

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2026-27

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WELLACRE

Contents

1. **Safeguarding and Child Protection – Key Contacts**
2. **Safeguarding Statement of Values**
3. **Prevent Duty Statement of Values**
4. **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

- 4.1 Policy Aims and Definitions
- 4.2 Academy Commitment
- 4.3 Links to other policies
- 4.4 Partnership with Parents/Carers
- 4.5 The views of our students
- 4.6 Roles and Responsibilities within the Academy
- 4.7 Training and Staff Support
- 4.8 Safer Recruitment and Selection
- 4.9 Confidentiality, Records and Information Sharing
- 4.10 Children attending Alternative Provision and Off Site Learning
- 4.11 Children potentially at greater risk of harm
- 4.12 Students with medical conditions
- 4.13 Looked-after children (LAC), previously looked-after children (PLAC) and Kinship care
- 4.14 Site Safety
- 4.15 Use of School Premises by Outside Organisations
- 4.16 Online Safety
- 4.17 Filtering and Monitoring
- 4.18 Whistleblowing
- 4.19 Managing allegations against members of staff and others / Low Level Concerns
- 4.20 Concerns regarding a child's welfare
- 4.21 Reporting Procedures
- 4.22 What to do if a child discloses abuse
- 4.23 Multi-Agency Working, Early Help and Family Help
- 4.24 Attendance at Child Protection Conferences, Child in Need Meetings and Core Group Meetings
- 4.25 The use of Reasonable Force in schools
- 4.26 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Reviews

5. Appendices

- Appendix 1 CPOMS Key Information for Staff
- Appendix 2 'Levels of Need' guidance
- Appendix 3 Types of abuse and recognising signs of child abuse

  A: Physical abuse
  B: Emotional abuse
  C: Sexual abuse
  D: Neglect

- Appendix 4 Specific Safeguarding and Child Protection Issues and Concerns

  A: Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

  B: Serious Violence and Serious Violent Crime
  - Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) / Grooming
  - County Lines and Exploitation

  C: Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

  D: Child Abduction and Community Safety Incidents

  E: Cybercrime

  F: Domestic Abuse and Operation Encompass

  G: Homelessness

  H: Honour or Faith based violence and abuse
  - Forced Marriage (FM)
  - Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

  I: Preventing Radicalisation– The Prevent Duty

  J: Child-on-Child Abuse
  (including Violence, Harassment and Harmful Sexual Behaviour)

  K: Children who are absent / missing from Education

  L: Mental Health

1. Safeguarding and Child Protection - Key Contacts

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

1.NAME: Mr Phil Pemberton, Vice Principal (All year)
CONTACT NUMBER: 0161 748 5011 #203

2.NAME: Mrs Julie Sharrock, Principal (Term Time)
CONTACT NUMBER: 0161 748 5011 #201

SAFEGUARDING OFFICER AND DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

NAME: Miss Chelsea Wedderburn (Term Time and Holiday Cover)
CONTACT NUMBER: 0161 748 5011 #247

NOMINATED GOVERNOR FOR SAFEGUARDING
NAME: Mr Steve Casey (contact via admin@wellacre.org)

REFERRAL TO SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

Where you have **URGENT** and **IMMEDIATE** concerns for the safety and welfare of a child or young person during office hours please see Mr Pemberton or Miss Wedderburn immediately or **call the police on 999 if the danger is immediate**.

If you have a concern about a child, and they are not at immediate risk of harm, you should call **Trafford Children's First Response** on 0161 912 5125 during office hours (Mon - Fri 8:30 - 4:30) or 0161 912 2020 out of hours (Emergency Duty Team).

Or contact Greater Manchester Police HQ on **0161 872 50 50**

2. Safeguarding Statement of Values

Wellacre is committed to a strong culture of safeguarding, ensuring that all staff embrace the concept of “it could happen here” and that they recognise that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. We are fully committed to creating a culture of vigilance. We expect everyone who works in and visits our school to share this commitment. We encourage staff, students, and visitors to report anything that concerns them, and we will always act in the best interest of the child. Safeguarding is embedded throughout school life, curriculum delivery, policies and decision making.

Our students are taught how to stay safe, including when online, and to recognise when they may be at risk. We ensure our students know how to get help when they need it. In line with the latest guidance we place importance on contextual safeguarding and consider risks in our local community when assessing the safety of our students. We ensure safeguarding legislation and guidance are adhered to and taken into account when developing and revisiting policies, procedures and associated arrangements.

The school provides a safe physical environment for its students and staff, ensuring that premises are of a good standard. Health and Safety arrangements are in place to ensure adherence to current legislation and guidance.

All job applications to Wellacre are subject to recruitment and selection procedures designed to emphasise the school’s commitment to the safeguarding of its students and staff. The procedures include questioning at interview stage, verification of appropriate qualifications, acquiring references and appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

Wellacre has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), supported by a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (our Safeguarding Officer), and the wider Inclusion Team. It is a condition of employment that all staff are trained to a level appropriate to their safeguarding responsibilities. All staff are expected to attend internal and external training and awareness sessions covering safeguarding issues over the course of the academic year.

Schools have a pivotal role to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Wellacre works effectively with the three safeguarding partners; the local authority (Trafford Strategic Safeguarding Partnership - TSSP), the Integrated Care Board within the local authority and the Chief Officer of Police for the area, and any other relevant agencies in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of our students. Information sharing and multi-agency working are essential.

Wellacre’s commitment to safeguarding is paramount to the success of the students. Governors continue to keep abreast of developments in this area and implement arrangements to continually improve the safety and awareness of its students, staff, visitors and volunteers.

The latest version of this policy is available on the school website and upon request.

3. Prevent Duty – Statement of Values

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism'. This duty is known as the Prevent duty and is seen as part of the schools wider safeguarding obligations.

Wellacre's community is special and is strengthened through its diversity. The contribution that everyone plays in creating a tolerant, respectful and inclusive culture in our society is highly valued, regardless of background, nationality, ethnicity, disability, sexuality and those of faith or none. We are confident we speak on behalf of everyone at Wellacre in saying we are all united in a common purpose to celebrate our differences and champion our togetherness as one place. We will not tolerate anything that threatens harmony in our community and will continue to be a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Principles
This statement is supported by Wellacre's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Education Act 2002, and in line with government publications: 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2026, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2026, the 'Prevent Duty' 2015 and the 'Prevent Duty Guidance' 2023.

Aims
- To ensure staff are aware of the Prevent duty and are able to protect children and young people who are vulnerable or at risk of being radicalised
- To refer any student at risk of being radicalised or susceptible to extremist ideology via the Trafford Strategic Safeguarding Partnership (TSSP), the three Safeguarding Partners and the Channel Team

Raise Awareness
- Ensure all staff and governors are aware of how to identify and respond to risks to children from extreme or radical views

Practice
- In addition to DBS checks we 'open source' check organisations and individuals, including those in the voluntary sector
- We ensure staff are aware of the risks to children and young people of being radicalised and provide training annually

Susceptibility to radicalisation or extreme view points

Children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Protecting children from this risk is a part of our safeguarding approach. Wellacre recognises its duty to protect our students from indoctrination into any form of extreme ideology which may lead to the harm of self or others. This is particularly important because of the open access to electronic information through the internet. Wellacre aims to safeguard young people through educating them on the appropriate use of social media and the dangers of downloading and sharing inappropriate material which is illegal under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act. This is done through the ICT and RESPECT curriculums explicitly.

Any visiting speakers, whether invited by staff or by students, are checked to ensure that they are suitable and they are appropriately supervised if they come on school site. We will take firm action if any individual or group is perceived to be attempting to influence members of our community, either physically or electronically.

The definition of "**Extremism**" is 'the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.'

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

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

Staff are trained to be vigilant for spotting signs of extremist views and behaviours and to always report anything which may suggest a student is expressing opinions which may cause concern. Our core values of Respect, Honesty, Aspiration, Resilience and Pride permeate all that we do as a school community.

We promote British values and we teach our students to respect and value the diversity around them and help them to understand why it is important to make safe, well-considered decisions.



4. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

4.1 Policy Aims

This document is written in accordance with the Department for Education's 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2026 and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2026 guidance. We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our three local safeguarding partners. The aim of this policy is to promote and ensure that all children within the care of the Academy are kept safe; it applies to **ALL** staff, Governors and non-employees working within Wellacre. Safeguarding and child protection is everyone's responsibility.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is what we do to **prevent** harm and 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 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 how we **respond** when we believe a child is at risk of harm or has been harmed.

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

Everyone will be treated with dignity and respect regardless of race, nationality, sexual orientation, disability and/or age.

4.2 Academy Commitment

Wellacre is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all of its students. Each student's welfare is of paramount importance.

We recognise that some children may be especially vulnerable to abuse and that children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning and those with Special Educational Needs may face additional safeguarding challenges.

We recognise that children who are abused or neglected may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. Whilst at the Academy, some of their behaviours may be challenging.

We recognise that some children who have experienced abuse may harm others. We will always take a considered and sensitive approach in order to support all of our students.

4.3 Links to other policies

This policy works in partnership with:

- Supporting students with medical conditions policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities policy
- First Aid in schools policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Online Safety policy
- Attendance and Punctuality policy
- Relational Behaviour policy
- Restrictive Interventions policy including the use of reasonable force
- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Staff in Schools policy
- Staff Discipline and Conduct policy
- Staff Code of Conduct policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing policy
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy for students and parents
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy for staff

4.4 Partnership with Parents/Carers

We are committed to working with parents/carers positively, openly and honestly. We ensure that all parents/carers are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We respect parents/carers' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission or it is necessary to do so in order to protect a child.

Wellacre shares a purpose with parents/carers to educate and keep children safe from harm and to have their welfare promoted. Any referral made to Children's Services is shared with parents/carers beforehand unless it is inappropriate to do so. Children will be given a proper explanation (appropriate to age and understanding) of what action is being taken on their behalf and why.

