (Individual schools to include appendices as required)
2	08 Oct 2019	CST Trustees		Annual review - updated alongside BSCB Policy (Individual schools to include appendices as required)
3	15 Sep 2020	CST Trustees		Updated and re-written alongside BSCB Policy to reflect COVID-19, new statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, and for ease of reading
4	21 Sep 2021	CST Trustees		Updated and re-written alongside BSCB Policy to reflect new statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, and for ease of reading
5	29 Sep 2022	CST Trustees		Updated and re-written alongside BSCB Policy to reflect new statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, and for ease of reading

6	28 Sep 2023	CST Trustees		Updated and re-written alongside BSCB Policy to reflect new statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, and for ease of reading
7	26th Sep 2024	CST Trustees		Updated and re-written alongside BSCB Policy to reflect new statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, and for ease of reading
8	9th October 2025	CST Trustees		Updated and re-written alongside BSCB Policy to reflect new statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, and for ease of reading

Alterations

This Policy may be altered, added to or repealed by a majority resolution of the Trustees of CST in a general meeting.

4 Approvals (Annual)

Version	Date	Approved by
1	22 January 2019	CST Trustees
2	8 October 2019	CST Trustees
3	15 September 2020	CST Trustees
4	21 September 2021	CST Trustees
5	29 September 2022	CST Trustees
6	28 September 2023	CST Trustees
7	26 September 2024	CST Trustees
8	9 October 2025	CST Trustees

Unless otherwise specified, 'CST' and 'school' refer to each academy/free school within CST.

Appendix A – Key Guidance for safeguarding issues.

All key education sector policies relevant for education settings can be found on the following webpage:

<https://www.bristolsafeguardingineducation.org/guidance/>

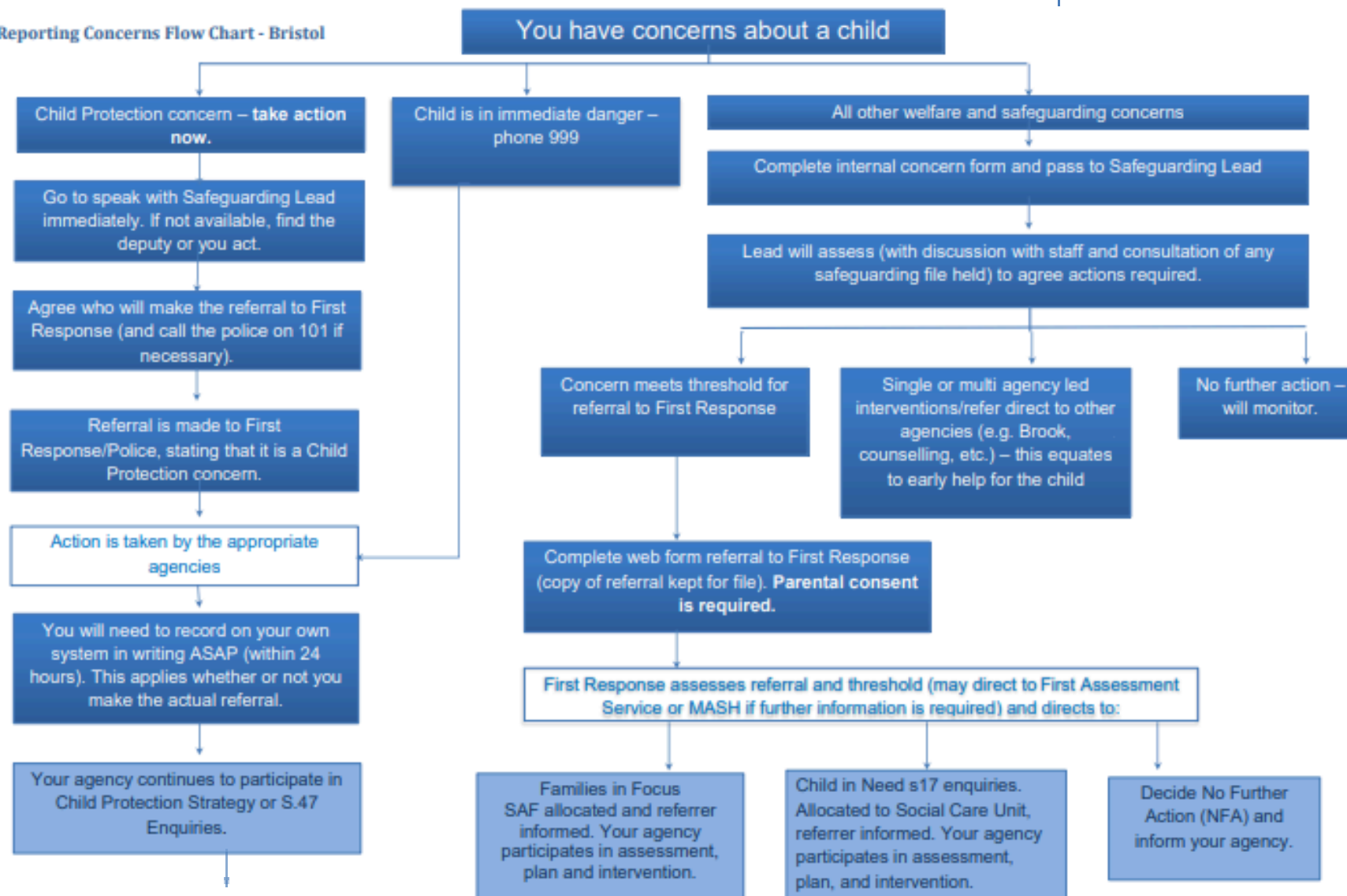
Other multi-agency guidance and policies from the Local Safeguarding Partnerships:

