



SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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Date of last whole School Safeguarding training:	September 2025
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Online Safety update training:	September 2025
Produced by:	Whole School Lead DSL
Approved by:	Full Governing Board
Cross referencing:	To be read in conjunction with the following policies: - Behaviour Management Policy - Online Safety Policy - Confidential Reporting [Whistleblowing] Policy - Anti-Bullying Policy - PSHE Schemes of Work - First Aid Policy - Health and Safety Policy - Staff Code of Conduct - Safer Recruitment Policy - Supervision Policy - Educational Visits Coordinator Policy - Staff ICT Acceptable Usage Policy - Admissions & Attendance Policy - Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy - Visitor Policy - School Pupil Refuser Policy - EYFS Policies - DfE guidance including: KCSiE (2025), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) Working Together to Improve Attendance (2024), EYFS Framework (2025) - Equal Opportunities Policy

Monitoring, evaluation and review.

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

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1. Introduction

THIS POLICY ALSO APPLIES TO THE EYFS.

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Children include everyone under the age of 18.

Westholme School and its staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (both mentally and physically) is **everyone's** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child. This Westholme School Safeguarding Policy should be read alongside Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE September 2025) guidance (including all annexes).

No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, **everyone** who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. Concerns about children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety/and or welfare. This is known as contextual safeguarding.

Westholme School staff members are trained to maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here**' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the **best** interests of the child.

Where a child is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so, action must be taken to protect that child. Action should also be taken to promote the welfare of a child in need of additional support, even if they are not suffering harm or are at immediate risk.

This policy is intended to give clear instructions to staff and others about expected procedures for dealing with child protection issues. Westholme is committed to the development of good practice and sound procedures. The aim of this policy is to ensure that safeguarding and child protection concerns and referrals may be handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which prioritise the needs of the child. It establishes procedures for dealing with cases of alleged or suspected abuse which might have occurred to or been perpetrated by (in or out of school) a member of the school community or other person.

This policy was written taking regard of the following DfE guidance:

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE September 2025) guidance (including Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 and What to do if you're worried a child is being abused, March 2015), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) (WT) guidance (WT refers to the non-statutory advice: Information sharing (2024), Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024), Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales (2023) (Prevent). The Counterterrorism and Security Act (2015) and The Use of Social Media for On-line Radicalisation (July 2015). Early years foundation stage statutory framework (2025)

In addition it also links with the Working Well with Children and Families in Blackburn with Darwen sections 1, 2, and 3.

Introduction:

Westholme fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support pupils in school. There are three main elements to our child protection and Safeguarding policy.

Prevention:

We provide a positive, safe environment and give teaching and pastoral support to pupils.

Protection:

By following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child protection concerns.

Support:

To pupils and school staff and to children who may have been abused.

This policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers in school.

Westholme will therefore:

Ensure we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children (see Safer Recruitment Policy).

- a) Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened to. We will foster positive relationships between staff and pupils through a strong and supportive pastoral system and effective teaching methods.
- b) Ensure that all staff are made aware of their safeguarding responsibilities, are familiar with the policy and are adequately trained in safeguarding procedures (including that anyone can make a referral to children's services although the DSL should still be informed as soon as possible).
- c) Ensure a culture of safety, raising concerns, valuing staff and reflective practice.
- d) Develop and implement procedures for identifying, reporting and handling concerns, cases, or suspected cases of abuse.
- e) Ensure that children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty. The pupils will continue to have access to the school nurse, person responsible for the pastoral care of the pupil, class teachers, form tutors and staff in general.
- f) Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe (including online) and /or communicate their fears and concerns about abuse and relationships and Sex Health Education (RSE). This will be supported by outside speakers and assemblies. We recognise that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate for all children, and a more personalised or contextualised approach for more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some SEND children might be needed.
- g) Support pupils in accordance with their Child Protection Plan if required.
- h) Support pupils and their families through the Early Help Assessment Form (EHAF) and Team Around the Family (TAF) processes (TAF previously named TAC [Team Around the Child]).

- i) Ensure that every effort is made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies.
- j) Ensure that the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) / Prep Leadership Team (PLT) checks with the party leader, at the time of booking a trip, that assurance has been obtained that appropriate safeguarding and child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organisation and working with the school's students on another site. Plus, any accompanying adults on the trip have had the appropriate DBS checks (if residential) and received an appropriate level of child protection training.
- k) The Principal, Deputy Head Pastoral (DSL) and Head of Prep (DDSL) meet half termly to discuss issues, policies and share good practice on Safeguarding including discussing any instances of bullying.
- l) Ensure that every child's previous school (outside of Westholme School where there are already rigorous transition procedures in place) is contacted to ask if there are any safeguarding records to share. The Deputy Head of Senior or Prep will follow up any instances where there is information to share to ensure the quick and efficient transfer of this information within 5 days of the child starting at the new school.

2. Staff Code of Conduct & Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy

These separate documents must be read by all staff of Westholme School. They are very clear regarding professionalism of staff. The Code of Conduct includes how to deal with certain situations including one to one tuition and other vulnerable situations and should ensure that staff do not put themselves in a position where allegations could be made against them.

The Confidential Reporting Policy explains how and under what circumstances staff should report other staff regarding safeguarding concerns. Staff must understand that reporting a safeguarding concern, even if it is regarding a colleague, is part of their statutory safeguarding duties. These documents can be found with the Safeguarding Policy in the policies area on the school network and on the policies area of the school website.

3. Safeguarding Roles

Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The key elements of the role of the DSL (with reference to Annex C of KCSIE 2025) are to:

- take **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety).
- provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters
- take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings (and/or to support other staff to do so) and to contribute to the assessment of children.

Deputy designated safeguarding leads

All deputy DSLs are trained to the same standard as the lead DSL. Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL's) work alongside the DSL and would perform all the following roles in their absence. The DDSL would take lead responsibility of any concerns that involved the immediate family member of the DSL.

Whilst the activities of the DSL are sometimes delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate **lead responsibility** for child protection, as set out above, remains with the lead DSL. This **lead responsibility** will not be delegated.

Manage referrals

The DSL will:

- Refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care as required;
- Support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care;
- Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required;
- Support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme;
- Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required; and
- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.
 - Be responsible for online safety in school.
 - With school leavers or new starters, the DSL (with the help of the Admissions Officer) will request or pass on any safeguarding records within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within 5 days of the start of a new term.

Work with others

- Liaise with the PLT and/or Principal to inform them of issues, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This includes being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult. Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - [PACE Code C 2019](#)
- As required, liaise with the "case manager" and the designated officer(s) (LADO) at the local authority for child protection concerns (all cases which concern a staff member); and
- Liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff.

Undertake training

The DSL (and any deputies) undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. The DSL's complete a Level 3 DSL course at least every two years.

The DSLs have also all undertaken Prevent awareness training.

In addition to this formal training, DSLs knowledge and skills are refreshed at regular intervals, as required, but at least annually, (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding documentation) to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role so they:

- Understand the assessment process for providing early help assessment and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as early help assessments;
- Have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so;
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands this child protection policy and school safeguarding procedures, especially new and part time staff;
- Are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers;
- Are able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals;
- Understand and support the school with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation;
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses; and
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school may put in place to protect them.

Raise Awareness

- DSLs will ensure the school's child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately;
- Ensure the school's child protection policy is reviewed at least annually and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies or proprietors regarding this;
- Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this; and
- Link with the Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) (previously known as the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, [LSCB]) – to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding.

Child protection file

Where children leave school, the DSL will ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within 5 days of the start of a new term to allow the new school or college to continue supporting children who have had a social worker and been victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file. Receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as DSLs and special educational needs co-ordinators

(SENCOs) or the named persons with oversight for SEN in a college, are aware as required. In addition to the child protection file, the DSL should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting children who have had a social worker and been victims of abuse, or those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

The DSL, working with the registrar, will also request any child protection/safeguarding information from the previous school or college of a child who joins Westholme via a Microsoft Form. The Form gives the option of requesting a call back from the DSL or Head of Year.

Availability

During term time the DSL (or a deputy) will always be available (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Many key staff are trained at DSL Level and an appropriate nominee will act in case of absence of lead and deputy DSLs; see list of DSL trained staff below in Section 6 of this policy.

Governing Body

The Governing body have a strategic leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements and must ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation. The Governors' responsibilities to facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding are to:

- nominate a Governor responsible for child protection and responsible for monitoring the child protection and safeguarding policies of the school. This is currently Dr Richard Dobrashian.
- ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.
- recognise the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis. Opportunity should therefore be provided for staff to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and child protection policy.
- ensure internet filters are not 'overblocking' which could place unreasonable restrictions on what children can be taught with regards to online teaching and safeguarding. Whilst considering their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, the governing body should be doing all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to online risks from the school's IT system. As part of this process, the governing body ensures that Westholme has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and regularly reviews their effectiveness, at least annually. They ensure that the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified. The governing body should consider the age range of their children, the number of children, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs verses safeguarding risks.
- ensure this child protection policy reflects the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with child on child abuse and also ensure sexting and the school's approach to it is reflected in this policy.
- audit implementation and compliance of this policy and other relevant safeguarding policies and review them annually, including a full report to the Governors' meeting
- ensure that their safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority (LA), as set up by the SCP.

- appoint a DSL and ensure they are given sufficient time, funding, supervision and support
- ensure that a member of the governing body liaises with the LA and any other partner agencies on issues of child protection if an allegation of abuse is made against the Principle.
- will ensure the staff code of conduct, behaviour policies and safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented effectively, and ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and facilitate a whole school approach to dealing with any concerns.
- ensure that allegations against staff and volunteers are made to the Local Authority designated officer (LADO)
- have procedures in place to make referrals to the DBS if a person has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns (this is a legal duty and failure to refer when the criteria are met is a criminal offence)
- ensure they keep their safeguarding training qualifications up to date. This training will provide them with the knowledge to ensure that Westholme's safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding (see Appendix I).
- Governing bodies and proprietors should be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty²³), and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to and contains the Articles and protocols of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) (the Convention) that are deemed to apply in the UK. It compels public organisations to respect and protect an individual's human rights when they make individual decisions about them. Under the HRA, it is unlawful for schools and colleges to act in a way that is incompatible with the Convention. The specific convention rights applying to schools and colleges are:

- Article 3: the right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment (an absolute right)
- Article 8: the right to respect for private and family life (a qualified right) includes a duty to protect individuals' physical and psychological integrity
- Article 14: requires that all of the rights and freedoms set out in the Act must be protected and applied without discrimination, and
- Protocol 1, Article 2: protects the right to education. Being subjected to harassment, violence and or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of these rights, depending on the nature of the conduct and the circumstances. According to the Equality Act, schools and colleges must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).

Whilst all of the above protections are important, in the context of safeguarding, this guidance, and the legal duties placed on schools and colleges in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, governing bodies and proprietors should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils and students with regard to particular protected characteristics - including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race. (Also see Equality Opportunities Policy).