We will always endeavour to preserve the privacy, dignity and right to confidentiality of the child and parents/carers. The Designated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will determine which members of staff need to know personal information and what they need to know for the purpose of supporting and protecting the child.

Parents/carers will not be consulted before a referral to Social Care if a child discloses any of the following information;

- Where sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or multiple abuse is suspected
- Where fabricated or induced illness is suspected
- Where planned or actual female genital mutilation is suspected
- Where contacting parents/carers would place a child, the parent or others at immediate risk
- Where there are concerns over possible forced marriage – at home or abroad

Staff MUST NOT discuss their concerns on any of the above matters with parents / carers. Staff MUST report their concerns directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

The Academy recognises it is an agent of referral and not of investigation.

4.5 The views of our students

In our school the views of our young people are very important to us. We ensure that our students are respected, listened to and supported when raising concerns. We remain child-centred and consider the child's voice, wishes and lived experience in all safeguarding decisions. We make sure that our students know that our staff are always prepared to listen to them. They are made aware that they can report any concerns verbally and/or through the following:

- Achievement Tutor or Subject Teacher
- Head of House
- Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy (our Safeguarding Officer)
- The Principal
- Inclusion Team
- Via Student Voice
- Via our pastoral email: care@wellacre.org

Concerns raised by students are always taken seriously and dealt with swiftly and appropriately.

4.6 Roles and Responsibilities within the Academy

The Governing Body of the Academy will ensure that:

- A safeguarding governor is appointed to oversee safeguarding compliance and the effectiveness of this policy. The identified governor will provide the Governing Body with appropriate information about safeguarding and will liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- A senior leader has Designated Safeguarding Lead responsibility.
- The Academy has a Safeguarding Policy which includes Child Protection and that procedures are in place that safeguard and promote the welfare and wellbeing of all students in the Academy.
- The Academy operates 'Safer Recruitment and Selection' practices including appropriate use of references and checks on new staff and volunteers.
- The school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and will review its effectiveness every year. It should also review the DfE filtering and monitoring standards with IT staff and service providers and support the school to ensure the standards are met.
- All staff and volunteers who have regular contact with children and young people receive appropriate training, including online safety, which includes an understanding of the expectations, roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, which is up-dated annually.
- The Academy has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers (see policy) and will make a referral to the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns.
- Any weaknesses in Safeguarding and Child Protection are remedied immediately.

- A member of the Governing Body, usually the Chair, is nominated to liaise with the Local Authority on Child Protection issues and in the event of an allegation of abuse made against the Principal.
- The Academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is regularly reviewed and updated, complying with local safeguarding procedures and is available on the Academy website.

The Principal will ensure that:

- The policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body to safeguard and promote the welfare of students are fully implemented and followed by all staff including temporary staff and volunteers.
- Safe Recruitment and Selection of staff and volunteers is practiced.
- DBS checks are completed on all Governors.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead is a senior member of staff on the Leadership Team and receives appropriate on-going training, support and supervision.
- Sufficient time and resources are made available to enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead to discharge their responsibilities, including attending multi-agency meetings, contributing to the assessment of children and young people, supporting colleagues and delivering training as appropriate.
- All staff and volunteers receive appropriate Safeguarding and Child Protection training, including online safety training, which is updated regularly.
- All staff and volunteers feel safe about raising concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to the safeguarding and welfare of the children and young people and such concerns will be addressed sensitively and effectively.
- Parents/carers are aware of, and have an understanding of, the Academy's responsibilities to promote the safety and welfare of its students by making its obligations clear in the Academy prospectus and this policy being available on the school website.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has a specific responsibility for championing the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people registered in the Academy. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is a member of the Academy Leadership Team.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Take lead responsibility for safeguarding with the support of the Deputy DSL and will act as the first point of contact with regards to all safeguarding matters and enquiries.
- Ensure robust cover arrangements are in place for periods when they are unavailable.
- Take lead responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection, including online safety, and oversee the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place, supported by the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Complete relevant DSL training at a minimum of every two years and update their own knowledge and skills.
- Provide relevant information to the Local Authority on how the Academy carries out its safeguarding duties and ensure the Local Authority 175 Safeguarding Audit is completed and updated.
- Provide support and training (or commission training) regularly for all staff.
- Ensure that the Academy's actions are in line with the Trafford Strategic Safeguarding Partnership (TSSP) and Multi-Agency Procedures. Guidance on these procedures can be found on the TSSP website.
- Act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners and share information with them as required.

- Refer a child to the Local Authority if there are concerns about possible abuse, neglect or exploitation, and act as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns. Referrals will be made in writing, following a telephone conversation, using the online referral form: (Trafford Children's First Response)
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers receive information on safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures from the point of induction and annually.
- Take part in strategy discussions and multi-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so.
- Oversee, manage, secure and keep up to date the Academy's safeguarding records (CPOMS).
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers understand and are aware of the Academy's reporting and recording procedures and are clear about what to do if they have a concern about a child.
- Liaise with the Principal and other relevant staff about any safeguarding issues.
- Keep up to date with changes in local / national policy and procedures and be aware of any guidance issued by the DfE concerning safeguarding and ensure that our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is reviewed and up-dated annually.
- Work with staff to promote the educational outcomes of children who have or have had a social worker by ensuring the school knows the cohort and staff make reasonable adjustments to enable these students reach their potential.
- Send a student's child protection or safeguarding file separately from the main file to a new establishment if a student leaves the Academy within 5 days.
- Provide, with the Principal, an annual report for the governing body, detailing any changes to the policy and procedures; training undertaken by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and by all staff and governors; number and type of incidents/cases reported, and number of children on child protection plans and open to social care (anonymised).
- Hold and share information in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the guidance around information sharing in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.
- Adopt a sensible Restrictive Intervention policy which outlines the procedures we follow.

Staff

- All staff (and volunteers) are aware of the systems which support safeguarding at our school, including this Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.
- Receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.
- Receive safeguarding updates regularly through weekly bulletins and at least annually, which provides them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.
- Understand local Family Help arrangements and the distinction between school-led support and support coordinated by the local authority and other safeguarding partners.
- Are able to contribute effectively to Family Help assessments, plans and multi-agency interventions where required.
- Receive training in emerging safeguarding risks including artificial intelligence (AI), deepfakes, misogyny, online misinformation, harmful sexual behaviour and serious violence.
- Understand the process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (child protection) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments, for example supporting the safeguarding team with collecting information for enquiries or multi-agency meetings.
- Know what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited, or neglected and maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality.
- Know not to promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse.
- Reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and assure them that they are not causing a problem by reporting.

- Are 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. This should not prevent professional curiosity and discussions with the DSL.
- Know the indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery, exercise professional curiosity and know that such issues are rarely standalone ones.
- Are aware of extra-familial and/ or contextual risks which occur outside of the families,for example, sexual abuse, domestic abuse, criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.
- Are aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues and the risks young people face online.
- Know how to report concerns about safeguarding practices within the school via whistleblowing procedures or other means.
- Know how to report concerns if staff have a safeguarding concern, or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers, and contractors) harming or posing a risk of harm to children through the following process:
    - Refer to the Principal, who will consider whether an onward referral to the LADO is required
    - Concerns about the Principal should be referred to the Chair of Governors
    - Report directly to the LADO where there is a conflict of interest.

- Read and understand Part 1 and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and review this guidance at least annually.
- Attend and engage with induction training, including reading and understanding our:

    Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
    Behaviour for Learning policy and the measures taken to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
    The Staff Code of Conduct policy
    Safeguarding response to children who go missing from education

4.7 Training and Staff Support

- All staff undertake Safeguarding and Child Protection training annually, to equip them to carry out their responsibilities effectively and recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect or exploitation, understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of school, at home and online. Exercising **professional curiosity** and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Staff training is regularly updated and covers the referral process in school and to the Local Authority and the LADO, the Early Help and Family Help processes, online safety, filtering and monitoring, specific safeguarding issues (such as sexting, CSE, FGM, children missing education, child on child abuse, serious violent crime and harmful sexual behaviours) as well as how to take timely action if they have a welfare (pastoral) or safeguarding concern.
- All staff receive training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, the Prevent duty, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.
- All members of staff are given a copy of the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy that they must read and sign to say they have done so and that they understand their responsibilities around safeguarding and child protection.
- Staff are required to complete online courses in relation to specific areas of safeguarding through the online platform Jedu and will complete a self-assessment each year to check and review their knowledge and understanding.
- A record of staff training is kept within school, which identifies who has completed training and when, along with the content of the training session.
- Our Nominated Governor receives annual updates about safeguarding through the appropriate Governor Committee.
- Training is provided to support the governors in their role

- In addition to training, staff also receive regular updates via weekly briefings and emails to keep them up to date with the latest guidance and are able to review their safeguarding knowledge.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead ensures that all members of the Academy Leadership Team and key members of Inclusion Team undertake training in multi-agency working which is provided by the Trafford Strategic Safeguarding Partnership and refresher training to keep knowledge and skills up to date. Temporary staff and volunteers who work with children in the Academy will be made aware of the arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection and their wider responsibilities by the relevant Curriculum Middle Leader, Head of House or member of the Academy Leadership Team.

4.8 Safer Recruitment and Selection

Wellacre ensures that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works in the Academy who is likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult including volunteers and people employed by contractors. Safer recruitment practice includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional references, checking previous employment history and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking interviews and undertaking DBS checks.