- For Bristol - <https://bristolsafeguarding.org/policies-and-guidance/>
- For South Glos - <http://sites.southglos.gov.uk/safeguarding/library>
- For North Somerset - <https://www.nsscp.co.uk/>

Appendix B – Reporting concern

- Reporting Concerns Flow Chart (Bristol) – Click here
- Process flow chart for responding to incidents of child-on-child incidents and Mental Health concerns – Click here
- Multiagency safeguarding contacts poster (Bristol) – Click here
- For wider local contacts use the following page - [Bristol Safeguarding in Education Local Contacts List](#)
- Neighbouring Local Authority Contacts - Click here

Reporting Concerns Flow Chart - Bristol



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)

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

There is a concern about child'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.

Secure the safety of the child (ren) 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 (e.g. on CPOMs). The 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 child-on-child abuse

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

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 \(link\)](#)
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying \(link\)](#)
- [NPCC: 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.

Repeat incidents or that of moderate concern – Setting liaises with parents/carers. Consider seeking consent and advice for targeted/specialist services to support all children 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.

Outcomes

Outcomes

All actions, risk assessments and responses should be recorded on the Safeguarding/Child Protection file. Plans/risk assessments should be reviewed every 3 months or on any occasion another concern is raised.

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

If a child is at immediate risk call the POLICE	POLICE 999	
To make a referral, i.e. a child is likely to suffer or is suffering significant harm, call children's social care.	FIRST RESPONSE - 0117 9036444	
Out of Hours Referrals	EMERGENCY DUTY TEAM - 01454 615 165	
Mental Health Crisis (24 hours, 7 days a week)	Bristol Mental Health - 0300 555 0334	
To raise concerns and ask for advice about radicalisation (also contact First Response).	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 LighthouseBristol@avonandsomerset.police.uk	
For advice and guidance about whether to make a referral	Family Help	
South 0117 9037770	East Central 0117 3576460	North 0117 3521499

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	<u>Local Authority Designated Officer - (LADO)</u> T: 0117 9037795 KBSP LADO notification form
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For information, advice and guidance in relation to safeguarding policy and procedures.