The role of school staff

- School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children's welfare and prevent concerns from escalating.
- **All** school staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
- The DSL will provide support to staff members to carry out their safeguarding duties.
- **All** school staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from Early Help Assessment (EHA). Early help assessment means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. In the first instance, staff should discuss early help assessment requirements with the DSL. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment.
- **Any staff member** who has a concern about a child's welfare should follow the referral processes set out in this policy. Staff may be required to support social workers and other agencies following any referral.
- The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers, including headteachers, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

4. Definitions of Abuse:

The difficulty lies in establishing the boundaries between unprofessional behaviour and abuse (where staff are involved) and between careless and cruel actions and abuse (where parents and others are involved). Staff and employees should not make such judgements and must always refer suspicions and allegations of abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will make an initial assessment of the known evidence.

An abused child is a boy or girl under the age of 18 years who has suffered, or is likely to suffer, physical neglect, failure to thrive, emotional or sexual abuse which any person caused or knowingly failed to prevent. This would include abuse of a child/young person by a stranger and abuse of a child/young person by a child/young person. A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable concern to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm (See Policy to Prevent Bullying).

The law recognises four broad categories of abuse:

- **Neglect**
- **Physical Injury**
- **Sexual Abuse**
- **Emotional Abuse**

It must be emphasised that these categories can, and often do, overlap. These types of abuse are explained in more detail further within this policy.

5. Training and support

Staff

See Appendix I for full outline of training requirements for Westholme Staff

In line with KCSIE and LA guidance, Westholme will ensure that Designated Safeguarding Leads regularly attend child protection and inter-agency working training and updates relevant to their role and at least annually. Safer

Recruitment training is taken at least every two years for appropriate staff including governors (those involved in the recruitment of staff). Please see the Safer Recruitment Policy for a list of trained staff.

All staff will receive training at least every three years on Child Protection, but all Westholme staff also receive formal annual safeguarding updates including online safety, prevent duty and some staff are required to have completed training in other areas such as FGM and CSE (see Appendix I). All new staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, are given training as part of their induction which includes:

- child protection policy (which should amongst other things also include the policy and procedures to deal with child on child abuse)
- behaviour policy (and anti-bullying policy which includes measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- staff code of conduct including low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing policy
- safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods and role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).
- The identity of the DSLs

Copies of policies and a copy of KCSIE 2025 - Part one (and Annex A, if appropriate) will be provided to all staff at induction and then annually and all staff sign a confirmation statement to agree that they have read and understood the relevant information for their role within Westholme.

Other training will be given as and when it seems appropriate for specific areas of safeguarding (e.g. radicalisation, cyber-bullying, mental health (self-harm, depression, anorexia etc.).

All staff have read at least part one of KCSIE (September 2025)

For DSLs overseeing EYFS they must ensure their training is consistent with the Early years foundation stage statutory framework Annex C.

Pupils, Parents and Staff

The PSHE (including RSE) programme, whole school and Year assemblies, curriculum lessons, notices around school and on form room notice boards and areas on the school website are all used to address and educate everyone in the dangers facing young people today (including consent, online safety, CSE, radicalisation, managing risks etc.) and how to safeguard against them. The school's Online Safety coordinator (Miss S Cooper) also ensures that staff, students and parents are regularly updated regarding internet safety and CSE concerns. Miss Cooper's regular online safety letters to parents (also sent to staff) are used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online.

6. Designated Safeguarding Lead trained staff

School Site	Name	Role	Expiry Date
<u>WHOLE SCHOOL</u> <u>LEAD</u> Based at Seniors	<u>Mrs R Moody</u> moodyr@westholmeschool.com	Wellbeing Advisor	19/07/26

DEPUTY WHOLE SCHOOL LEAD Based at Prep	<u>Mrs C Hornby</u> <u>hornbyc@westholmeschool.com</u>	Head of Prep	09/01/27
DEPUTY WHOLE SCHOOL LEAD Based at Seniors	<u>Mrs J Gough</u> <u>goughj@westholmeschool.com</u>	Assistant Head - Strategic Wellbeing Lead	21/12/27
Deputy DSL Leads Based at Seniors	<u>Mr P Taylor</u> <u>principal@westholmeschool.com</u>	Principal	04/09/26
	<u>Mrs L Cowan</u> <u>cowanl@westholmeschool.com</u>	Senior Deputy Head	06/10/26
Deputy DSL Lead (incl. EYFS) Based at Prep	<u>Mrs J Dixon</u> <u>dixonj@westholmeschool.com</u>	Deputy Head - Prep	30/01/28
	Mr J Oracz <u>oraczj@westholmeschool.com</u>	Head of Sixth Form	02/09/26
	Dr P Watson <u>watsonp@westholmeschool.com</u>	Head of Year 12/13	30/08/26
	Mr O Kenyon <u>kenyono@westholmeschool.com</u>	Head of Year 11	22/04/27
	Mrs B Rigby <u>rigbyb@westholmeschool.com</u>	Head of Year 11	03/04/27
	Miss S Cooper <u>coopers@westholmeschool.com</u>	Head of Year 10	22/07/26
	Mr J Fialho <u>fialhoj@westholmeschool.com</u>	Head of Year 9	29/08/26
	Mrs S Burton <u>burtons@westholmeschool.com</u>	Assistant Head of Year 9	26/12/26
	Miss N Davies <u>daviesn@westholmeschool.com</u>	Head of Year 8	27/08/26
	Mrs J Santi <u>santij@westholmeschool.com</u>	Assistant Head of Year 8	23/08/26
	Mrs A Moore <u>moorea@westholmeschool.com</u>	Head of Year 7	01/09/26
	Mr M Zourmand <u>zourmandm@westholmeschool.com</u>	Assistant Head of Year 7	29/08/26
	Mrs A Cunliffe <u>cunliffea@westholmeschool.com</u>	SEND CO	25/10/26
	Mrs V Davenport <u>davenportv@westholmeschool.com</u>	Commercial Director	15/05/28
	Mrs A Holland <u>hollanda@westholmeschool.com</u>	Head of Performing Arts	30/10/26
	Mrs C Jackson <u>jacksonc@westholmeschool.com</u>	Creative Arts Teacher	30/07/26
	Miss A Harfield <u>harfielda@westholmeschool.com</u>	Criminology Teacher	30/08/26
	Mrs A Gartold	Cleaning Manager	04/02/28

	gartolda@westholmeschool.com		
Prep	Mrs H Ahmed ahmedh@westholmeschool.com	Prep Teaching Assistant	09/12/26
Safeguarding Governor	Dr R Dobrashian dobrashianr@westholmeschool.com	Safeguarding Governor	10/08/26
Deputy Safeguarding Governor	Mrs E Barker barkere@westholmeschool.com	Deputy Safeguarding and Wellbeing Governor	14/03/28

7. School Child Protection Procedures

What should staff do if they have any concerns about a child or young person in school?

Education professionals, staff or parents who are concerned about a child's welfare or who believe that a child is or may be at risk of abuse, exploitation or neglect may make a referral to external agencies themselves if they wish (all relevant contact details/procedures contained within this policy – Section 27) or should pass any information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in school; this should always occur immediately. Staff should fill in a "Child Protection Incident Reporting Form" (Appendix B) if appropriate. **If at any time there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral should be made to children's social care immediately.** If anyone other than the DSL makes the referral they should inform the DSL, as soon as possible. The local authority should make a decision within one working day of a referral being made about what course of action they are taking and should let the referrer know the outcome. Staff should follow up on a referral should that information not be forthcoming. If after a referral the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL (or the person that made the referral) should press for re-consideration to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves.

Staff must report any concerns, whether they believe them to be a child protection issue or not through the record of concern form (Appendix A) or by informing the DSL verbally or via email, and with EYFS children, the pupil injury sustained out of school form (appendix J) if appropriate. The DSL for the school site will collate these records using MyConcern and look for patterns or multiple concerns and act accordingly. Records of actions taken (or reasons why no action was taken) are recorded here too. Staff know not to promise confidentiality to a child when any form of abuse is reported to them as this is not in the child's best interests.

Feedback to staff who reported concerns to Designated Safeguarding Lead

Rules of confidentiality mean that it may not always be possible or appropriate for the DSL to feedback to staff who report concerns to them. Such information will be shared on a "need to know" basis only and the DSL will decide on which information needs to be shared, when and with whom. The primary purpose of confidentiality in this context is to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

Role of the DSL in making an urgent initial assessment

The Designated Safeguarding Lead may carry out an urgent initial assessment of all cases referred to them (using the form that can be found in Appendix C, if appropriate). The purpose of this assessment is to discover: the

nature of the suspicion or allegation, the validity of the suspicion or allegation based on the evidence, the likelihood of future harm to the child. The DSL may refer to the confidential files on issues of child protection (held by the main DSL (Deputy Head at Seniors or Prep); they may refer to school medical records, registers and pupil files. They may talk discreetly with staff or pupils to ascertain relevant information without revealing the nature of the enquiry.

This is not an investigation, although the child and staff might have to be interviewed (See guidance below).

A written record of the urgent initial assessment may be made if appropriate (appendix C), including signed statements where appropriate, which will be kept by the DSL. On the basis of the urgent initial assessment the DSL, usually in consultation with the Principal, will decide an appropriate course of action which might involve referring the matter to an outside agency or implementing disciplinary procedures with staff.

The urgent initial assessment must be completed promptly and within 24 hours of the allegation or suspicion being reported. If a welfare agency does need to be informed, this must also happen within 24 hours of a disclosure or suspicion of abuse.

If it is clear that the nature of the case is a child protection matter then the referral should be made immediately, with no delay being caused by the completion of paperwork.

The DSL may choose to ring the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team or other agency for advice on a specific case. The agency may request it be escalated straight to a child protection referral, in which case the urgent initial assessment would be bypassed and a child protection referral completed instead.

Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the DSL or a deputy. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Thresholds for referral to Children's Services

Where a Designated Safeguarding Lead or line manager considers that a referral to Children's Services may be required, there are two thresholds for and types of referral that need to be considered:

1) Is this a Child in Need?

Under section 17 (s.17 (10)) of the Children Act 1989, a child is in need if:

They are 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.

2) Is this a Child Protection Matter?

Under section 47 (1) of the Children Act 1989, a local authority has a duty to make enquiries where they are informed that a child who lives or is found in their area:

- a) Is the subject of an Emergency Protection Order;
- b) Is in Police Protection; or where they have:

- c) Reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

It is the “significant harm threshold” that justifies statutory intervention into family life. The DSL will make judgments around “significant harm”, levels of “need” and when to refer. Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to children’s social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately. Referrals should follow the local referral process.

Children’s social care assessments should consider where children are being harmed in contexts outside the home, so it is important that schools and colleges provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm.

High Risk Indicators and Underlying Risk Factors can be found in Appendix K. These may also help staff and the DSL in determining the level of need.

Making referrals to Children’s Services (Even if a referral is not made it is vital that concerns are reassessed when situations do not improve. The sharing of information quickly is imbedded within the culture of the school and inaction challenged).

Guidance for the Designated Safeguarding Lead

1) Child in Need/ Section 17 Referrals

It is important that the relevant information is sent to the correct agencies. It is very important therefore, that the home address of the child/children involved is taken into account.