Our safer recruitment practices include:

1. Ensuring that all our adverts include a statement which explains our commitment to safeguarding children.
2. Displaying our commitment to safeguarding both visually in the Academy and on our website.
3. Ensuring that all our posts are detailed accurately through specific job descriptions and person specifications which state the contact that the post-holder will have with children.
4. Discarding any applications that are made by any applicant who submit a CV instead of the required application form.
5. Requesting references prior to interview.
6. Scrutinising the application form and references, to identify any gaps in employment, including any periods working abroad, or inconsistencies in the information presented. We use this information to formulate candidate specific questions that will be used during the interview.
7. Checking the validity of qualifications and the eligibility of the candidate to work in the UK.
8. Checking the identity of the individual concerned.
9. Asking specific questions during the interview that relate to safeguarding children. We expect candidates to discuss individual experiences rather than talking hypothetically.
10. Collecting the information for a DBS check.
11. Prohibition checks and S128 checks as necessary via the DfE login portal.
12. Discussing any self-declared information with the candidate in a non-prejudicial way during the interview.
13. Reserving the right to call candidates back for further questioning if anything emerges either through the DBS process or late references.
14. Reserving the right not to appoint if the DBS checks or references highlight issues which are inappropriate for a person working with children.
15. Reserving the right to dismiss a candidate if false information has been submitted during the recruitment process or if information comes to light that the candidate failed to disclose.
16. Adherence to the Academy Rehabilitation of Ex-offenders policy.
17. Ensuring that at least one member of the interview panel has completed the Safer Recruitment in Education training as recommended by the DfE.
18. Carrying out online searches as part of our due diligence on short listed candidates ahead of the interview.
19. Ensuring appropriate checks are completed on agency and third party staff, including trainee teachers and obtain written confirmation that the employment business / training provider has carried out these checks.

In addition we:

- Maintain our single central record for our own employees, volunteers and Governors.
- Have a clear process of risk assessing any individuals who come onto our premises who do not require a DBS check.
- Ensure that all visitors to our Academy are met at Reception and are signed in using the Inventory System and wear a visitor badge with a coloured lanyard at all times. We ensure that where appropriate (LA officers/contractors) visitors are asked to show their formal identity badges to link them to a known organisation. They are only admitted to complete known and verifiable duties.
- The Business Director will review our Service Level Agreements annually to check the adequacy of the arrangements contractors put in place to ensure that their staff are 'suitable' for working in the Academy.
- Carry out DBS checks on all of our governors.
- All candidates attending the interview will complete a self-disclosure form.

4.9 Confidentiality, Records and Information Sharing

A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a student nor should they agree with a student to keep a secret, as where there is a child protection concern this must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities.

The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and GDPR do not prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Staff will be informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases regarding child protection on a "need to know basis" only. Any information shared with a member of staff in this way must be held confidentially to themselves.

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. The Academy is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child and when these concerns should be passed over to other agencies. Electronic records are kept confidential and can only be accessed by designated members of staff and the safeguarding team via CPOMS. They are retained in line with published guidance.

Student welfare / pastoral concerns and child protection concerns are recorded on CPOMS (Child Protection Online Monitoring System) see Appendix 1 for guidance.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse must make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen, putting the event in context, and giving the date, time and location (see Appendices).

If a student transfers from the Academy, these files will be forwarded to the student's new school marked confidential and for the attention of the receiving school's Designated Safeguarding Lead. Records are not sent unless it has been confirmed that the young person has taken up their new place. If this confirmation is not received we retain the file until the student's 25th birthday. We will inform Trafford Pupil Absence Team that the young person is no longer at our Academy, just as we would for all young people who either suggest they are moving or who are missing from education with no explanation. This is in accordance with Trafford's 'Children Missing from Home and Education' guidance.

We encourage parents and carers to supply us with two emergency contacts for their child, update their contact details without delay if they change, and we share our procedures for notifying the school of an absence with all parents. When a pupil leaves the school, we will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date.

The school maintains appropriate information security and access management procedures to ensure that information is safeguarded, stored securely, and accessed only by authorised personnel. Appropriate technical and organisational security measures protect safeguarding records.

4.10 Children attending Alternative Provision and Off Site Learning

When a student is placed with an alternative provision provider, we continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that student and must be satisfied that the provider meets the needs of the student. As part of our due diligence we require written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on all individuals working at the establishment, consistent with those we would undertake for our own staff. We must be informed of any arrangements that might put a child at risk, such as new staff joining, and that suitable checks have been made on them. We should always know the whereabouts of our students throughout school hours.

Alternative provision placements will be reviewed at least half-termly to ensure students are attending, that their needs are being met and the setting continues to be safe, with the potential that the placement is ended if any concerns are not addressed or if the student is not attending. If we have any safeguarding concerns regarding a student that is an off-site learner, a health and safety risk assessment will be completed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and a member of the Inclusion Team.

Some students at Wellacre may be offered opportunities for work-based learning. These opportunities will be made available through:

- Work Experience Placements / Extended Work Experience Placements
- Timetable ‘drop down’ days
- Alternative Curriculum Provision

Wellacre will carry out all necessary Safeguarding and Health and Safety checks and ensure the appropriate Public Employer and Public Liability Insurance policies are in place, in accordance with our Health and Safety Policy. We retain oversight of safeguarding in all off site or external placements.

4.11 Children potentially at greater risk of harm

We recognise that for our students, high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult helps to prevent abuse. We also recognise that children who are abused, neglected, exploited or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth or view the world as a positive place.

Wellacre may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Nevertheless, whilst at the school their behaviour may still be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. At Wellacre will endeavour to support students through:

- A curriculum which encourages self-esteem and self-motivation.
- Our Academy culture and ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all students and adults a sense of belonging and a sense of being respected and valued.
- Implementation of the Academy’s behaviour management policy (Ready, Respectful, Safe).
- A consistent approach agreed by all staff which will endeavour to ensure students know that some behaviours are unacceptable but they are valued.
- Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies which support our students and their families.
- A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents/carers, whenever it is in the child’s best interest to do so.

- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group, trained to respond appropriately in safeguarding and child protection situations.
- Recognition that some children may be more at risk of harm than others from specific issues such as homophobic, bi-phobic or transphobic bullying or racial discrimination.
- Recognition that in a home environment where there is domestic violence or abuse, drug or alcohol abuse, or complex family circumstances, children may also be vulnerable and be in need of support or protection.

Statistically children with behavioural difficulties, Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding barriers when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation for reasons including:

- 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 SEND being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges, the need for intimate care and /or being more reliant on adults for care
- cognitive understanding – being able to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content / behaviours in school, or the consequences of doing so

Staff who work in any capacity with children with SEND, profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and / or emotional and behavioural problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise our children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face. Students may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. We recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead along with all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children. Where we are aware that a student has a social worker or a Family Help or Support Worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the student's safety, welfare and educational outcomes.

We also recognise that low or erratic attendance and Children Missing Education (CME) may be an indicator of abuse or neglect. All staff should be aware of children being absent from school particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods. Children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities which may include abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, exploitation, child criminal exploitation, county lines involvement, mental health problems and risk of substance misuse.

We know that early intervention is essential to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in the future. Our Attendance Officer supported by the Inclusion Team track attendance thoroughly, address concerns without delay, and liaise with Trafford Pupil Absence Team where needed.

We ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school but fail to take up their place or cannot be located are referred to the local authority in line with local procedures and statutory guidance, such as *Children Missing Education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools* (DfE, 2025). In line with DfE statutory guidance (2025), the school will undertake appropriate reasonable enquiries to establish a child's whereabouts, working jointly with the local authority where required, before any referral or removal from roll takes place. The DSL will be aware of any students who may be considered CME and will work with the Attendance Officer and the Local Authority to ensure that any safeguarding concerns are reviewed, that the advice of external agencies is sought, and that local procedures are followed.

A child or young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm; however, they can sometimes be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual can be just as vulnerable.
At Wellacre we recognise the importance of supporting pupils who may be questioning their gender identity. We take a cautious approach that considers the individual needs of each child, working in partnership with parents (other than in exceptionally rare circumstances where involving parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child). We also consider any available clinical advice and seek additional non-clinical professional advice where relevant (e.g. the SENCO), including involving the DSL to address wider vulnerabilities. We endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced by pupils in this group and to create a culture in which all pupils feel able to speak out and share their concerns with staff.

We will have regard to current DfE guidance on children who are questioning their gender. Decisions will be made on an individual basis, taking into account safeguarding, wellbeing, educational needs, parental involvement where appropriate, privacy considerations, and relevant professional advice.

Schools should be alert to the needs of young carers, recognising that caring responsibilities can impact on their attendance, attainment, behaviour and wellbeing. Early identification is essential to ensure young carers receive support at the right time and by the appropriate services including additional support from external partners, or local authority and health services.

4.12 Students with Medical Conditions

Any member of school staff may be asked to provide support to students with medical conditions, including the administering of medicines, although they cannot be required to do so. Although administering medicines is not part of teachers' professional duties, they should take into account the needs of students with medical conditions that they teach. School staff will receive sufficient and suitable training and achieve the necessary level of competency to ensure that they are able to support children with medical conditions. Any member of school staff should know what to do and respond accordingly when they become aware that a student with a medical condition needs help.

4.13 Looked-after children (LAC), previously looked-after children (PLAC) and Kinship care

We recognise that children with social workers may potentially be at greater risk of harm and need further support. Children may need this support due to abuse, neglect, exploitation or complex family circumstances. Our staff are aware that these students may face additional barriers to their attendance, learning or behaviour. We take these needs into account and liaise regularly with the relevant social worker to put appropriate support in place.

Every Local Authority has a Virtual School Head who has statutory duties in promoting the educational achievement of looked after children, previously looked after children and those children in kinship care. Kinship care is when a child lives with a relative or close family friend because they cannot live with their birth parents. This arrangement can be temporary or permanent and may or may not involve the local authority. Kinship carers are often grandparents, aunts, uncles, or other close family friends.

We ensure that all staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked-after children and previously looked-after children safe. Appropriate staff will have relevant information about children's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements.