<u>Safeguarding in Education Team</u> T: 01179222532 E: Safeguardingineducationteam@bristol.gov.uk		
South Advisor Helen Macdonald helen.macdonald@bristol.gov.uk 01179222533	East Central Advisor Vacant Safeguardingineducationteam@bristol.gov.uk 01179222532	North Advisor Elisabeth Clark elisabeth.clark@bristol.gov.uk 01179222534
Child sexual exploitation	Operation Topaz (Avon and Somerset Police) https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/forms/vul	

Safer Connections

Urgent Referrals and Threshold Advice: For all urgent referrals, requests for service **(including Weapons and Drugs in Schools)**, and threshold advice, contact First Response:

T: 0117 903 6444

Partnership Support: To request non-urgent, non-case specific support from the Partnership Team (such as consultations, training, or coordination around emerging concerns)

E: saferconnections@bristol.gov.uk

Report a Child Missing from Education	Bristol City Council – Education Welfare https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/children-missing-education-cme
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 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 support (Bristol)	Directorate of local and national services https://www.bristol.gov.uk/crime-emergencies/abuse-violence
Young Carers – advice and support.	Carers Support Centre T: 0117 958 9980 W: https://www.carerssupportcentre.org.uk/young-carers/contact-young-carers/

Whistleblowing professional policy	NSPCC Whistleblowing hotline T: 0800 028 0285 E: help@nspcc.org.uk	
<u>Child and Adolescent Mental health</u> (CAMHS)		
Primary Mental Health Specialists (advice) Child and Adolescent Mental Health		
South 0117 3408121	East Central 0117 3408600	North 0117 3546800
Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust 24/7 crisis line: 0800 953 1919		
Advice around harmful sexualised behaviour.	Be Safe 0117 3408700 W: https://www.awp.nhs.uk/camhs/camhs-services/HSB-services/be-safe	
	Brook Traffic Light Tool CPD: Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool (RSE) Course	

Other Local Authorities Contacts

Local Authority in which the child is resident	Contact details	Out of hours/ Weekend
South Gloucestershire	<p>Access and Response Team</p> <p>T: 01454 866000 - Monday to Thursday 9.00 – 5.00, 4.30 on Friday</p> <p>E: accessandresponse@southglos.gov.uk</p> <p>W: Access and Response Teams (ART) South Gloucestershire Council (southglos.gov.uk)</p>	<p>Emergency Duty Team</p> <p>01454 615165</p>
North Somerset	<p>Single Point of Access</p> <p>T: 01275 888 808 –Monday-Thursday 8.45am-5pm, Friday 8.45am-4.30pm</p> <p>W: Children, young people and families North Somerset Council (n-somerset.gov.uk)</p>	
Bath and North East Somerset (BANES)	<p>Children's Social Work Services</p> <p>T: 01225 396312 or 01225 396313 Mon-Thurs 8:30am to 5pm, Friday 08:30-4:30pm</p> <p>E: ChildCare_Duty@bathnes.gov.uk</p> <p>W: Report a concern about a child Bath and North East Somerset Council (bathnes.gov.uk)</p>	

Appendix C - Dealing with a disclosure of abuse, neglect or exploitation

When a child tells me about abuse, neglect or exploitation 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.

NB It is not the 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 professionals' duties are in relation to responding to an incident.

Recognise – Respond – Reassure – Refer - Record

Appendix D - Types of abuse and neglect

Abuse and neglect is 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, 2025).

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 care-givers); 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 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, CST 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 child 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.

Harm Outside the Home (HOTH) – including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), county lines, online harm, modern slavery, child on child abuse.

CST will ensure that early help intervention is provided as soon as a concern of HOTH is identified. Consultation and advice will be sought from Local Authority and targeted services to consider the appropriate support available. The child and their families will be part of any planning and interventions.