There are slightly different Early Help Assessment Forms (EHAF) and processes for accessing help from various agencies. If the child lives in Lancashire (but not Blackburn with Darwen) then the DSL should complete an EHAF form and email to: eha@lancashire.gov.uk Info can be found at: <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/practitioners/supporting-children-and-families/>

If the child/children live within Blackburn with Darwen the **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** team should be contacted via email at cypreferrals@blackburn.gov.uk or Tel (01254) 666400, Emergency Duty Team on (01254) 587547. Referral forms can be found at [3.1 Making a Referral to Children's Social Care \(proceduresonline.com\)](https://proceduresonline.com)

If they live outside Lancashire e.g. Greater Manchester/North Yorkshire etc. then the correct forms must be completed – these can be found on the websites in the contact information at the end of this policy before the appendices.

This is a request for assessment/ support/services and, as such, consent must be obtained from the parent(s)/carers (and child/young person when appropriate), this should be identified on the EHAF. It is important to emphasise that the EHAF /TAF processes are about working together with the family – it is not something that is done to the family.

Where a parent/carer/child/young person refuses to consent, you should make clear your ongoing plans and responsibilities in respect of support, monitoring, etc, and the possibility of a child protection referral at some point in future if things deteriorate or do not improve.

This referral could be made if it is felt that the child/family are at Level 2 on the CoN (Continuum of Need) and should definitely made if they are at Level 3. All DSLs have copies of the CoNs and they can also be found on the local safeguarding websites.

TAF meetings must take place within 4 weeks of the EHAF being registered.

2) Child Protection/Section 47 Referral

This referral must be made if it is felt that the child/family are at Level 4 on the CoN and should be made **immediately**.

Make a telephone call to Lancashire Safeguarding Children board: 0845 0530009 (Out of hours: 0845 602 1043). Or on the number found in the contact section of this document for children who live outside of this area.

You will speak to a Customer Care officer whose role is to receive your referral information, enter it onto the appropriate IT system and forward to the relevant Social Work team Leader for consideration:

You should still complete an EHAF form and should forward this as soon as possible and certainly within 48 hours.

You **do not** require the consent of a parent/carer or child/ young person to make a child protection referral.

A Children's Social Care Referral Form should be completed and emailed to cypreferrals@lancashire.gov.uk

A parent/carer should, under most circumstances, be informed by the referrer that a child protection referral is to be made. The criteria for not informing parents/carers are:

- a) Because this would increase the risk of significant harm to a child/ to children; or
- b) Because in the referrer's professional opinion, to do so might impede an investigation that may need to be undertaken;
- c) Because there would be undue delay caused by seeking consent which would not serve the child's best interests.

The best interest of the child is the primary consideration. We encourage joint working with parents where possible. Fear of jeopardizing a relationship with parents because of a need to refer is not sufficient justification for not telling them that you need to refer. On the contrary, this lack of openness will do little to foster ongoing trust, particularly as the source of referrals will be disclosed to parents except in a limited number of circumstances. If you feel that your own or another adult's immediate safety would be placed at risk by informing parents/carers, then you should seek advice and /or make this clear on the forms and in any telephone contacts with Children's Services Tel: 0845 053 0009.

The population of Blackburn with Darwen/Lancashire/Greater Manchester etc. is multicultural. Race, ethnicity and culture should be taken into consideration by all agencies working to safeguard children and to promote their welfare.

The assessment process should have as an integral part the way in which different ethnic and cultural groups are influenced in their values, attitudes and behaviour by their religious beliefs and cultural traditions and the way in which family and community life is structured and organised. Professionals need a proper understanding of these influences and how they are likely to affect families. They should also be aware of the strengths and support systems available within families, ethnic groups and communities that can be built upon to help safeguard children and promote their welfare. At the same time, it is essential to maintain a focus on the needs of the individual child.

Culture does not explain, or condone, acts of commission or omission that put a child at risk of significant harm. Professionals should guard against myths and stereotypes (both positive and negative) of black and ethnic minority families. Neither should a fear of being accused of racist practice prevent the necessary action being taken to safeguard a child. Careful assessment, based on evidence, of a child's needs and a family's strengths and weaknesses, will help to avoid any distorting effect of these influences on professional judgements.

8. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is paramount when working in the context of child protection.

1) Training in safeguarding will ensure that every adult working in the school understands the need for and basic principles regarding confidentiality.

This will include:

- Why a member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a child.
- What they should say to a child who asks the adult to keep a secret and how the child should be advised that the information may need to be shared with others. (See guidance procedures below)
- who needs to be given this information
- Who should be contacted

2) It has been recognised that professionals can only work together to safeguard children if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. Any disclosure of personal information to others (including Children's Social Care services), must always have regard to both common and statute law.

3) Normally, personal information should only be disclosed to third parties (including other agencies) with the consent of the subject of that information (*Data Protection Act 2018, European Convention on Human Rights, Article 8*). Wherever possible, consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances, consent may not be possible or desirable but the safety and welfare of a child dictates that the information should be shared. The law permits the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child or children. Disclosure should be justifiable in each case, according to the particular facts of the case, and legal advice should be sought if in doubt.

9. Records and Monitoring

Clear records are essential to good child protection practice. Westholme is clear about the need to record any concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions held about a child or children within our school, the status of such records and when these records, or parts thereof, should be shared with other agencies.

- Child protection concerns are recorded by the DSL/Pastoral team on 'MyConcern' a secure online platform showing concern about the welfare or behaviour of a child.
- Staff need to be aware that these files are confidential and are there as a help to relevant staff, and as such are not public records.
- These files are subject to strict gate keeping procedures and may only be viewed by authorised staff. DSL trained staff and SLT members have **DSL** access to MyConcern.
- 'Pupil Injury sustained outside of school' records (see appendix J) will be filled in by a member of staff at Lower Prep when a pupil comes into school with a visible injury sustained outside of school. Parents will be asked to contribute information to this by filling in and signing an 'Accident at home' slip (these will be stapled to the completed Appendix J sheet). These records will be kept in a 'Pupil Injury sustained outside of School' file, which is held and monitored by the DSL. Any noticeable patterns may illicit a cause for concern being logged.
- The monitoring of the administration is the responsibility of the DSL
- Monitoring records indicate sufficient concerns to warrant a referral when the DSL and the Principal consider that the child is at risk of significant harm and that the school cannot support and protect the child.
- If a child transfers to another school their child protection file must be sent to the DSL of their new school.
- Every child's previous school (outside of Westholme School where there are already rigorous transition procedures in place) is contacted to ask if there are any safeguarding records to share. The Deputy Head of Seniors or Prep will follow up any instances where there is information to share to ensure the quick and efficient transfer of this information.

10. Allegations of abuse made against other children

Children are capable of abusing their peers. If there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm because of suspected abuse by one or more pupils against them then child protection procedures will be actioned. This includes referring any such abuse to the LA as a child protection concern. In the event of child on child abuse, all children, whether perpetrator or victim, will be treated as being 'at risk'.

Child on child abuse can manifest itself in many ways, such as bullying, online bullying, sexual violence, sexual harassment, physical abuse, up-skirting, sexting (youth-produced sexual imagery), initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. It should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter" or "part of growing up".

At Westholme School, there is a culture of respect and good behaviour and very clear rules that pupils know to follow (but a clear sanctions systems when behaviour expectations fall short - see Behaviour Policy).

Victims of child on child abuse will be supported in the same way as any person who has suffered abuse (see 'Children who have been the victims of abuse' section below).

11. Staff Guidance on dealing with Safeguarding

Talking and Listening to Children:

Guidance for staff interviewing pupils

If a child wants to confide in you, you **SHOULD**

- Be accessible and receptive;
- Listen carefully and uncritically, at the child's pace;
- Take what is said seriously;
- Reassure children that they are right to tell;
- Tell the child that you must pass this information on;
- Make sure that the child is safe;
- Make a careful record of what was said.

You should **NEVER**

- Make promises about confidentiality or keeping "secrets" to children;
- Ask leading questions (i.e. questions requiring only a 'yes' or 'no' answer)
- Investigate or seek to prove or disprove possible abuse;
- Assume that someone else will take the necessary action;
- Jump to conclusions, be dismissive or react with shock, anger, horror etc;
- Speculate or accuse anybody;
- Investigate, suggest or probe for information;
- Confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved;
- Offer opinions about what is being said or the persons allegedly involved;
- Forget to record what you have been told;
- Fail to pass this information on to the correct person (The Designated Safeguarding Lead)

Recording should

- State who was present, time, date and place;
- Be written in ink and be signed by the recorder;
- Be passed to the DSL or Principal immediately (or certainly within 24hrs)
- Use the child's words wherever possible;
- Be factual/state exactly what was said;
- Differentiate clearly between fact, opinion, interpretation, observation and/or allegation.

What information do you need to obtain?

- Schools have no investigative role in child protection (Police and Children's Integrated services will investigate possible abuse very thoroughly and in great detail, they will gather evidence)
- Never prompt or probe for information, your job is to listen, record and pass on;
- Ideally, you should be clear about what is being said in terms of **who, what, where and when;**
- The question you should be able to answer at the end of the listening process is **"might this child be a child protection matter?"**
- If the answer is yes, or if you are not sure, record and pass on immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Principal/Deputy Head of Prep.

If you do need to ask questions, what is and is not ok?

- **Never** ask closed questions (i.e. ones where children can answer yes or no to. E.g. Did he touch you?)
- **Never** make suggestions about who, how or where someone is alleged to have touched, hit etc.
- If we must, use only **minimal prompts** such as: Go on.../ tell more about.../ tell me everything that you remember about that...
- Timescales are very important: “When **was the last time this happened?** Is an important question.

What else should we think about in relation to disclosure?

- Is there a place in school which is particularly suitable for listening to children?
- We need to think carefully about our own body language- how we present will dictate how comfortable a child feels in telling us about something which may be extremely frightening, difficult and personal;
- Be prepared to answer the “what happens next” question.
- We should never make face-value judgements or assumptions about individual children. For example, we know that (child.....) tells lies;
- Think about how you might react if a child DID approach you in school. We need to be prepared to offer a child in this position exactly what they need in terms of protection, reassurance, calmness and objectivity;
- Think about what support you could access if faced with this kind of situation in school.

All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. With regards to any disclosures of child on child on abuse, it is important to explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

Staff should be aware of the importance of understanding intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents.

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 could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child.

12. Early help assessment

Any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
- has a mental health need

- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care,
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- 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 and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child.

13. Supporting Pupils at risk

Westholme recognises that children who are abused or who witness abuse or violence may find it difficult to have a positive outlook on life and to have high self-esteem. School may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Whilst at school they may still present with challenging and defiant behaviour.

It is also recognised that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a measured, careful approach so that the child can receive appropriate help and support.

Westholme will endeavour to support pupils through:

- a) The curriculum to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation.
- b) The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and safe environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued.
- c) The implementation of the school behaviour management policy.
- d) A consistent approach, which recognises and separates the cause of behaviour from that which is displayed.
- e) Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the pupils and their families,
- f) A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, wherever possible and as long as it is in the child's best interests to do so.
- g) The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable pastoral staff trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.

We recognise that children with behavioural difficulties, disabilities or certain health conditions are particularly vulnerable to abuse. School staff who work, in any capacity, with children with profound and multiple disabilities,

sensory impairment and/or emotional and behaviour problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse. Children with SEND have a higher risk of being left out, of being isolated from their peers, and they are disproportionately affected by bullying.

All staff have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and or alcohol misuse, Unexplained and/or persistent absences from education and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk.