The Designated Teacher for LAC is Mr Pemberton and he is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and those in kinship care, in line with statutory guidance. As part of this role the Designated Teacher will:

- ensure that any Virtual School which oversees the education of children at their school has updated contact details.
- ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- work with virtual school heads to promote the educational achievement of these children, including discussing how pupil premium plus funding can be best used to support looked-after children and meet the needs identified in their termly Personal Education Plans (PEPs), which staff may be asked to contribute to

4.14 Site Safety

All staff members have a responsibility to ensure the buildings and school site are secure and to report any concerns that arise. The main gate is closed at 8.25am and opened at 2.55pm (3.55pm on Wednesday) prohibiting access by car or members of the public to the pedestrian areas of the Academy.

Any visitors to the Academy are directed to report to the reception at the front of the Main reception Building. They are required to sign in and out via the electronic inventory system. All visitors are given an identification badge on a coloured lanyard dependent on their DBS status and this must be worn at all times. All Wellacre staff must wear their ID badge on their Wellacre lanyard at all times on the academy premises. Any individual who is not known or identifiable will be challenged by our staff for clarification and reassurance.

The school will not accept the behaviour of any individual, parent or anyone else, who threatens the school's security or makes others, child or adult, feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse the person access to the school site and advice being sought from our local safeguarding partners.

4.15 Use of School Premises by Outside Organisations

The school will follow its safeguarding policy and procedures, just as it would with any allegation, and inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if there is an allegation of an incident happening while an individual or organisation (for example a community group or sports association) is using the school premises to run activities for children.

4.16 Online Safety

We recognise that use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues, including child-on-child abuse. We recognise that children need to be safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. To address this, our school strives to:

- have clear procedures in place to ensure the online safety of all staff and students
- educate the school community in the safe and responsible use of online technology
- set clear expectations for the use of online technology, including mobile phones

Our approach to online safety is framed by four main areas of risk:

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that stimulate this; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes

- **conduct:** online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (eg consensual and non-consensual sharing of self generated intimate images and /or videos including those generated using AI (eg deepfakes), sharing other explicit images and online bullying)
- **commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

Schools should be alert to these risks when educating pupils about online safety and when assessing emerging safeguarding concerns. We recognise that artificial intelligence (AI) technologies can create safeguarding risks, including online grooming, harassment, exploitation, deepfake imagery and the creation or sharing of self-generated intimate images.

To address the risks above, as a school we will:

- teach students about online safety through computing lessons, via tutor time activities and our RESPECT curriculum, and other relevant subjects
- keep parents informed about what their child is being asked to do online by the school
- train all staff in online safety, including filtering and monitoring

We have clear guidance for our school community on the acceptable use of technology, including mobile phones and smart devices, and our Behaviour for Learning policy, Online Safety policy and Staff Code of Conduct policy align with this. They outline how we ensure our students understand how to **stay safe** and **behave** online. They are located on the website.

Staff and students should be aware of the following online safety risks which may contribute to safeguarding risks:

- Online grooming
- Online bullying
- Sexting / sharing of nude and semi-nude images and videos / Indecent images
- Online sexual harassment and violence
- Child sexual exploitation (including sex trafficking and modern slavery)
- Radicalisation, terrorism and extremism
- Online gambling
- The Dark web
- Age inappropriate content
- Phishing
- Online abuse
- Screen addiction
- Oversharing personal information
- Disinformation, including fake news
- Pop ups and inappropriate advertisements
- Online relationships
- Generative AI applications

4.17 Filtering and Monitoring

The Business Director reviews the effectiveness of our IT systems annually, working closely with the appropriate staff. The school has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place to limit children's exposure to online risks. There are also appropriate security procedures in place to safeguard our systems; the Business Director conducts monthly spot checks to verify certain categories are blocked using the *testfiltering.com* website as well as trying to access random disallowed *urls* using test student and test teacher accounts on random computers across the school site. The results are recorded and tracked on a spreadsheet.

Wellacre uses ‘Smoothwall’ as a filtering and monitoring system. This filters and monitors for inappropriate websites and content categories, restricting access to help shield children from harmful material such as adult content, pornography, violence, drugs and substance abuse, discrimination, hate speech, extremism, gambling, self-harm, malware and hacking.

This covers all internet connected devices within our school network including laptops and PCs. We also use Impero, the classroom monitoring tool, to monitor what students are viewing online.

The DSL has lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place. The DSL and Deputy DSL monitor the effectiveness of this system through Smoothwall reporting functions. When the school filtering and monitoring system detects usage concerns, the DSL will be alerted. Information will be recorded in CPOMS and appropriate action will be taken with the student, which may include informing parents/carers and a referral to external agencies.

The school takes care not to ‘over block’ content so that there are no unreasonable restrictions on what students can be taught regarding online safety.

The DfE has published filtering and monitoring standards which set out that schools should:

- Identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems
- Review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually
- Block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning
- Have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs

The processes we have in place have been informed by an annually reviewed risk assessment. This risk assessment is taken from the DfE filtering and monitoring standards. We adopt a proactive approach to securing our digital systems including cyber resilience and ensuring any emerging AI tools are used safely and appropriately in school. We also refer to the DfE's guidance on the use of generative AI in education (2025) to support our approach to online safety, digital literacy and filtering / monitoring practices.

4.18 Whistleblowing (see separate policy)

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues. Any member of staff or volunteer who has concerns about poor or unsafe practice or potential failures in our school’s safeguarding provision should speak to the Principal or the nominated Safeguarding Governor. The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline can also be contacted via telephone (0800 028 0285) or email (help@nspcc.org.uk).

4.19 Managing allegations against members of staff and others / Low Level Concerns

All the staff in our Academy are aware that they have a duty to report any concerns they have about the conduct of another member of staff, visitor, volunteer or Governor to the Principal. If the concerns are about the Principal they should report the matter to the Chair of Governors.

When an allegation has been made against a member of staff the Principal will consider whether the allegation suggests that the individual has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a young person
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a young person
- Behaved towards a young person in a way that indicates he / she may pose a risk of harm to young people

- ♦ Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with young people

If an allegation is made against the Principal, this should be referred to the Chair of Governors, who will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to ask for advice about how to proceed. The contact details are lado@trafford.gov.uk Tel: 0161 912 5024 or 0161 912 5125.

The term **low-level concern** does not mean that the concern is insignificant, it means that the adult's behaviour towards a child does not meet the 'harm' threshold. A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt', that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct and the standards and values of our organisation, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO, but may merit consulting with and seeking advice from the LADO

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children/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 with no visibility from outside
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language
- humiliating children
- criminal acts of dishonesty and misuse of substances or alcohol
- possession of a weapon
- violence against a person / sexual assault
- being closely associated with someone in their personal lives who may present a risk of harm to children
- as a parent/carer being subject to child protection procedures

Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults (including where the threshold for an allegation is not met) must be shared responsibly with the Principal and/or the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the information recorded and dealt with appropriately. This encourages an open and transparent culture, enabling us to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working for or with our organisation are clear about professional boundaries and act within them, in accordance with the ethos and values of the school.

At Wellacre we aim to create an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

Low-level concerns will not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance. However, where a low-level concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for a referral to the LADO and is found to be substantiated, it will be referred to in a reference.

The procedure for reporting and responding to reports of low-level concerns:

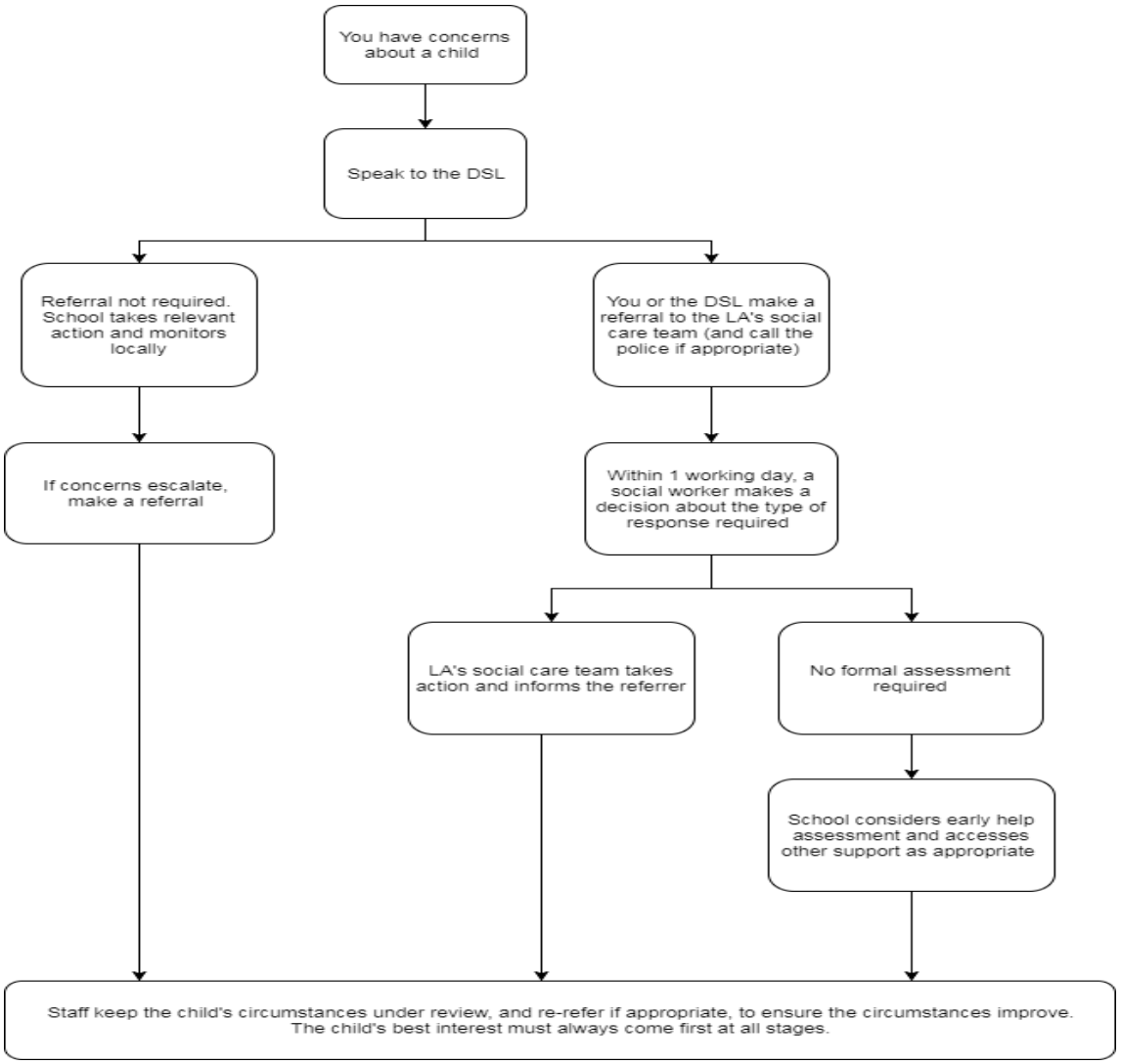
Incidents should be reported via the Low Level Concern Google Form; the link can be found here https://forms.gle/cgoDtQ3Fjfgvz7r37. The link is also available from the Business Director or can be found on the Staff Intranet.