- If there is evidence that a child is experiencing HOTH CST will make a referral to First Response on 0117 903 6444.
- If there is intelligence or information which indicates that the child or group of children are at risk of or involved in criminality, [CST will share information with the police via 101 or online via Avon and Somerset Police's online reporting form: <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/forms/vul> This information will support proactive activity to disrupt criminal activity in relation to exploitation or harm outside the home more broadly.
- CST will contact Safer Connections for inter-agency support, consultation, and advice about responding to HOTH and for guidance in implementing contextual safeguarding strategies to improve safety for vulnerable learners. saferconnections@bristol.gov.uk

Domestic Abuse

- Operation Encompass is a national information sharing scheme where education settings are notified when the police are called to an incident of domestic abuse. This scheme enables our schools to take proactive action and make reasonable adjustments in relation to behaviour management and achieving positive educational outcomes.
- Under the current information sharing protocol, professionals are **not permitted** to share information without first seeking consent from Avon and Somerset police in case this will put victims and children at further risk of harm. The only exception to this is when information is shared with the new education setting (part of statutory duties in relation to transfer of the Safeguarding/ Child Protection file, Keeping Children Safe in Education).
- **All CST schools** will follow the Local Safeguarding Partnerships procedures when receiving and managing information through Operation Encompass. Our settings will promote an open culture of safeguarding to enable children and families to disclose and feel safe to talk about their experiences and what support may be required.

- Further information can be accessed through the Bristol City Council Safeguarding in Education Team webpages [Operation Encompass](#)

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.

Travel

National guidance has highlighted going on holiday to a risk affected country is cause for concern, local guidance has been developed to prevent discriminatory action against families from risk affected communities.

- Families are encouraged to notify the education setting when they are looking to travel during term time dates.
- This will prompt a conversation with the DSL/ specialist trained member of staff to discuss and explain what FGM is in that; it is significantly harmful and illegal to practice this.
- The setting will complete an [FGM Referral Risk assessment](#) (available on the [Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership or relevant partnership website](#)) with the family to identify any support that the family may require in relation to FGM.
- Proportionate action is taken. Referrals to social care should NOT be automatically made – however should be made if there are high risk concerns identified from the FGM Referral Risk Assessment.
- These assessments should be saved onto the child's Safeguarding/Child Protection file to avoid duplication with new incidents of travel.

Online Safety

Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education highlights additional actions schools should take to keep children 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 Guidance for 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 Safer Options should be called for a multi-disciplinary assessment of risk. A Safer Connections Advisor will determine whether the young person meets the criteria for the 'Weapons in Schools Pathway' and coordinate the response with the Police and Youth Justice Service. If the criteria for a Weapons in School intervention is not met (in situations where there is evidence of threat or direct harm), a Safer Connections Advisor will support the school to take the appropriate measures for reporting and mitigating ongoing risk.
- Whilst it is acknowledged that the decision to exclude remains with the Head Teacher/Principal it is recommended that consultation with the Safer Options Team is made so as not to further put the child at further risk of harm if they are excluded.
- Alternatives to exclusions should be considered first in recognition that by doing so a child may be at further risk of harm out in the community.

Police will be notified through the multi-agency discussion held at the 'Out of Court Disposals Panel' to prevent students unnecessarily getting a criminal record.

Preventing Radicalisation - The Prevent duty

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools' and colleges' wider safeguarding obligations. 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 (*A 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.

The setting will support children who are young carers to appropriate support. To find out what is available locally visit the Bristol City Council Website -

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/support-for-young-carers>

The Carers Support Centre can undertake an assessment of need and provide bespoke support. <https://www.carerssupportcentre.org.uk/young-carers/making-a-referral/>

Children from Forced Migration

Children with a forced migration background may be more vulnerable to criminal or sexual exploitation or may have been trafficked. It is important that staff understand what signs to look out for, and understand the [National Referral Mechanism](#) procedures.

There are other specific safeguarding issues relating to this group for example adultification, age assessments, No Recourse to Public Funds, and coming from countries where practices such as underage or forced marriage or FGM may be more prevalent.

The setting will support staff to develop and embed a proactive whole school anti-racist approach and adopt a trauma informed approach when supporting these children and their families.

There are a range of specialist support services available in the city that can be accessed for further information visit the [Resources for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Bristol - Bristol City of Sanctuary web pages](#)