It must also be noted that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, family members in prison or those going through the court system, county lines criminal activity and being homeless or at risk of being homeless, children may also be particularly vulnerable and in need of support or protection.

School Counsellor

Westholme School employs a School Counsellor three days a week, predominantly at Seniors for any child who requires extra support. The referrals to this counsellor will be decided ultimately by the Deputy Head but made in conjunction with the Heads of Year, Deputy Head of Prep and the School Nurse.

The use of 'reasonable force'

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools and colleges 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 needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom. The decision on whether or not to use reasonable force to control or restrain a child is down to the professional judgement of the staff concerned within the context of the law and should always depend on individual circumstances.

When using reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), mental health or with medical conditions, schools and colleges should in considering the risks carefully recognise the additional vulnerability of these groups. They should also consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to making reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and their Public Sector Equality Duty. By planning positive and proactive behaviour support, for instance through drawing up individual behaviour plans for more vulnerable children, and agreeing them with parents and carers, schools and colleges can reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use reasonable force.

When reasonable force has been used a form should be completed and passed to the Lead DSL (see appendix L).

14. Types Of Abuse and Neglect

All school staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and exploitation are rarely standalone events that cannot be covered by one definition or label alone. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another, therefore staff should always be vigilant and always raise any concerns with their designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

Definitions:

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

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

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

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

[CSA Centre: Resources for Education Settings](#)

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as

a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion 13 from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

All staff have an awareness of safeguarding issues- some of which are listed below. Staff are aware that behaviours linked to the likes of drug taking, alcohol abuse, truancy and sexting put children in danger.

Possible indicators of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation:

See the NSPCC's child protection fact sheet 'Signs of child abuse' (www.nspcc.org.uk/signsofabuse) for further information.

Physical Abuse:

There can never be a definitive list of indicators of physical abuse but the following are cause for concern. The indicators can be divided into physical and behavioural indicators;

Physical Indicators:

- Unexplained bruises, marks, welts, lacerations, abrasions
- On face, lips, mouth
- On torso, back, buttocks, thighs
- In various stages of healing
- Clustering forming regular patterns
- Reflecting shape of article used e.g. belt, buckle, and electrical flex
- On several different surface areas
- Regularly appear after absence, weekends, or holiday
- Bite marks or fingernail marks
- Cigar, cigarette burns especially on soles, buttocks, palms or back
- Immersion' burns, where hands and feet or body have been forcibly immersed in very hot water
- Patterned like electrical burner, iron etc.
- Rope burns on arms, legs, back or torso
- Unexplained fractures to nose, skull, and facial structure in various stages of healing
- See separate section within policy for indicators of FGM

Behavioural/Emotional indicators:

- Significant changes in the child's behaviour
- Difficult to comfort
- Apprehension when other children cry
- Above normal crying/irritability
- Frightened of carers/parents
- Afraid to go home
- Rebelliousness
- Behavioural extremes - aggressiveness-withdrawal - impulsiveness
- Regresses to child-like behaviour
- Apathy
- Depression/poor peer relationships

- Panics in response to pain
- Refusal to discuss/improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Talking about punishment which seems excessive
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Self destructive tendencies
- Chronic running away
- Children's comments which give cause for concern

Emotional Abuse:

Physical indicators:

- Failure to thrive
- Not growing or putting on weight
- Delays in physical development or progress
- Behavioural/Emotional Indicators:
- Physical, mental and emotional developmental delay
- Talk about being punished in a way that seems excessive
- Overreact to mistakes
- Develop sudden speech difficulties
- Show fear of new situations
- Show inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Demonstrate neurotic behaviour - rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking.
- Self-mutilation
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Show extremes of passivity or aggression
- Become involved in drink/drug abuse
- Chronic running away
- Compulsive stealing
- Scavenging for food
- Be seen to 'buy' affection
- Deterioration in general well-being

Emotional abuse causes damage to emotions and feelings and because it is difficult to measure it is the most difficult form of abuse to prove. Parents and carers can emotionally abuse children by being cold and unloving and not giving or returning love and affection. They may show an active dislike of a child by being rude and unpleasant all or most of the time, being negative and always complaining instead of praising. Equally can be inconsistent by being loving one day and very unpleasant the next. Often one child in the family becomes the 'scapegoat' or focus of family unpleasantness.

Sexual Abuse:

Physical indicators:

- Pregnancy
- Sickness

- Excessive crying
- Difficulty in walking/sitting down
- Stained or bloody underclothing
- Pain or itching in genital area

Behavioural / emotional indicators:

The possible emotional/behavioural signs of possible sexual abuse are likely to vary according to the extent of the abuse, the duration of the abuse and their age. Children of different ages have different levels of knowledge and understanding about sexual matters this means that sexual abuse will impact differently on a young child compared to an adolescent.

Children aged 11+

- Hint about secrets they cannot tell
- Say that a friend has a problem
- Ask if you will keep a secret if they tell you something
- Begin lying, stealing, blatantly cheating in the hope of being caught
- Have unexplained sources of money
- Start wetting/soiling
- Show sudden, inexplicable changes in behaviour, such as becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Stop enjoying previously liked activities such as music, sport, and gym
- Be reluctant to undress for PE
- Become fearful of, refuse to see certain adults for no apparent reason
- Act in a sexual way inappropriate to their age
- Draw sexually explicit pictures depicting some act of abuse
- Write about sexual acts that is inappropriate to their age
- Seem old beyond their years
- Develop eating disorders
- Become depressed and even attempt suicide
- Have a poor self-image, self-mutilate
- Continually run away
- Regress to younger behaviour patterns
- Surround themselves with previously discarded cuddly toys
- Say that they are no good, evil, dirty
- Engage in criminal behaviour
- Use drink and drugs to excess
- Unable to concentrate
- Have low self esteem
- Sexually abuse themselves
- These lists are not exhaustive.

Neglect:

Neglect is not always easy to recognise, but the following may cause concern when considered in relation to the age of the child.

- Constant hunger
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate dress
- Poor state of clothing
- Consistent lack of supervision
- Unattended physical problems or medical needs
- Abandonment
- Weight problems
- Stealing food
- Constant fatigue, listlessness
- Problems in relationship with caregiver
- Regularly not collected on time from school
- Frequent lateness, non-attendance at school
- Destructive tendencies
- Low self esteem
- Neurotic behaviour - rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking
- Begging

15. Domestic Violence/Abuse (DV/DA)

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Key indicators and signs would be the same as those for the types of abuse above. 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). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

Also see other signs of abuse for specific issues such as CSE, CCE and radicalisation in the relevant sections below.

All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Education staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Where children have suffered abuse, neglect, exploitation or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, 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, behaviour and education. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy, and speaking

to the DSL or a deputy. Further information can be found in Westholme's Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy and in the 'Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools Guidance' found on www.gov.uk website.

Pupils are educated about online safety, radicalisation, safeguarding, child sexual exploitation, bullying and building resilience etc. These topics are embedded within PSHE, targeted assemblies/whole school focus days, the curriculum and subject specific areas such as online safety within the computing syllabus and radicalisation within the EPR syllabus etc. (See also Anti-Bullying Policy and PSHE Scheme of Work).

Westholme School has a very strong ethic amongst staff that children should be listened to. This stretches from support staff to class teachers to those with a larger pastoral responsibility such as Heads of Year (HoY), School Nurse and Senior Pastoral team. So, there are plenty of people for pupils to talk to. There is also a Student Council where children can make their voices heard too.

16. Online Safety (including Filtering and Monitoring)

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation- technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm. Our effective approach to online safety empowers us to protect and educate the whole school in our use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene and escalate any incident where appropriate.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four 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; 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: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- commerce - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>)

As we increasingly work online, it is essential that our pupils are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. As such, Westholme School has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place. The DSL takes responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems in place. The effectiveness of this is reviewed at least annually.

The DfE has published [Generative AI: product safety expectations to support schools to use generative artificial intelligence](#) safely, and explains how filtering and monitoring requirements apply to the use of generative AI in education.

Our pupils are regularly taught about safeguarding, including online, through our broad and balanced curriculum including PSHE. The firewalls and monitoring systems we have in place also ensure that access to inappropriate sites are blocked (through 'lightspeed relay') and use of computers monitored (with concerns flagged by a company, 'Smoothwall' via email to the DSL and concerns over staff sent to the Principal). Westholme understands that, although there is a need to ensure appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place; we are careful that "over blocking" does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what our pupils can be taught with regards to online teaching and safeguarding.

We recognise that children could use data on their phones during school time so have therefore banned the use of mobile phones during the school day from the Primary phase until the end of Y10. Y11 and Sixth Form students may use their phones at break and lunchtimes in their year group areas. All pupils receive a copy of an age-appropriate Acceptable Usage Policy at the start of every new school year. Policies are discussed with class teachers/form tutors and copies are sent home to parents. The policies clearly state the behavioural expectations regarding online activity (and for those pupils of appropriate age, both using the school internet and their own personal 3G, 4G and 5G internet access devices, including when not on-site). Sanctions are explained in the AUP and also on the School's sanctions consequences system which can be found in the Behaviour Policy.

Sexting – Older pupils are taught about the dangers of (and potential for being prosecuted if caught) sexting in PSHE, during assemblies, form time, from outside speakers etc. Current guidance from the LA is that sexting issues should be dealt with within school unless an imbalance of power exists between those involved and is therefore a potential safeguarding risk. Safeguarding concerns regarding sexting would be referred to children's services via MASH. Staff are aware that online abuse can be perpetrated by children and not just adults.

All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life. Children can also abuse their peers online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content. In all cases, if staff are unsure, they should always speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

For more information see the school's Online Safety Policy.

17. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Sexual Violence And Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), Gangs and County Lines

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

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

abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. They do not always inform physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology (*Department for Education guidance on Child sexual exploitation issued in February 2017*). Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online. More information includes definitions and indicators are included in Annex A of KCSiE (September 2025).

Child Sexual Exploitation – CSE

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet. CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship

There are particular concerns within the local area of Blackburn about the rising number of cases of this sort of abuse. The school has very strong links with the 'Engage' team in Blackburn. They are a specialist team dedicated to tackling sexual exploitation in Blackburn with Darwen. The team has workers from the Lancashire Care Foundation NHS Trust, Children's Services, Voluntary Sector and the Police. They provide advice, support and training for staff, students and parents. This has been delivered through whole school 'prevention of CSE' days, the PSHE programme and through numerous whole school and Year assemblies. The school's online safety coordinator (Miss S Cooper) also ensures that staff and students are regularly updated regarding internet safety and CSE concerns.

All staff must be aware of the threat of CSE and CCE and the signs that may be displayed by a child that is a victim of it.

Child Criminal Exploitation – CCE

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others. Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others.