If the concern has been raised via a third party, the Principal will collect as much evidence as possible by speaking directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously, and to the individual involved and any witnesses. The information collected will help categorise the type of behaviour and determine what further action may need to be taken. All of this information will be recorded along with the rationale for the decisions and action taken on the Low-Level Concern Google Sheet. Most low-level concerns are likely to be minor and can be dealt with by means of management support or additional training. Where necessary, action may be taken in **accordance with the Staff Discipline and Conduct policy**. The Principal has oversight of all recorded concerns and has the ultimate decision making power in respect of all Low-Level Concerns.

Further guidance can be found in the 'Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Staff in Schools' policy.

4.20 Concerns regarding a child's welfare **(as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger)**

(Note – if the DSL is unavailable, this should not delay action)



any child may benefit from support before statutory intervention, including from universal services and **community based Early Help or the **targeted early help level of Family Help** (see Appendix 2)

4.21 Reporting Procedures

At Wellacre we follow the policies and procedures presented in the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory Guidance for schools and colleges.

When staff have a concern or receive a disclosure of abuse or notice something which leads them to suspect that abuse may have taken place, the information is recorded securely on our CPOMs software by the staff member.

Staff must also see the Designated / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead as a priority for immediate concerns. If the DSL or Deputy are not available, staff should not delay in acting and should consider speaking to a member of the Academy Leadership Team or take advice from Children's Social Care. Any such action should be shared with the DSL as soon as is practically possible.

If physical abuse is suspected a **'body map'** can be used to record the site and extent of any injury that has been noticed **(available on CPOMS).**

Any information regarding concerns or incidents must be recorded securely and should include the following:

- The date and time of the observation/concern/incident/disclosure
- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern (which may include comments about the child's appearance, behaviour, emotional state and actions) using professional language

The DSL will then decide what action must be taken (see section 4.20), which can include:

- Further pastoral support in school
- Referral for Early Help and/or Family Help support in accordance with local safeguarding partnership arrangements
- Referral to children's social care

The safeguarding team will ensure the following are recorded on CPOMS:

- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- A note of any actions taken, decisions reached and the outcome
- The rationale for the action taken including where a decision to refer, or not, to external agencies has been made

All staff in school are aware of the process for making referrals to the local authority Children's Social Care and for statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989, especially Section 17 (Children in Need) and Section 47 (Child Protection), that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

If children do not require the support of statutory children's services, the DSL (or Deputy) will generally lead the liaison with other agencies and set up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in carrying out this assessment, and in some cases act as the lead practitioner.

4.22 What to do if a child discloses abuse

Always follow the 4 R's:

1. RECEIVE

LISTEN to the student. If you are shocked at what the student says to you try not to show it. Take what the student says to you seriously, children and young people rarely lie about abuse and if they are not believed it adds to the traumatic nature of disclosing. If they meet with revulsion or disbelief, children and young people may retract what they have said.

ACCEPT what the student says. Be careful not to burden the young person with guilt by asking, "Why didn't you tell me before?"

2. REASSURE

STAY CALM. Reassure the young person that they have done the right thing in talking to you. Be honest with the student. Do not make any promises that you are unable to keep, like "I'll stay with you", or "Everything will be all right now".

DO NOT promise confidentiality.

TRY to alleviate any feelings of guilt that the student displays, e.g. "You are not alone, you are not the only one this sort of thing has happened to".

ACKNOWLEDGE how hard it must have been for the young person to tell you what has happened.

EMPATHISE with the student. Don't tell them what they should be feeling.

3. REACT

REACT to the student only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer to matter.

DO NOT interrogate the child or make investigations with third parties to establish any of the facts.

AVOID asking leading questions, for example "Did he touch you?"

BE careful about what you ask the child; you may taint any evidence being put before a court.

USE open questions, such as, "Is there anything else you would like to tell me?" or "When did it happen?"

DO NOT criticise the perpetrator. The student may love him/her and reconciliation may be possible.

DO NOT ask the child to repeat what has been said to another member of staff.

EXPLAIN what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk to.

INFORM the Designated Safeguarding Lead

4. RECORD

AS SOON as is reasonably possible make notes on what has happened.

DO NOT destroy these notes, they should be retained in a safe place. The court in any legal process may require them.

RECORD Place, date, time and details of the child/young person involved. Record any noticeable non-verbal behaviour of the student. If the young person uses their own words to describe sexual organs/acts, record the words spoken. Do not translate them into proper words. Record this incident on CPOMS as soon as possible.

DRAW a diagram (using 'body map") to indicate positioning, size and location of any injuries you have identified

BE OBJECTIVE in your recording. Include statements made and what you have seen, rather than assumptions or interpretations. Rely on FACT. A fact is any event that can be perceived by one of the five senses.

SUPPORT
Certain disclosures can be very emotive. Please seek support from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All the above should be recorded on CPOMS

When technology is involved we retain all the evidence (e.g. screen shots/emails/text messages) and use it to support the information recorded in CPOMS. We do not search mobile phones or computers to gain further information. Upon receiving the information the Designated Safeguarding Lead follows the procedures endorsed by Trafford's Strategic Safeguarding Partnership. Action is taken within the same working day. The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy will immediately refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to Children's Social Care (Trafford Children's First Response Team) by telephone.

The telephone referral to the First Response Team will be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. Essential information will include the student's name, address, date of birth, family composition, the reason for the referral, whether the child's parents/carers are aware of the referral, the name of the person who initially received the disclosure plus any further relevant information.

The Academy will always undertake to share the intention to refer a child to Social Care Services with the parents/carers unless to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On these occasions advice will be taken from Children's Social Care or Greater Manchester Police. Staff are aware that they must not discuss any issues with parents/carers unless they are told to do so by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy.

NO ATTEMPT SHOULD BE MADE BY OUR STAFF TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION INTO CASES OF SUSPECTED ABUSE.

Social Care and the Police are responsible for undertaking investigations. Inappropriate actions by others may negate or contaminate evidence. At our Academy it is expected that staff will co-operate with those investigating abuse following a referral. It will be the responsibility of those investigating the case to ensure that parents/carers are fully informed about the investigation. This is not the responsibility of our Academy.

4.23 Multi-Agency Working, Early Help and Family Help

When a safeguarding concern is received the DSL may refer to universal services and community based Early Help and/or Family Help support in accordance with local safeguarding partners. The Trafford Family Help model is an early intervention and relational support framework led by Trafford Council that combines targeted early help, child in need support and family practitioner roles into a single, seamless service. It coordinates local schools, health services and community groups to provide help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

Community based Early Help and targeted Family Help aim to reduce crisis escalation, prevent further problems arising and keep children safely within their families by using multi-agency support. Staff at Wellacre are committed to multi-agency working to support vulnerable students and their families. We work closely with Children's Social Care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of Early Help and/or Family Help when additional needs of children are identified, and contributing to multi-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans.

We recognise the importance of identifying concerns at the earliest opportunity and provide help before issues escalate. Early Help and Family Help ensure children reach their potential in all areas of development and this should reduce the likelihood of a referral to Children's Social Care. Where it is deemed that young people (and their family) require additional support, staff will:

- Discuss their concerns with relevant key staff (DSL, SENDCO, SMHL, Head of House, Inclusion)
- Discuss their concerns with parents/carers

- ♦ Follow TSSP's Early Help processes (a referral to Trafford Team Together - TTT)
- ♦ Monitor the young person's progress and raise the issue to Family Help (targeted support) or the level of Child in Need or Child Protection, if this is necessary

All staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for **additional support for a child** who: (KCSIE 2026, paragraph 17)

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is pregnant and/or a parent themselves
- has exhibited early signs of abusive, violent and/or harmful behaviour
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing from education, home or care
- has been repeatedly removed from the classroom, experienced multiple suspensions, is on a part-time timetable, is at risk of permanent exclusion, or is in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit
- is at risk of exploitation, modern slavery or trafficking, including criminal or sexual exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised into terrorism
- has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues or domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol or other drugs themselves
- is at risk of honour or faith-based abuse, such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child

All our work at the Early Help stage is conducted with the support and full knowledge of our parents/carers. Where it is appropriate we also involve the young person in discussions.

Trafford Team Together (TTT) is part of the Early Help offer in Trafford and is committed to working in partnership with families and young people including schools, health, social care, community safety, housing and a wealth of voluntary organisations. Its aim is to provide the right support at the right time in the right way for a family in need of this support to help prevent small worries turning into future problems. TTT is designed to address the needs of any child (and their family) living in Trafford and/or attending a Trafford educational setting. These are some of the issues that TTT could help with but there may be other things too:

- Dealing with times of change
- Children's self-esteem and confidence and understanding a child's development
- A child's school attendance
- Challenging behaviour at school, home, or in the community
- Family relationships
- Financial difficulties
- Parenting strategies

4.24 Attendance at Child Protection Conferences, Child in Need Meetings and Core Groups

It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that the Academy is represented at all meetings and that a report is submitted to any child protection conference for a child on their school roll or previously known to them. Whoever attends should be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the Academy has and be prepared to make serious decisions at the end of the conference.