As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to. It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

High risk indicators to CSE/CCE

The following signs and behaviour are generally seen in children who are already being sexually exploited:

- Physical injuries/repeat A&E attendance
- Involvement in offending/substance misuse
- Repeat sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations
- Change in physical appearance
- Evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through the internet and/or social networking sites
- Estranged from their family
- Receipt of gifts from unknown sources
- Recruiting others into exploitative situations
- Poor mental health/suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- Self-harm
- Thoughts or attempts at suicide
- Regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education

Underlying Risk Factors to CSE/CCE

The following are typical vulnerabilities in children prior to abuse:

- Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (including parental substance misuse, domestic violence, parental mental health issues, parental criminality)
- History of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of honour-based abuse, physical and emotional abuse, exploitation and neglect)
- Recent bereavement or loss
- Gang-association either through relatives, peers or intimate relationships (in cases of gang-associated CSE only)
- Learning disabilities
- Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families
- Homeless
- Lacking friends from the same age group
- Living in a gang neighbourhood
- Living in residential care, hostel or bed and breakfast accommodation
- Low self-esteem or self-confidence
- Young carer
- Poor school attendance
- Criminality

If there is a concern regarding any young person, a phone call to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team should be made. Appropriate screening will take place by the team. Depending on the level of risk they will progress through to a C&F assessment with social care and possibly the Engage team or will start an EHA if

appropriate. If neither of these options are appropriate then the Engage link worker can provide school with advice and/or resources to address the issues themselves within school but the link worker should not be completing 1:1 targeted direct work with young people unless it's at EHA, CiN or CP level (and unlikely at EHA level as ENGAGE would seek to signpost). There is an Engage social worker who can support MASH with the screening and decision making if necessary.

[The Children's Society – Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation](#)

Serious Violence

All staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include:

- unexplained and/or persistent absences from education
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups,
- a significant decline in performance,
- signs of self-harm,
- a significant change in wellbeing,
- signs of assault or unexplained injuries,
- unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation

All staff should be aware of the 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.

Gangs

Due to the school's broad catchment area and the places our students generally reside, Westholme students do not have a history of gang cultures within or outside of school. This does not however, mean staff should not be alert to signs and triggers that would indicate a gang culture developing or students becoming victim to pressures from a gang either face to face or via the internet. The warning signs (and actions required from staff) that a child is at risk are very similar to those for CSE and radicalisation (please see those sections for more information).

County Lines Criminal Activity

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children's homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily

become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism (<https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/modern-slavery-and-human-trafficking>) should be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation. Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office.

18. Child on Child Abuse (Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children)

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child on child abuse) and that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child on child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports. All staff should understand, that even if there are no reports in school it does not mean it is not happening; it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child on child abuse, they should speak to the DSL.

It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, many of which are listed below, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. Child on child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos (also known as sexting, AI deepfakes or youth produced sexual imagery);
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and

- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

All staff should be clear as to the school's policy and procedures with regards to child on child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it. Incidents involving sexual violence and/or sexual harassment between children will be dealt with as a child protection issue, although the alleged perpetrator may also require support.

Sexual violence is a criminal offence and anyone of any gender can be a victim. 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 risk and needs assessment should consider the victim, the alleged perpetrator and all other children. Records will be kept of the risks posed and adequate measures put in place to protect and keep children safe. For further details on how the victim and perpetrator will be supported see Anti-Bullying policy.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that **all** victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support.

Some situations are statutorily clear:

- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
- the age of consent is 16;
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape;
- rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are defined in law; and
- creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal (often referred to as sexting). This includes children making and sharing sexual images and videos of themselves.

When considering harmful sexual behaviours, ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors to consider. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature.

- It is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and more likely that sexual harassment will be perpetrated by boys.
- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can be especially vulnerable. Disabled and deaf children are three times more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can sometimes exist when recognising abuse in SEND children.

Children who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi, or Trans (LGBTQAI+) can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, a child who is perceived by their peers to be LGBTQAI+ (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBTQAI+. We endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced by children who are LGBTQAI+ and provide a safe space for them to speak and share their concerns with a member of staff.

Sexual violence refers to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

What is consent? Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs.

Sexual harassment refers to 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. 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.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual "jokes" or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment, which might include non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos and sharing sexual images and videos (both often referred to as sexting); inappropriate sexual comments on social media; exploitation; coercion and threats.

Prevention

During PSHE sessions and assemblies etc. the following are covered in an age-appropriate context:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence, upskirting or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"; and
- challenging behaviours (which are potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation has developed a [HSB toolkit](#), which amongst other things, provides support, advice and information on how to prevent it, links to organisations and helplines, resources about HSB by children, internet safety, sexual development and preventing child sexual abuse.

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation in collaboration with the Home Office, has developed '[Shore Space](#)', an online resource which works to prevent harmful sexual behaviour. Shore Space offers a confidential chat service supporting young people who are concerned about their own or someone else's sexual thoughts and behaviour.

The NSPCC provides free and independent advice about HSB: [NSPCC Learning: Protecting children from harmful sexual behaviour](#) and [NSPCC - Harmful sexual behaviour framework](#).

[Beyond Referrals](#) | Contextual Safeguarding provides a school self-assessment toolkit and guidance for addressing HSB in schools.

[StopItNow](#) – Preventing harmful sexual behaviour in children - Stop It Now provides a guide for parents, carers and professionals to help everyone do their part in keeping children safe, they also run a free confidential helpline.

It is the responsibility of all staff to challenge inappropriate behaviours. Not doing so can normalise these behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence. The initial response to a report from a child is incredibly important. How school responds to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment to report or come forward. Schools not recognising, acknowledging or understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and/or downplaying of some behaviours can actually lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Further guidance on responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment can be found in Part five of KCSiE (September 2025).

19. Prevent Duty and Radicalisation

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools' or colleges' safeguarding approach.

- The Government has defined extremism in the *Prevent* strategy “the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. It also includes calls for the death of members of the armed forces. Essentially, it's about promoting ideologies that undermine these core values”.
- Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- 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 or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

The "Prevent" strategy is a UK government initiative focused on stopping individuals from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It aims to safeguard vulnerable people from radicalization and to protect communities from extremist ideologies.

This section of Westholme School's Safeguarding policy takes due regard of HM Government's Prevent Duty Guidance document, 2023 and Channel Duty Guidance, 2023 and the Counterterrorism and Security Act (CTSA) 2015. Westholme School understands its responsibility to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Pupils are encouraged to regard people of all faiths, races and cultures with respect and tolerance. Whilst different people may hold different views about 'right and wrong', all people living in England are subject to its law.

At Westholme we will promote fundamental British values and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils by:

- Enabling students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence
- Enabling students to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England
- Encouraging students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and to understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality of the school and to society more widely
- Enabling students to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England
- Furthering tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling students to acquire an appreciation for and respect for their own and other cultures
- Encouraging respect for other people, and
- Encouraging respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.

Westholme School is however, mindful of existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues.

Some vulnerable students may become isolated or marginalized and as such could be at risk of exploitation by extremist groups. As part of our Safeguarding responsibility to ensure that all children are safe, we will work with other agencies such as Channel, to ensure that young people and their families are supported.

The Blackburn with Darwen 'Prevent' team are the providers of staff training at Westholme School (along with the Government online Prevent training courses). This training increases staff knowledge and confidence in identifying children at risk of being drawn into terrorism, and to challenge extremist ideas which can be used to legitimise terrorism. Staff know to treat concerns over radicalization as a safeguarding issue and to follow the standard school procedures for this. They can also report concerns directly to Children's Services or the police.

As with any instance of believing a child is at risk of significant harm, parental or pupil consent for a referral is not required. Referrals can also be made to the Channel programme (see useful contacts section below). Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages. In addition to information sharing, if a staff member makes a referral to Channel, they may be asked to attend a Channel panel to discuss the individual referred to determine whether support is required. If the concern is NOT AN IMMEDIATE SAFEGUARDING concern, then contact should initially be made with Leanne Romney (Prevent Support Officer (Education) for Blackburn with Darwen- Tel: 01254 585270/ Mobile: 07740 753900) to have a discussion about the best way forward. She will advise if a 'Cause for Concern' form needs to be completed or whether some other intervention would be more appropriate. If it is AN IMMEDIATE SAFEGUARDING concern, contact should be made with the police on 101/999.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many different ways and settings. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people. The three main drivers for radicalisation, however, have found to be ideology, grievance and motivation. Indicators of someone becoming radicalised however, could include:

- Disclosing their exposure to extremist actions
- Graffiti symbols, writing or artwork promoting extremist messages or images
- Accessing extremist material online
- Parental reports of changes in behaviour, friendships or actions and requests for assistance
- Pupils voicing opinions drawn from extremist ideologies and narratives
- Use of extremist or 'hate' terms to exclude others or incite violence
- Intolerance of difference, whether secular or religious or views based on, but not exclusive to, gender, disability, homophobia, race, colour or culture
- Attempts to impose extremist views on others
- Anti-British views
- A willingness to believe in conspiracy theories

The Safeguarding Committee add reported instances of extreme, racial or discriminatory behaviour/language used by pupils, staff and/or parents to MyConcern. This is analysed at each meeting to check for patterns or developing issues which may need intervention. Prevent guidance expects schools to ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet through school systems and to establish appropriate levels of monitoring and filtering. **We are confident that this is the case at Westholme and have stringent filters in place (see also Online Safety Policy).** We also pay an external company 'Smoothwall' to monitor staff and pupil use of computers. Reports regarding pupils are sent to the Pastoral Deputy Head (DSL)/ Online Safety Coordinator /Head and Deputy Heads of Prep and reports regarding staff to the Principal. This monitoring highlights the use of words connected with extremism, as well as other safeguarding concerns so issues can be dealt with swiftly and hopefully before they are given the chance to escalate.

Protocol for ensuring that any visiting speakers – whether invited by staff or by children themselves – are suitable and appropriately supervised includes all speakers being supervised unless it is felt detrimental to the session e.g. pupils are more likely to involve themselves more and ask more questions of a medical professional regarding sexually transmitted diseases if a member of school staff is not present. A risk assessment will be conducted if a member of staff is not going to supervise a visiting speaker and will only be passed if it is felt the risks are controlled. Checks could be carried out and if they are, will be recorded on the SCR. These may not be confined to the usual formal checks; internet searches, for example, may sometimes be more instructive than formal vetting checks (see Visitor Policy for further information).

EYFS pupils are arguably the most vulnerable and impressionable members of society. Westholme School already focuses on children's personal, social and emotional development but teaching children about fundamental British values is conducted in an age-appropriate way, through ensuring children learn right from wrong, mix and share with other children and value other's views, know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes.

In the EYFS at Westholme, partnerships with parents are strengthened by each child and her/his family being allocated a keyworker who is their first point of contact with any questions/suggestions/concerns. Further information on can be found in 'Partnership with Parents' Policy (Appendix D) and 'Key Person Approach' Policy (Appendix E).

Staff in the EYFS are provided with the opportunity to have 'Supervision' meetings with senior leaders. These meetings give EYFS staff the opportunity to discuss any issues, particularly those concerning children's development or well-being and take place termly/every three months. Supervision meetings follow guidance stated in the Supervision Meetings Policy (Appendix H) and are conducted using the Supervision Record forms (Appendix F).

20. Honour Based Abuse (HBA), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Breast Ironing, Forced Marriage and the Modern Slavery Act (2015)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubt, staff should speak to the DSL. See below for further information on FGM and forced marriage.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM (sometimes referred to as Female Genital Cutting (FGC) or female circumcision) is an illegal and life-threatening form of abuse. It involves the removal of part or all of the external female genitalia, or any injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Communities tend to use local names for this practice, including 'sunna'.

It is often performed without anaesthetic and leaves its young victims in agony and with physical and psychological problems that can continue into adulthood. In some cases, victims go on to suffer chronic vaginal and pelvic infections, menstrual problems, kidney damage, cysts and abscesses, pain during sex and fertility problems. In some cases, they will die.

It typically happens to girls between 5 and 8 years old, although it has been performed on babies, and can take place any time before a young woman is married. UK communities that are most at risk of FGM include Kenyan, Somali, Sudanese, Sierra Leonean, Egyptian, Nigerian and Eritrean, as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdish, Indonesian and Pakistani. Obviously, this is not to say that all families from the communities listed above practise FGM.

Due to the secretive nature of the abuse, it is difficult to know how many girls are affected. Many victims do not seek medical help, and often those who do are adults with maternity problems. It is estimated that in the UK around 24 000 children are at risk from FGM and nearly 66 000 girls and women are living with its consequences.

As FGM is a much-hidden form of abuse, teachers and school staff are often the only professionals that can identify children at risk of this, and they play a vital role in protecting them from harm.

Examples of signs that a pupil may be at risk of FGM:

- a child's family being from one of the 'at-risk' communities for FGM (mentioned earlier)
- Has an older sibling, or someone else in the family who has undergone FGM
- Talks about having a 'special ceremony' or a 'special procedure' to become a woman
- School holidays are a particular time of risk for a girl to be taken abroad for the purpose of FGM.

Teachers may have cause for concern where:

- A young person talks of going abroad to be 'cut', or get ready for marriage
- A girl is going abroad but may seem vague about where they are going and how long for, is reluctant to talk about the holiday, or seems upset and scared when discussing it but won't say why.

- Parents ask to take their daughter out of school before the holidays begin and/or are uncommunicative or become aggressive when asked about their plans

Examples of signs that a pupil may be the victim of FGM:

- Is absent for a long time from school
- Goes to the toilet more than usual or stays in there for an unusually long time
- Isn't able to cross her legs when she is sitting down on the floor
- Tries to get out of doing PE
- Suffers urinary tract infections
- Is in pain and clutches her body
- bladder or menstrual problems e.g. Is off from school for a week when on her period (if she has started)
- behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as the child being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- finding it difficult to sit still, and looking uncomfortable
- complaining about pain between their legs
- mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
- reluctance to take part in physical activity
- disclosure.

Why is FGM carried out?

Reasons cited include social acceptance, family honour, ensuring a girl is 'marriageable', preservation of a girl's virginity or chastity, custom and tradition, and the mistaken belief that it enhances fertility and makes childbirth safer. There is a common misconception that there is a religious element to FGM. This is not the case – FGM is not a requirement of any religion. Within FGM-practising communities there is a belief among many that it is the right thing to do. Parents may think that if they do not carry it out their daughter will be an outcast. The pressure for girls to be cut is immense, as is the pressure to stay silent about the practice, with some even being threatened with violence if they speak out.

What to do / mandatory reporting duty

It is essential that all staff know that FGM is not a cultural issue but one of child abuse, which they have a legal duty to report.

Teachers and other healthcare professionals are required to report cases of FGM in girls under 18s which they identify in the course of their professional work to the police (if a girl tells you she has had FGM or signs which appear to show she has had FGM). This is a personal duty; the professional who identifies FGM / receives the disclosure must make the report. This can be done by ringing the non-emergency crime number, 101 as soon as possible but definitely by the close of the next working day. School staff must NOT examine a pupil. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions.

As with any safeguarding concern, the school's DSL and children's social care must also be informed. If the concerns are based on more concrete indicators – i.e., the young person says this is going to happen to them, or disclosure that it has happened to them or to an older sister – a child protection referral should be made immediately.

Staff **should not**:

- contact the parents before seeking advice from children's social care
- make any attempt to mediate between the child/young person and parents.

It is important to keep in mind that the parents may not see FGM as a form of abuse; however, they may be under a great deal of pressure from their community and or family to subject their daughters to it. Some parents from identified communities may seek advice and support as to how to resist and prevent FGM for their daughters, and education about the harmful effects of FGM may help to make parents feel stronger in resisting the pressure of others in the community. Remember that religious teaching does not support FGM.

It is essential that we take such concerns seriously and act without delay. Never underestimate the determination of parents who have decided that it is right for their daughter to undergo FGM. Attempts to mediate may place the child/young person at greater risk, and the family may feel so threatened at the news of their child's disclosure that they bring forward their plans or take action to silence her.

Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is illegal. It can affect both males and females and has involved people from the ages of 2 – 71. It is different to arranged marriages. Arranged marriages only occur with the consent of both parties. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage, however, there are no specific religions that adopt the forced marriage approach. It often leads to sexual, physical and/or emotional abuse. The effects on the victims can lead to isolation, depression, self-harm and even suicide. Schools play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

Contact the police if you know the abuse is happening, children's social care/MASH if the child is vulnerable, and the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) if you know a forced marriage is about to occur/has occurred, this includes even if the child has already been taken abroad.

Due to potential honour based killing or further abuse if the victim is found to have informed the authorities, the situation must be dealt with very carefully. Speak to the FMU and see the Forced Marriage survivor's handbook for guidance:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/149854/FM_Survivors6.pdf

Breast ironing

What is breast ironing?

Breast Ironing is practiced in some African countries, notably Cameroon. Girls aged between 9 and 15 have hot pestles, stones or other implements rubbed on their developing breast to stop them growing further. In the vast

majority of cases breast ironing is carried out by mothers or grandmothers and the men in the family are unaware. Estimates range between 25% and 50% of girls in Cameroon are affected by breast ironing, affecting up to 3.8 million women across Africa.

Why does breast ironing happen?

The practice of breast ironing is seen as a protection to girls by making them seem 'child-like' for longer and reduce the likelihood of pregnancy. Once girls' breasts have developed, they are at risk of sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage and kidnapping; consequently, breast ironing is more prevalent in cities. Cameroon has one of the highest rates of literacy in Africa and ensuring that girls remain in education is seen as an important outcome of breast ironing.

Breast ironing is physical abuse

Breast ironing is a form of physical abuse that has been condemned by the United Nations and identified as Gender-based Violence. Although, countries where breast ironing is prevalent have ratified the African Charter on Human Rights to prevent harmful traditional practices, it is not against the law.

Breast ironing does not stop the breasts from growing, but development can be slowed down. Damage caused by the 'ironing' can leave women with malformed breasts, difficulty breastfeeding or producing milk, severe chest pains, infections and abscesses. In some cases, it may be related to the onset of breast cancer.

Breast Ironing in the UK

Concerns have been raised that breast ironing is also to be found amongst African communities in the UK, with as many as 1,000 girls at risk. KCSIE mentions breast ironing as part of the section on 'Honour Violence'. Staff worried about the risk of breast ironing in their school should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

The Modern Slavery Act (2015)

Any form of slavery is against the law. The Modern Slavery Act places a statutory duty on public authorities, including schools, to notify the National Crime Agency (NCA) (Tel:0370 496 7622) on observing signs or receiving intelligence relating to modern slavery, e.g. suspected cases of human trafficking, slavery servitude and forced labour. It is important to know that children do not need to give their consent to be referred to the NCA. All members of staff who have any relevant concerns should speak to one of the school's Designated Safeguarding Leads immediately. The DSL should contact the NCA and also the Blackburn with Darwen Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) TEAM - Tel: 666400.

21. Operation Encompass and Police Safeguarding Reports

Operation Encompass is a police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which ensures that a child's school is informed, prior to the start of the next school day, that there has been an incident of domestic abuse to which the child or young person has been exposed, and which might then have an impact on them in school the following day.

Each school in Blackburn with Darwen is informed of all domestic abuse incidents, not just those where an offence can be identified or those which are graded as high risk. The partnership recognises that all incidents of domestic abuse can be harmful to children and young people.

Operation Encompass notifications are emailed to the DSL for each site and the Principal.

The DSL will use the information that has been shared with them, in confidence, to ensure that the school makes provision for possible difficulties experienced by children or their families.

The DSL will conduct an individual assessment of the child's needs and decide on any school routine modifications that need to be made, for instance, allowing the child time out, additional time to complete homework, discreetly providing the child with access to washing facilities, food and clothing (if available). They should record a brief summary of their assessment, and any support actions taken that directly relate to it.

If school staff have additional concerns around the child's safety and wellbeing due to being aware of previously unknown information, they should make a CP referral following existing referral procedures, even if they are aware of one having been done by the Police and Operation Encompass officers. They may possess unique information that they can share, that will more fully inform the picture of risk to a child or victim adult.

Schools will be on occasion be asked to provide the Local Authority, Safeguarding Partnership or the Domestic Abuse Strategic Board information in relation to analysis/audit of Operation Encompass notifications.

Operation Encompass reports can be copied and saved onto the MyConcern platform (or any other reporting system) in their entirety, even if they include names of children NOT at Westholme School. Our safeguarding duty is to protect ALL children, and our staff would be expected to follow this up with other schools if it is known which school other children may attend.

Police Safeguarding Reports (PSRs)

These are different to Operation Encompass reports but are still emailed to the DSL for each site. They contain Police information from Lancashire Constabulary within the referral and **MUST NOT** be disclosed to the referred person or any other parties without the express permission of Lancashire Constabulary.

To support timely responses, Lancashire Police have requested that the Police PSR is shared with school, rather than a summary of the impacts to the child/ren. Police information must, therefore, be managed securely and with the adherence to your statutory safeguarding principles. The PSR document **MUST NOT** be saved to a child's a file or MyConcern; a short summary should be saved instead.

If the DSL receives a PSR, the safeguarding partners will already be managing any immediate concerns, the notification is for the DSL to risk assess and typically await further contact. The notification is for you to be aware of the potential impact that a police officer attended incident may have had on the child, and to offer support.

It shouldn't be necessary, but where there are other safeguarding concerns, the DSL should follow standard safeguarding processes as per KCSiE.

The information is shared with the Lead DSL and DDSL only – it will contain information which is confidential or privileged. It is intended for the addressee(s) only. If a notification is received in error, notify the sender by returning to PSR@blackburn.gov.uk and delete it and any attachments without retaining a copy.

Any questions in respect of a PSR received? Send an email to the PSR@blackburn.gov.uk mail box, this mail box is manned each morning during term time between 9 am and 12.30. If an update is required or to explore if any action has been taken, use the PSR mailbox. Do not contact CADS or the officer within the PSR for this update.

22. Children Missing from or Not Receiving a Suitable Education (CME)

This section is written, taking due regard of Blackburn with Darwen procedures and protocol. Children missing in education and/or being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines.

“If no-one in authority knows what education these children and young people receive each week, or whether they even attend, they not only miss out on education but can be vulnerable to abuse. Everyone must take greater responsibility for knowing where they are.”

Sir Michael Wilshaw, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Schools

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education, which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less.

Safeguarding Procedures must always be implemented if there is a child protection concern regarding the missing child. Children missing from education, particularly persistently, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse, and child sexual and criminal exploitation. It is important the school or college’s response to children missing from education supports identifying such abuse and also helps prevent the risk of them going missing in the future.

Below is a list of children who are likely to go missing from education.