When a child is placed on a Child Protection Plan or a Child in Need Plan it is the Designated Safeguarding Lead's responsibility to ensure that the child is monitored regarding their attendance, welfare, presentation and academic progress. The DSL will ensure that a member of staff represents the school at Core Group Meetings, contributing to discussions and providing feedback from the education perspective.

All concerns about a Child Protection Plan or a Child in Need Plan and/or the child's welfare should be discussed and recorded at Core Group meetings unless the child is at further risk of significant harm. In this case the DSL must inform the child's key worker **immediately** and record that they have done so, along with the actions agreed.

Schools can also be invited to Trafford's Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) for any high risk identified cases to share relevant information with multi-agency partners regarding students attending their school and contribute to decisions made.

4.25 The use of Reasonable Force in schools

There are limited circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools to use 'reasonable force' to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time', the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

4.26 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Governing Body or sooner in response to statutory guidance changes as they are released by the Department for Education.

Appendix 1

CPOMS – Key Information for Staff

CPOMS is our internal programme to log any pastoral, welfare or safeguarding information or concerns. You should also use CPOMS to record child-on-child abuse concerns and log conversations with parents on CPOMS if you feel that they are relevant to the Core Safeguarding Team (for example parent lost job, benefits stopped, parents separated, grandparent ill).

CPOMS does not replace the process of directly reporting safeguarding concerns or disclosures to the DSL or Deputy DSL

Instructions for Recording an incident or concern on CPOMS (all staff)
The process for using CPOMS is detailed below:

1. Log in to CPOMS (https://wellacre.CPOMS.net)
2. Click reset password
3. Check emails and re-log in change your password.
4. Click on 'add incident'
5. Type in the student's name under 'student' and click on the correct student
6. Begin writing up the incident / concern
7. Choose a **category** that best describes the nature of the incident you are recording:
   - Attendance
     - Alternative Provision Communication
     - Attendance Concern
     - EBSNA (Emotionally Based School Non Attendance)
     - Parent/Carer Communication
     - Punctuality Concern
     - Truanting
   - Child-on-Child Abuse
     - Cyber-Bullying Incident
     - HBT (Homophobic, Biphobic, Transphobic) Incident
     - Other Discriminatory Incident
     - Physical Incident
     - Racial Incident
     - SEND Incident
     - Sexual Violence/Sexual Harassment Incident
     - Sharing of Inappropriate Images
     - Verbal/Emotional Incident
   - Medical Concern
   - Pastoral
     - Cause for Concern
     - Contextual Concern
     - Home Visit
     - Information Sharing
     - Monitoring
     - Parent/Care Communication
     - Referral
     - Young Carers

- Safeguarding
  - Allegation Against Staff
  - Cause for Concern
  - Child in Need
  - Child Protection
  - Contact from Professionals
  - Criminal Exploitation
  - Early Help
  - IFS (Intensive Family Support)
  - LAC
  - Online Concern
  - Operation Encompass
  - Physical Interaction with a Child
  - Sexual Exploitation
  - TTT (Trafford Team Together)
- SEND
  - EHCP Document
  - Initial Concern
  - Parent/Carer Communication
  - Referrals

8. If you are reporting an incident that concerns other children in school please add them in the linked students bar. This may be siblings, friends or other children involved in an incident in school.

9. Members of the Core Safeguarding Team will automatically receive an alert - the Principal, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Safeguarding Officer), the SENDCO, Head of House and Inclusion Manager.

10. Add **incident** / **concern** and save – **THIS SHOULD BE A CLEAR AND COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY OF THE CONCERN** (See 4.21 Reporting Procedures)

11. If you have an **action** to add (you may have spoken to parent at home time about the disclosure, you may have logged something in Arbor, discussed with a colleague etc) you can then add this by clicking 'add action' below the incident you have added – this is shown on your dashboard once you have been alerted. Again, members of the Core Safeguarding Team will be informed of this action.

You can check when your incident has been viewed and may notice that when it comes back to you, categories and agencies may well have been added or changed. This information is on your 'Dashboard page'.

Remember that this information is both sensitive and confidential, please do not discuss anything with other staff members or leave the page open in view at school or public places. Any queries, please ask a member of the Core Safeguarding Team.
CPOMS is completely secure – you may use full names when making reports. You can access CPOMS from any Internet connection.

Members of the Core Safeguarding Team have access to retrieve student information in CPOMS. A secure pass code will be issued via an authenticator app to enter the system.
Any incident / concern allocated to them MUST be acted upon and details of how the incident / concern was followed up and resolved must be recorded - which will include a note of any action(s) taken, decisions reached and outcome. See section 4.21 Reporting Procedures. **ACTIONS must be recorded in the ACTION section**.

All incidents / concerns will remain 'Active' until they are resolved. Once resolved their status will be changed to 'Closed' or 'No Further Action' by the DSL or Deputy DSL.

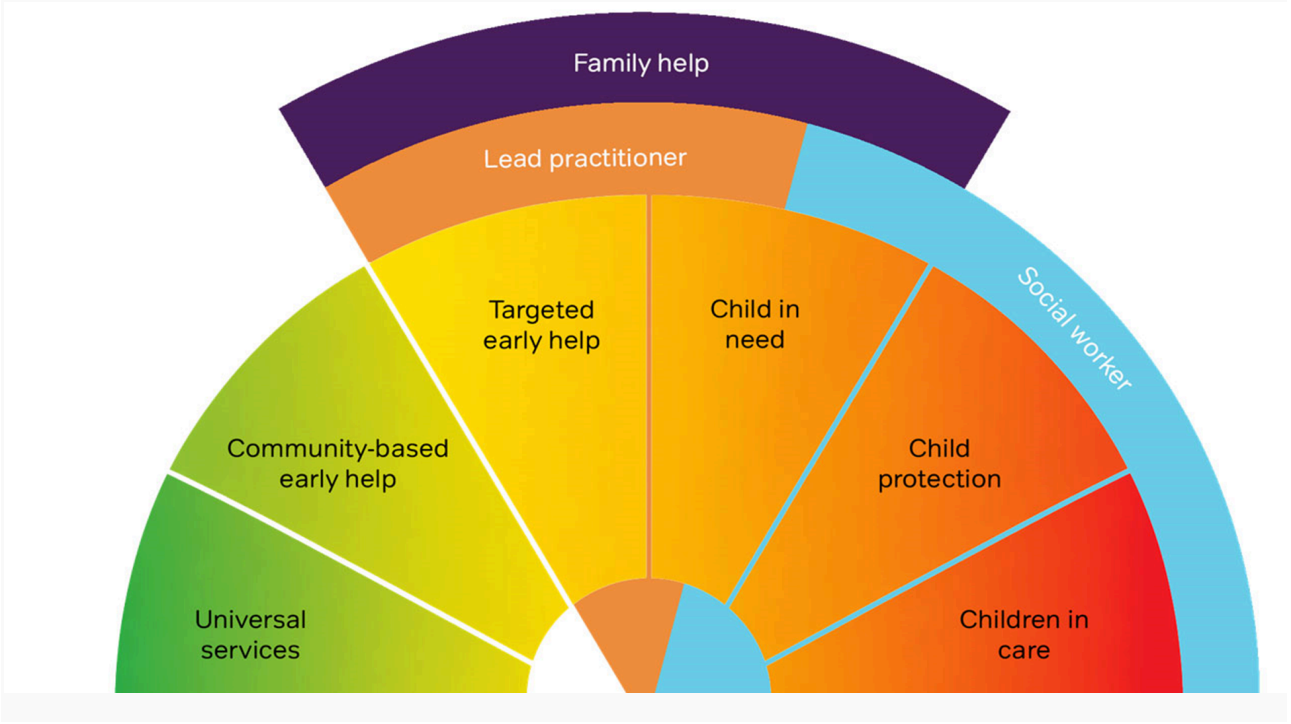
Appendix 2

‘Levels of Need’ Guidance

This information is to help professionals assess and understand the needs of a family who may require additional support in order to thrive. The majority of families will never go beyond Universal Services. Others will only dip into additional services while others will need varying levels of support throughout their lives. **The expectation in guidance is that as education settings we are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating.**

The Levels of Need are designed to support professionals when making decisions about what level of support a family needs and what tools and other agencies are available to support this work. It is important to remember, when making a decision about what Level of Need a family are in, that:

- The child's safety and wellbeing is paramount
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Early Help is everyone's responsibility
- Put yourself in the child's place
- Think - what is their lived experience?
- Do not fail to act. Your piece of the jigsaw could make the difference
- Trafford has adopted a Relational approach to supporting families. We will 'do with' families, not 'for' or 'to' families
- A child is aged 0 - 18. However, if they have a disability this extends to age 25



The windscreen is a concept that has been used for a number of years now to illustrate a child’s potential journey through services. The suggestion is that with increasing levels of need the child will move from the left to the right of the windscreen. It is presented in this way as this is not necessarily a linear journey, and, as a result of interventions at a specific stage, the child may move back towards the left-hand side of the windscreen.

If we look at what each of them mean:

•**Universal services** – services which are available to all children and young people regardless of their background, personal situation and level of need. These include early years providers, schools and health services such as GP surgeries, health visitors, hospitals, etc. They may also include local initiatives such as youth clubs, holiday activities, etc.

•**Community-based early help** - support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. Not an individual service, but a system of support delivered by local authorities and their partners working together. These services can include support delivered through Family Hubs, youth services, youth offending teams, after school clubs and housing provision.

•**Targeted early help (Family Help)** – support to address specific concerns within a family. Examples of these include parenting support, mental health support, domestic abuse services, youth services, youth offending teams and housing and employment services. Targeted early help should be provided for children and families who have multiple and/or complex needs, or whose circumstances might make them more vulnerable. This could include where a child is living with wider family members under a kinship arrangement. Targeted early help might also be appropriate to support a pregnant person to provide safe and effective care for their unborn child.

•**Child in need** – defined as "a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired without the provision of services, or a child who is disabled." These are situations where there are concerns that if there is no intervention, the child's situation could deteriorate further. Where a child is deemed to be a child in need, an assessment will be completed and a bespoke action plan developed which will involve agencies who know the child and potentially making referrals to other agencies, for example mental health, drugs and alcohol, domestic abuse, etc.

•**Child protection** - where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives or is found in their area is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, it has a duty to make such enquiries as it considers necessary to decide whether to take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Work will involve completing an assessment and then, if required, developing a multi-agency plan which is regularly reviewed.

•**Children in care** – A small cohort of children are unable to remain living with their primary care givers and so alternative accommodation has to be provided. This can include being with friends and family, in a foster placement, in residential care, or in a secure environment. Where the local authority is involved in these arrangements, the child is deemed to be in care.

Appendix 3

Types of abuse and recognising signs of child abuse

All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery, understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside of home, and online. Staff have day to day contact with students and are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse such as changes in behaviour or developmental concerns. A child protection concern may come to the attention of school staff or volunteers in a variety of ways, such as student disclosure, third party disclosure or staff suspicion. Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse, neglect or exploitation must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

Categories of Abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse (including Domestic Abuse)
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

Signs of Abuse in Children:

The following non-specific signs may indicate something is wrong:

- Significant change in behaviour
- Extreme anger or sadness
- Aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour
- Suspicious bruises with unsatisfactory explanations
- Lack of self-esteem
- Self-injury
- Depression
- Age inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Child Exploitation.

Risk Indicators

The factors described in this section are frequently found in cases of child abuse. Their presence is not proof that abuse has occurred, but:

- must be regarded as indicators of the possibility of significant harm
- justifies the need for careful assessment and discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy, (or in the absence of all those individuals, an experienced colleague)
- may require consultation with and/or referral to Children's Social Services

The absence of such indicators does not mean that abuse, neglect or exploitation has not occurred.

In an abusive relationship the child may:

- appear frightened of the parent/s
- act in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development (though full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups)

The parent / carer may:

- persistently avoid child health promotion services and treatment of the child's episodic illnesses
- have unrealistic expectations of the child
- frequently complain about/to the child and may fail to provide attention or praise (high criticism/low warmth environment)
- be absent or misusing substances
- persistently refuse to allow access on home visits
- be involved in domestic abuse

Staff should be aware of the potential risk to children when individuals, previously known or suspected to have abused children, move into the household.

A. Physical Abuse

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury
- Several different explanations provided for an injury
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment
- The parents/carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury
- Parents are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a "cry for help" and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury)
- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries

Bruising

Children can have accidental bruising, but the following must be considered as non- accidental unless there is evidence or an adequate explanation provided:

- Any bruising to a pre-crawling or pre-walking baby
- Bruising in or around the mouth, particularly in small babies which may indicate force feeding
- Two simultaneous bruised eyes, without bruising to the forehead, (rarely accidental, though a single bruised eye can be accidental or abusive)
- Repeated or multiple bruising on the head or on sites unlikely to be injured accidentally
- Variation in colour possibly indicating injuries caused at different times
- The outline of an object used e.g. belt marks, hand prints or a hair brush
- Bruising or tears around, or behind, the earlobe/s indicating injury by pulling or twisting
- Bruising around the face
- Grasp marks on small children
- Bruising on the arms, buttocks and thighs may be an indicator of sexual abuse

Bite Marks

Bite marks can leave clear impressions of the teeth. Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped. Those over 3 cm in diameter are more likely to have been caused by an adult or older child. A medical opinion should be sought where there is any doubt over the origin of the bite.

Burns and Scalds

It can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns and scalds, and will always require experienced medical opinion. Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious e.g.

- circular burns from cigarettes (but may be friction burns if along the bony protuberance of the spine)
- linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements
- burns of uniform depth over a large area

- scalds that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid (a child getting into hot water of his/her own accord will struggle to get out and cause splash marks)
- old scars indicating previous burns/scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation

Scalds to the buttocks of a small child, particularly in the absence of burns to the feet, are indicative of dipping into a hot liquid or bath.

Fractures

Fractures may cause pain, swelling and discolouration over a bone or joint. Non-mobile children rarely sustain fractures.

There are grounds for concern if:

- the history provided is vague, non-existent or inconsistent with the fracture type
- there are associated old fractures
- medical attention is sought after a period of delay when the fracture has caused symptoms such as swelling, pain or loss of movement
- there is an unexplained fracture in the first year of life

Scars

A large number of scars or scars of different sizes or ages, or on different parts of the body, may suggest abuse.

B. Emotional Abuse

This is 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 verbal abuse, such as persistent criticism, belittling or name-calling, as well as 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 from 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.

Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. The manifestations of emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse.

C. Sexual Abuse

This 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, oral sex or penetration with an object) 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.

Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and/or fear. This is particularly difficult for a child to talk about and full account should be taken of the cultural sensitivities of any individual child/family.

Recognition can be difficult, unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional/behavioural.

Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Inappropriate sexualised conduct
- Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age
- Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts
- Involvement in prostitution or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes e.g. for sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties)

Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Pain or itching of genital area
- Blood on underclothes
- Pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed
- Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted disease, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing

Sexual Abuse by Young People

The boundary between what is abusive and what is part of normal childhood or youthful experimentation can be blurred. The determination of whether behaviour is developmental, inappropriate or abusive will hinge around the related concepts of true consent, power imbalance and exploitation. This may include children and young people who exhibit a range of sexually problematic behaviour such as indecent exposure, obscene telephone calls, fetishism, bestiality and sexual abuse against adults, peers or children.

Developmental Sexual Activity encompasses those actions that are to be expected from children and young people as they move from infancy through to an adult understanding of their physical, emotional and behavioural relationships with each other. Such sexual activity is essentially information gathering and experience testing. It is characterised by mutuality and of the seeking of consent.

Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour can be inappropriate socially, inappropriate to development, or both. In considering whether behaviour fits into this category, it is important to consider what negative effects it has on any of the parties involved and what concerns it raises about a child or young person. It should be recognised that some actions may be motivated by information seeking, but still cause significant upset, confusion, worry, physical damage, etc. It may also be that the behaviour is "acting out" which may derive from other sexual situations to which the child or young person has been exposed.

If an act appears to have been inappropriate, there may still be a need for some form of behaviour management or intervention. For some children, educational inputs may be enough to address the behaviour. Abusive sexual activity includes any behaviour involving coercion, threats, aggression together with secrecy, or where one participant relies on an unequal power base.

In order to more fully determine the nature of the incident the following factors should be given consideration. The presence of exploitation in terms of:

- **Equality** – consider differentials of physical, cognitive and emotional development, power and control and authority, passive and assertive tendencies

- **Consent** – agreement including all the following:

  - Understanding that is proposed based on age, maturity, development level, functioning and experience
  - Knowledge of society's standards for what is being proposed
  - Awareness of potential consequences and alternatives
  - Assumption that agreements or disagreements will be respected equally
  - Voluntary decision
  - Mental competence

- **Coercion –** the young perpetrator who abuses may use techniques like bribing, manipulation and emotional threats of secondary gains and losses that is loss of love, friendship, etc. Some may use physical force, brutality or the threat of these regardless of victim resistance.

In evaluating sexual behaviour of children and young people, the above information should be used only as a guide.

D. Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Other indicators include:

- Failure by parents or carers to meet the basic essential needs of a child e.g. provide adequate food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, shelter, supervision and medical care
- A child seen to be listless, apathetic and irresponsive with no apparent medical cause
- Failure of child to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss
- Child thrives away from home environment
- Child frequently absent from school
- Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent
- Child abandoned or left alone for excessive periods

Appendix 4

Specific Safeguarding and Child Protection issues and concerns

There are a number of other safeguarding concerns that ALL staff need to be aware of. At Wellacre we will ensure that our students are taught about specific safeguarding issues through our RESPECT curriculum (based on the DfE 'Relationships, Sex and Health Education' programme). All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that often overlap and can put children at risk of harm.

A: Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. It may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. Children or young people who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.

CSE can include both physical contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity. It can also happen online. For example, young people may be persuaded or forced to share sexually explicit images of themselves, have sexual conversations by text, or take part in sexual activities using a webcam. CSE may also occur without the victim's immediate knowledge, for example through others copying videos or images.

Indicators of CSE can include a child:

- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant
- Showing inappropriate sexualised behavior / risky behaviour
- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Being seen at known places of concern
- Misusing drugs and alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education
- Not taking part in education

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

B: Serious Violence and Serious Violent Crime

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime (see below). They should also have a basic grasp of what might make a child vulnerable to such exploitation. Where children are involved with serious violent crime, which may involve physical assault, carrying, threatening with, or using weapons, often in the context of peer conflict or bullying, it can also be associated with criminal exploitation and modern slavery. There are a range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

The word 'gang' means different things in different contexts, the government in their paper 'Safeguarding children and young people who may be affected by gang activity' distinguishes between peer groups, street gangs and organised criminal gangs:

- **Peer group**
  A relatively small and transient social grouping which may or may not describe themselves as a gang depending on the context.
- **Street gang**
  "Groups of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity."
- **Organised criminal gangs**
  "A group of individuals for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain (financial or otherwise). For most, crime is their 'occupation'.