- Children at risk of forced marriage;
- Children entering or leaving the independent schools’ sector;
- Young people who have committed criminal offences and/or are returning from custody;
- Children living in women's refuges;
- Children in homeless families, perhaps living in temporary accommodation, houses of multiple occupancy or Bed and Breakfast accommodation;
- Young runaways;
- Children with long-term medical or mental health needs, e.g. accessing ELCAS support;
- Have particular social and behavioural difficulties and have personalised learning plans: this means that, by arrangement, they do not attend their usual school full-time;
- Have complex needs and no suitable school place is available;
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees, or the children of asylum-seeking families;

- Looked after children;
- Children from Gypsy/Roma/Traveller background and alternative provision has not been made;
- Young carers;
- Children and young people from transient families, i.e. pupils who have experienced high levels of mobility between different education providers;
- Teenage mothers of compulsory school age;
- Children permanently excluded from school;
- Children informally excluded from school and/or those placed on long-term part-time timetables;
- Children and young people of statutory school age who rarely attend school and have personalised learning plans as part of attempts to reintegrate them into full-time education;
- Children taken off their school roll following a lengthy absence due to an unapproved extended family holiday taken in term-time;
- EC nationals who have the right of abode in the UK – this now includes a significant number of asylum seekers granted status by other EC countries and who have subsequently moved to the UK;
- Others who have come from abroad to live and/or work in the Borough are waiting a school place;
- Children in private fostering arrangements.

Safeguarding procedures are in place within the registration systems at Westholme School, to identify children who may have gone missing/run away. Parents are requested to inform school, by 9am if their child is not going to be attending school that day. In the first instance, if no contact has been made by the parent, the school receptionist will try to phone the parent directly. If no contact has still been made by the second day, the Head of Year (HoY)/Deputy Head of Seniors or Prep will be informed and investigative procedures actioned including: asking the friends of missing pupils for any current information, checking with the pupil's named emergency contacts/telephone numbers (where possible more than one emergency contact number is held for each student), checking all school records to see if a change of address has been entered. By the third day, if contact has still not been made or the pupil's whereabouts not confirmed, then the LADO will be contacted by the Principal/Deputy Head of Seniors or Prep and advice and guidance taken from them.

The Local Authority legally requires schools to report a pupil who has been absent for 10 days or more without schools' permission.

If the parent/guardian is spoken to and says the child is receiving education overseas and offers for you to speak to them on the phone, decline. Tell them that the child is reported as missing from education and must be taken to the nearest British Embassy/consulate. The child may be under duress, or you may not actually be speaking to the child you think you are.

If/when the child returns to school, a return interview should be conducted with the parents and the pupil. It is crucial that Westholme staff follow the procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future.

School transfers

Also see Admissions and Attendance Policy for more details.

Westholme School is legally required to inform the Local Authority about the details of all children and young people admitted or removed from the pupil roll including:

- those who have been out of school without the schools' permission (i.e. marked unauthorised) for a continuous period of 10 school days or more or any pupil who fails to attend school regularly.
- those on part-time education arrangements.
- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- have been permanently excluded;

(If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity to prevent the child from going missing from education).

This should be done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than the point where the pupil's name is deleted from the register. It is essential that this happens, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

Elective Home Education

Many home educated children have an overwhelmingly positive learning experience. We would expect the parents' decision to home educate to be made with their child's best education at the heart of the decision. However, this is not the case for all, and home education can mean some children are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their needs. From September 2016 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended so that schools must inform their LA of all deletions from their admission register when a child is taken off roll. Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, school and other key professionals will work together to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. This requirement does not apply where a pupil's name is deleted after they have completed the final year at the school (e.g. Year 6 at a typical primary school) unless the local authority have asked to be informed about such deletions. Ideally, this would be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker. DfE guidance for local authorities on Elective home education sets out the role and responsibilities of LAs and their powers to engage with parents in relation to EHE. Although this is primarily aimed at LAs, schools should also be familiar with this guidance.

Westholme School will inform the LA of any pupil that leaves the pupil roll to be home schooled.

Running away during the school day or going missing on a trip - Each class teacher takes a register and will follow up with reception/HoY (at Seniors) regarding any child who appears to have gone missing during the school day as soon as is reasonably practicable. On a trip / educational visit the trip leader and accompanying staff will take regular registers to ensure all pupils are present at departure/s, set points during the trips (depending on age of pupils) and the return/s. The Base Contact for the trip should be contacted immediately in any such circumstances.

Every attempt must be made by working with the child/family/external agencies to determine why the child ran away/was missing and to ensure no possible underlying safeguarding causes are missed.

Where this is reported and considered to be a safeguarding concern then a **Reporting a Safeguarding Incident when a child exits school unsupervised or is 'lost'** form (available from Westholme's DSL) should be completed and submitted to the [BwD Safeguarding SEO](#).

23. Looked after children/children in care

Training needs will be reviewed annually depending upon whether looked after children are on roll at Westholme. If such children are on roll, governors will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep safe children who are looked after by a local authority. Looked after children remain vulnerable and it is important that the school and all agencies work together to safeguard them. This will include ensuring that the main DSL for the site has responsibility for their welfare and progress and has up to date assessment information from the relevant local authority, the most recent care plan and contact arrangements with parents, and delegated authority to carers.

Staff will be informed of information on a need to know basis to preserve confidentiality. The DSL/Deputy Head of Prep/Principal will share as much information as is required to ensure these children are kept safe. Statutory guidance to local authorities about how they are to support schools with the care and education of these pupils can be found in the document: Children and Social Work Act 2017. Young people who cease to be looked after become care leavers. The school will liaise with Local authorities who have on-going responsibilities for these young people.

Private Fostering

By law, the contents of the school admissions register must contain the personal details and information regarding parents and carers of every pupil in the school – including any private fostering arrangements. Where possible, more than one emergency contact number is held for each child.

Private fostering is an arrangement made between the parents of or person with parental responsibility for a child/young person under the age of 16 years (18 years if disabled) and someone other than a parent or relative with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

The Children Act 1989 (C.A.1989) defines a relative as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt (by blood or marriage) or stepparent. It is not a private fostering arrangement when a child/young person is cared for by anyone defined by the Children Act 1989 as a relative. (A step-parent is a guardian that replaces a mother or father, but to be a legal step-parent you have to marry one of the parents.)

An arrangement where a child is cared for, for 28 days or more by a member of their extended family who is not according to this definition a relative e.g. a cousin, great-aunt, great grandparent, is a private fostering arrangement – and this is deemed as private fostering irrespective of whether a financial payment is made to the carer or not.

Private foster carers may be from the child's extended family, they may be family friends, but they may also previously be unknown to the child or child's parent. As there is no register of private foster carers, families have to find these carers themselves. Parents have no access to criminal record checks, and most will have little

understanding of the risks they may face. Children privately fostered are a diverse and potentially vulnerable group.

A private foster carer becomes responsible for day-to-day care which promotes the safety and welfare of the fostered child. However, it is the legal duty of the local authority to ensure the safety and wellbeing of privately fostered children in their area and to ensure that unsuitable persons are prevented from fostering a child privately.

The local authority does not formally approve private foster carers or register them as private foster carers, but is required to satisfy itself that private foster care arrangements are safe and satisfactory in every respect – and to this end it is vitally important that all staff are aware of their duty to inform the DSL at their site about any private fostering arrangements which come to their attention, so that this can then be reported to the Local Authority MASH.

For further information please find a link to a copy of the local authority information leaflet ‘Looking after someone else’s child? - 28 days’ on the school website next to the Safeguarding policy.

Private fostering and educational institutions

As a school, we offer many trips, tours and visits to pupils to enhance their learning experiences. Westholme School will give due diligence to legislation (including the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006), if a trip/exchange was arranged where a private fostering agreement was required.

Exchange trips may be arranged where our pupils stay with families overseas, known as a ‘homestay’ arrangement. We ensure that host parents will have an enhanced DBS check. If there are other people in the family aged 16 or above, it is at our discretion whether we would like them to undertake an enhanced DBS check. Westholme will however, always work closely with partner schools abroad to ensure that similar assurances are undertaken prior to a visit. The party leader may (or ask the local authority to) contact the relevant foreign embassy or High Commission of the country in question and find out if similar checks can be done in that country (see EVC Policy for more information). Students should understand who to contact during a homestay should an emergency occur or a situation arise which makes them feel uncomfortable.

Children who have been the victims of abuse

Children who have been the victims of abuse or have witnessed violence or trauma may need additional support and care in order to develop their self-esteem. Their behaviour may be challenging and Westholme School will endeavour to support the pupil in a number of ways:

- Appropriate curriculum
- Maintaining an ethos promoting a positive, secure and supportive environment to build pupil self esteem
- Ensuring that the Behaviour Policy provides support for vulnerable pupils
- Liaison with other agencies and professional services (e.g. East Lancashire Child and Adolescent Services (ELCAS)/ Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)/ CANW etc.)
- Ensuring that if any child on the Child Protection register leaves Westholme that their information is transferred to the new school within 5 days of them starting at then new school and the child’s social/case worker is informed. If no explanation for leaving is given, the Registrar will inform the LEA.

24. Allegations Made About Staff, including Supply Teachers, Volunteers and Contractors

Westholme School has procedures for dealing with concerns and/or allegations made about staff (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) that aim to strike a balance to protect children from abuse (the overriding principle) but also to protect these staff from false or unfounded allegations. At any stage of consideration or investigation, all unnecessary delays should be eradicated. If an allegation of abuse is made about a member of the teaching staff, support staff, governing body, someone working for externally managed services within the school or a volunteer, the Principal should be informed immediately. (Allegations against the Designated Lead and Commercial Director should go to the Principal). If the Principal is not available, the Chairman of the Governors should be informed without delay. The colleague about who the allegation has been made should not be informed until the LADO has been consulted. Allegations regarding the Principal should be made to the Chairman of the Governors without notifying the Principal first. Allegations regarding the Chairman of the Governors and a situation where there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to the Principal, should be reported directly to the LADO. In a case of serious harm, the police should be informed from the outset.

There are two sections covering the two levels of allegation/concern:

1. Allegations that may meet the harms threshold.
2. Allegation/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold – referred to for the purposes of this guidance as ‘low level concerns’.

Full details of our process for Managing Allegation against Staff, including Supply Teacher, Volunteers and Contractors can be found in Appendix N

Westholme School has a culture of valuing staff and of reflective practice. If at any time a member of staff feels there is poor or unsafe practice and/or potential failures in the school’s safeguarding regime then they should address this with the DSL in the first instance, followed by the Principal and then the Chairman of Governors if it is felt that the matter has not been dealt with satisfactorily. It is important that staff feel confident in doing this to ensure the safety of all our school community. There will be transparency and accountability in relation to how concerns are received and handled. There will also be provision for mediation and dispute resolution where necessary.

25. Safer Recruitment (See Safer Recruitment Policy)

Westholme School is fully committed to ensuring that safe recruitment practice is followed as outlined by our policy. We comply with the DfE regulations in all employment matters including the required DBS checks. At Westholme, we actively encourage all staff to raise any concerns about unsafe practice in our safeguarding arrangements (see Confidential Reporting [‘Whistleblowing’] Policy).