It is not illegal for a young person to be in a gang – there are different types of 'gang' and not every 'gang' is criminal or dangerous. However, gang membership can be linked to illegal activity, particularly organised criminal gangs involved in trafficking, drug dealing and violent crime.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) / Grooming

This is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. CCE and CSE can be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and the victim may identify as being part of this group.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. It does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be forced to work in cannabis factories, coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

The following behaviours maybe indicative of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime:

- persistently going missing from school or home and/or being found out of area
- unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones, gifts
- excessive receipt of texts, phone calls and/or having multiple handsets
- a change in friendships or relationships with controlling / older individuals or groups
- leaving home / care without explanation
- signs of physical assault / unexplained injuries

- parental concerns (perhaps arriving home late)
- carrying weapons
- absence from education / significant decline in school results and performance
- gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- self-harm or significant changes in emotional wellbeing
- misusing drugs and alcohol

Should we have reason to believe a student has become involved we will make referrals to both the Police and Children's Social Care.

County Lines and Exploitation

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of 'deal line'. This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children are increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. They can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines work.

C: Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including: sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the UK's framework for identifying and supporting victims of exploitation and modern slavery. Whatever form it takes, exploitation and modern slavery are child abuse, and relevant child protection procedures (including a referral to the NRM) must be followed if modern slavery or trafficking is suspected.

D: Child abduction and community safety incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members, by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances) and by strangers.

E: Cybercrime

This is described as one of the most significant and rapidly evolving threats in the UK crime landscape - criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen offline but are enabled at scale and at speed online) or 'cyber-dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). Cyber-dependent crimes include:

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example, accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded
- Denial of Service (DoS or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources

- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

F: Domestic Abuse and Operation Encompass

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

(a) physical or sexual abuse
(b) violent or threatening behaviour
(c) controlling or coercive behaviour
(d) economic abuse (adverse effect on the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services)
(e) psychological, emotional or other abuse

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background, and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), or be involved in child-to-parent/caregiver abuse, where a child's behaviour causes harm or distress to a parent, carer, caregiver or other family member, all of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn. Exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children and therefore, children are now classified as victims and not merely witnesses where domestic abuse occurs. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

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. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or are being threatened. This should not prevent staff from having a **professional curiosity** and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child

Operation Encompass operates in all police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children following an incident of domestic abuse or violence, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident. The police inform the DSL in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day, ensuring the school has up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable immediate support to be put in place, according to the child's needs. Following such an incident at home, children may arrive at school distressed, upset and unprepared for the day.

Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures.

G: Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. It should also be recognised that, in some cases, 16 and 17 year olds may be living independently of their parents or carers, for example, through their exclusion from the family home, and they will require a different level of intervention and support.

H: Honour or faith based violence and abuse

Honour or faith based abuse (HFBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM). Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. All forms of HFBA are abuse, regardless of motivation, and should be handled and escalated as such.

Forced Marriage (FM)

This is an entirely separate issue from arranged marriage. Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime. It is illegal to cause a child under the age of 18 to marry, even if violence, threats or coercion are not used. It is a human rights abuse and falls within the Crown Prosecution Service definition of domestic violence. Young men and women can be at risk in affected ethnic groups. Whistle-blowing may come from younger siblings. Other indicators may be detected by changes in adolescent behaviours. Never attempt to intervene directly as a school or through a third party. Inform the DSL.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. There is a legal duty upon teachers to immediately report any known cases of FGM in a child to the police.

I: Preventing Radicalisation – The Prevent duty

From July 2015 all schools (as well as early years childcare providers and registered later years childcare providers) are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism". This duty is known as the **Prevent duty**.

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

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

Terrorism is an action that:

- endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people;
- causes serious damage to property; or
- seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system

The use or threat of terrorism must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Schools have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk.

We assess the risk of children in our school being drawn into terrorism. This assessment is based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

We ensure that suitable internet filtering and monitoring is in place, and equip our students to stay safe online at school and at home. We build students' resilience to radicalisation by providing a safe environment for debating controversial issues and promoting fundamental British values.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period. Staff should be alert to changes in students' behaviour.

The government website Educate Against Hate and charity NSPCC say that signs that a student is being radicalised can include:

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance
- Rejecting activities they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions
- Accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter
- Possessing extremist literature
- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem, or be victims of bullying or discrimination. It is important to note that these signs can also be part of normal teenage behaviour – staff should have confidence in their instincts and seek advice if something feels wrong. If staff are concerned about a student, they must discuss their concerns with the DSL.

Staff should **always** take action if they are worried.

J: Child-on-Child Abuse (including Violence, Harassment and Harmful Sexual Behaviour)

In line with our strong commitment to safeguarding, we believe that all children have a right to learn in a safe environment and take a whole school approach to child-on-child abuse, which includes preventative work, appropriate responses and a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

Our staff recognise that children of any age or gender can be capable of abusing other children and it can take many forms. It can happen both inside and outside of school and online. This behaviour will be dealt with in line with our 'Behaviour for Learning' policy.

Child-on-child abuse can include, but is not limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (also known as teenage relationship abuse) and non-intimate relationships
- physical abuse which can include 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)
- serious physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon
- harmful sexual behaviour, including misogyny, sexual violence and sexual harassment
- consensual and non-consensual creation or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including those generated using AI, manipulated images and deepfakes
- 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
- upskirting which is a criminal offence
- initiation-type violence and rituals

Child-on-child abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional, financial, and/or coercive control exercised between children and young people. All concerns will be taken seriously and will be dealt with. Even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse this does not mean that it is not happening - it may be the case that it is just not being reported. Staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers and that this can manifest itself in many ways. It is important to note that abuse is abuse and should **never** be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'part of growing up', 'boys being boys' or 'just having a laugh'. It should always be challenged or it can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children. All concerns should be passed on the DSL (or a Deputy).

We recognise that misogyny may contribute to harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment, sexual violence, online abuse and coercive behaviour. Staff will actively challenge misogynistic attitudes, language and behaviour and respond through safeguarding and behaviour procedures. All problematic and harmful sexual behaviour requires a safeguarding response to protect both the child who has displayed the behaviour and those who have been impacted.

Reports and allegations of child-on-child abuse, sexual abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made. Any decisions are for the school to make on a case by case basis, with the DSL taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies such as Children's Social Care and the police as required. The victim will be reassured that they are being taken seriously and both the victim and alleged perpetrator will be given appropriate support.

Following a report of sexual violence, the DSL will contact the police and complete an immediate 'Risk and Needs Assessment'. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case by case basis. The school will follow the guidance published in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

In cases where self-generated intimate images and/or videos, including those generated by AI (eg deepfakes) have been shared, we follow the guidance given to schools by the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS): Sharing nudes and semi-nudes (March 2024).

Most cases of students hurting other students will be dealt with under the Academy Behaviour for Learning policy, but our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour is serious and potentially a criminal offence, is violent, involves students being forced to use drugs or alcohol, involves sexual exploitation or sexual abuse, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, sexual violence, sexual harassment or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including sexting and upskirting). Decisions will then be made and actions taken on a case by case basis, supported by other agencies.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed of any bullying incidents when there is a reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

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

- challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour
- being vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders / sexual orientations
- ensuring our curriculum helps to educate students about appropriate behaviour, respectful relationships, consent, equality and the impact of discriminatory and misogynistic behaviour.
- ensuring staff are trained to understand that a student harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and this would fall under the scope of this policy

Children can report any child-on-child abuse by speaking to an adult at school or via the CARE@wellacre.org email from their school email account.

Definitions

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) is developmentally inappropriate sexual behavior displayed by children and young people under the age of 18 which is harmful and abusive.

Sexual Violence refers to criminal acts: rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault and causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Sexual Harassment is described as ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline. It can include sexual comments, jokes or taunting, physical behaviour, displaying sexual images and upskirting. It is likely to violate a child’s dignity and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Upskirting typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence.

Consent given with free will and the capacity to do so; consent is not all encompassing, may cover only certain sexual activities, may be given with conditions, may be withdrawn at any time; and consent is needed every time sexual activity takes place. **It is important to note that children under 13 years old cannot consent to any kind of sexual activity.**

K: Children who are absent / missing from education

A child who is absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions can be a warning sign to a range of safeguarding and child protection issues and they can be at an increased risk of harm. This might include abuse, neglect or child sexual or child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse or radicalisation.

Children who are absent from education are not receiving a suitable education and are at significant risk of underachieving and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

There are many circumstances where a child may become absent / missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- are at risk of harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation
- are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- come from the families of service personnel
- go missing or run away from home or care
- are supervised by the youth justice system
- cease to attend a school
- come from new migrant families / international new arrivals

We have a legal obligation to monitor absence and investigate any unexplained / unauthorised absences. We follow our procedures for dealing with children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify any risk of harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation and to help prevent the risks of going missing or being absent in the future. This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the school without a new school being named, and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

Staff are trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being absent from school, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, the DSL must be informed and local child protection procedures will be followed. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority Children's Social Care and the police, if the child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm.

L: Mental Health

Mental health plays a large part in safeguarding - both in terms of responsibility to protect and promote children's mental health and in terms of understanding the interplay between mental health difficulties and other safeguarding issues or child protection concerns. This could include self-harm, suicidal ideation or risk of suicide. 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.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff should be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

- Feeling sad, angry, anxious, stressed, depressed
- Mood swings, fighting, arguing
- Obsessive behaviour, thoughts, addictions

- Withdrawn, keeping away from friends / family
- Constantly coming out of lessons to seek time with an adult
- School absence
- Eating problems and disorders
- Neglect of personal care
- Poor sleep pattern
- Hurting self on purpose
- Constant unwanted thoughts
- Hearing voices / seeing things that aren't there
- Relying on alcohol, drugs, sex

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences can impact on their mental health, behavior, attendance and progress at school.

If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action and speak to the DSL.

If you have a mental health concern that is **not** a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL to agree on a course of action. The DSL is also the Senior Mental Health Lead (SMHL) and works closely with the School Mental Health Support Team, Trafford Thrive.

For each of the above specific safeguarding issues, Wellacre will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care.

All staff should refer to Part 1 and Annex A 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2026) for further information and guidance.