26. Use Of Mobile Phones, Cameras, Tablets and Digital Media

Children at Westholme School have their photographs taken to provide evidence of their achievements for developmental records, as well as for use in educational activities and school displays. Westholme School may also use photographic images in publicity, providing that consent has been obtained from parents. Westholme School has a separate ICT policy and each student at Seniors and each member of staff has signed an ICT AUP. Staff who have received a school tablet/or who have access to one have also signed an AUP specific to this. Pupils at the Prep are not asked to sign an AUP, however, they are given specific guidance by staff on appropriate use of digital media/computers etc. and safe use of the internet. Their behaviour online and in computer rooms is closely monitored by the member of staff in charge.

It is a specific legal requirement however, that EYFS providers have a policy and procedure that covers the use of mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities are used in the setting. The following procedures are therefore in place in EYFS to provide an environment in which children, parents and staff are safe from images being recorded and inappropriately used:

EYFS MOBILE PHONE AND CAMERA POLICY

Mobile Phones

- Westholme Lower Prep allows staff to bring in personal mobile telephones for their own use. Users bringing personal devices into school must ensure there is no inappropriate or illegal content on the device. Staff must not give out personal mobile numbers to pupils or parents/carers.
- All staff must ensure that their mobile telephones are left in a cupboard, office or locker throughout contact time with children unless requested by the PLT to move them to another appropriate location (because of Open Days, etc).
- Mobile phone calls may only be taken during staff breaks or in staff members' own time. If any staff member has a family emergency or similar and needs to keep their mobile phone to hand, prior permission must be sought from the PLT. If staff have a personal emergency, they are free to use the school's phone or to make a personal call from their mobile when no children are present.
- Staff need to ensure that the school has up to date contact information and that staff make their families, children's schools etc, aware of emergency work telephone numbers. This is the responsibility of the individual staff member.
- All students on placement will be requested to place their bag containing their phone in the cupboard/locker/office and are asked not to text, take or receive any calls in the staffroom.
- Visitors/contractors/staff not normally associated with the site, should seek approval from a senior member of staff when there is a need to use their phone on the premises and this should then be supervised by a member of staff to ensure its appropriate use.
- It is the responsibility of all members of staff to be vigilant and report any concerns to the PLT. Concerns will be taken seriously, logged and investigated appropriately.

Cameras

Photographs taken for the purpose of recording a child or group of children participating in activities or celebrating their achievements is an effective form of recording their progression in the Early Years Foundation

Stage. They may also be used on our website, social media pages and/or by the local press with permission from the parents.

- However, it is essential that photographs are taken and stored appropriately to safeguard the children in our care. Parents are asked to sign a consent form before any photographs are used outside school.
- Only the designated school cameras/mobile phones/tablets are to be used to take any photo within Westholme Lower Prep or on outings. Images taken on these cameras must be deemed suitable, without putting the child/children in any compromising positions that could cause embarrassment or distress. All staff are responsible for the location of the cameras; they should be placed in a secure, discreet place at the end of the school day.
- Images taken and stored on the cameras/mobile phones/tablets must be downloaded and saved on the school system or printed as soon as possible. Images should be downloaded and printed on site. Printed photographs should then be distributed to members of staff to record in children's activity books. Images may only be uploaded to the secure school website, social media pages only when permission from parents is agreed.
- Visitors/contractors/staff not normally associated with the site, should seek approval from a senior member of staff when there is a need to use their phone to take photos on the premises (e.g. photos of serial numbers on computers/pipes & wiring etc.) and this should then be supervised by a member of staff.
- Under no circumstances must cameras of any kind be taken into bathrooms without prior consultation with the PLT. It is the responsibility of all members of staff to be vigilant and report any concerns to JDX/DSL. Any non-compliance will be taken seriously, logged and investigated appropriately.

Other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities.

- Staff and student helpers in EYFS who have their own electronic devices such as a smart watch will either be asked not to use these within the setting or to disable any cameras and recording facilities. **Smart watches must never be used to record or photograph children.**

Whole School (including EYFS):

- Westholme School allows staff to bring in personal mobile telephones for their own use. Users bringing personal devices into school must ensure there is no inappropriate or illegal content on the device. Staff must not give out personal mobile numbers to pupils or parents/carers.
- Under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), photographs and video images of pupils and staff are classed as personal data. Using such images for school publicity purposes requires the consent of parents, which is requested on registration.
- Images of pupils and staff should primarily be taken using school owned devices. On the rare occasions when this is not possible and personal devices have been used; images should be emailed or uploaded to the school network and the original image deleted as soon as practicable.
- Videos and images must only be downloaded onto school devices and machines, the school website or authorised school social media (e.g. Westholme's Instagram / X /Facebook page). All school devices are password protected.
- Visitors/contractors/staff not normally associated with the site, should seek approval from a senior member of staff when there is a need to use their phone to take photos on the premises (e.g. photos of serial numbers on computers/pipes & wiring etc.) and this should then be supervised by a member of staff.

- Cameras, mobile phones, tablets and digital media devices are prohibited in toilets, shower rooms or changing areas.
- Events such as sports' days and school productions may be recorded by video or photographs taken by staff and parents; however, this must always be in full view of all attending.
- Teachers are responsible for the location of the school devices assigned to their class; they must be placed in a secure, discreet place at the end of the school day.

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to be vigilant and report any concerns to JDX/ DSL. Any non-compliance will be taken seriously, logged and investigated appropriately.

The school will undertake an annual review of this policy and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged. This process will be overseen by the Governor responsible for child protection, who will report to the Governing body. The report will then be discussed and the meeting minuted.

If at any time a deficiency is found in the Safeguarding Policy and practice, this will be remedied immediately.

27. Useful Contact Information

It would be usual to contact Blackburn with Darwen agencies first, although depending on the issue and, if applicable, where the child involved lives, there is quite often a requirement to contact agencies in other boroughs.

Police – 999 (Emergency) or 101 (not urgent) / **Crimestoppers** – 0800 555 111

<https://doitonline.lancashire.police.uk/PEDisclaimer/Create> - report an incident (non-urgent)

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Blackburn

Email – mash@blackburn.gov.uk

MASH referral form - <https://blackburn.gov.uk/children-families-and-young-people/child-protection/multi-agency-safeguarding-hub-mash>

Tel 01254 666400 (9am-5pm weekdays) Emergency Duty Team: 01254 587547 Out of hours

LADO details- Blackburn - LADO@blackburn.gov.uk 01254 506915

Elissa Harper- elissa.harper@blackburn.gov.uk

<https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/children-families-and-young-people/local-authority-designated-officer-lado>

EHA Admin - Blackburn with Darwen

01254 666913/666914

Lancashire Safeguarding Children's Board Tel: 0300 123 6720. (Out of hours 0300 123 6722 -8pm - 8am)
www.safeguardingpartnership.org.uk

Pan Lancashire policy and procedures for Safeguarding children website:

<http://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/contents.html>

Engage Team (Child Sexual Exploitation)

Jay Ratcliffe

Young Person's Worker

Phone: 01254 505670

Mobile: 07855 143747

Engage Office number: 01254 353882

Jay.Ratcliffe@blackburn.gov.uk

Team manager for Engage BWB [Lauren Isyons@blackburn.gov.uk](mailto:Lauren.Isyons@blackburn.gov.uk)

Senior Primary Mental Health Worker for Blackburn West

Laura Winckley - Burnley General Hospital - Laura.Winckley@elht.nhs.uk - 01282 803408

Children Missing Education - Blackburn with Darwen's nominated persons are:

Catherine Salt CME Manager: Catherine.salt@blackburn.gov.uk (01254) 666756

Aisha Patel CME officer: - Aisha.patel@blackburn.gov.uk (01254) 666579 – 07484495892

Prevent Support Officers for Blackburn with Darwen

01254 585260

Leanne.Romney@blackburn.gov.uk Leanne Romney (Prevent Support Officer (Education) for Blackburn with Darwen) Tel: 01254 585270/Mobile: 07740 753900

<https://www.lancashirepreventpartnership.org.uk/> <https://www.ipreventblackburn.org.uk/>

Pan Lancashire Prevent HQ team (Police) Channel co-ordinator - 01772 413366

Email: Channelreferrals@lancashire.pnn.police.uk / concern@lancashire.pnn.police.uk

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline

0808 800 5000 - Email – help@nspcc.org.uk

National Childline – 0800 1111

Independent School Inspectorate - Complaints about Independent school - [Raising a concern about a school :: Independent Schools Inspectorate](#)

Disclosure and Barring Service

01325 953795 - PO Box 181, Darlington, DL1 9FA

Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)

020 7593 5393

misconduct.teacher@education.gov.uk

Confidential Anti-Terrorism Hotline

0800 789321

Department for Education dedicated telephone helpline and mailbox for non-emergency advice for staff and governors 020 7340 7264 / counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk

Reporting Slavery

National Crime Agency (NCA) Tel:0370 496 7622 www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk

FGM concerns - 0800 028 3550 or email fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

Forced Marriage Unit - 020 7008 0151 or email fmu@fco.gov.uk

Forced Marriage/Honour Based Violence - Fatima Chandia, Police Link Worker, Hate Crime and Cohesion Unit, 01254 353626/07966 373055 Fatima.Chandia@lancashire.pnn.police.uk /

Farhet Quraishi Farhet.Quraishi@lancashire.pnn.police.uk /

Benjamin Hodgkinson Benjamin.Hodgkinson@lancashire.pnn.police.uk

Domestic Violence Service Providers

- Changing Lives - www.changing-lives.org.uk/get-help/ Tel: 01254 311181 Wish Centre – 01254 260465
- Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247

Substance Misuse Services

CRI/Inspire – 24 Hour advice and support helpline: 01254 495014, 24-hour text help number: 07507839021

Sexual health advice and contraception

Brook - 01254 268700

Mental Health Crisis Team

Single Point of Access (SPA)

Referrals are usually via GPs, practice nurses, health visitors, and other health professionals, statutory and non-statutory services. Self-referrals are also accepted.

01282 657116

Children's centres in Blackburn with Darwen which act as a network of support for parents of children under five. Parenting classes and support classes available.

- Darwen – 01254 778 900, Contact: Carol Holding
- Highercroft – 01254 267 920, Contact: Carol Holding
- Livesey – 01254 507 950, Contact – Dinah Wilson
- Hancock Street – 01254 666 230, Contact - Dinah Wilson
- Shadsworth – 01254 680 733, Contact: Jo – Ann Dwyer
- Audley – 01254 507 750, Contact: Jo – Ann Dwyer
- Little Harwood -01254 506 910, Contact: Louise Shorrock
- Wensley Fold – 01254 585 085, Contact: Louise Shorrock

Bolton: <http://boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/>

North Bolton: Astley Bridge, Bradshaw, Brightmet, Bromley Cross, Tonge Moor

01204 337408 or 01204 331505 **South Bolton:** Burnden, Daubhill, Farnworth, Harper Green, Kearsley, Little Lever 01204 337729 or 01204 337730 **West Bolton:** Blackrod, Deane Cum Heaton, Halliwell, Derby, Smithills, Hulton Park, Horwich, Westhoughton 01942 634625. Concerns outside 9am-5pm contact Bolton Emergency Duty Team – 01204 337777

Bury: <http://www.safeguardingburychildren.org/> Bury Children's Services Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub Team 0161-253-5678

Wigan: <http://www.wiganlscb.com/> Wigan Children's Duty Team **01942 828300**. Outside office hours **0161 834 2436**.

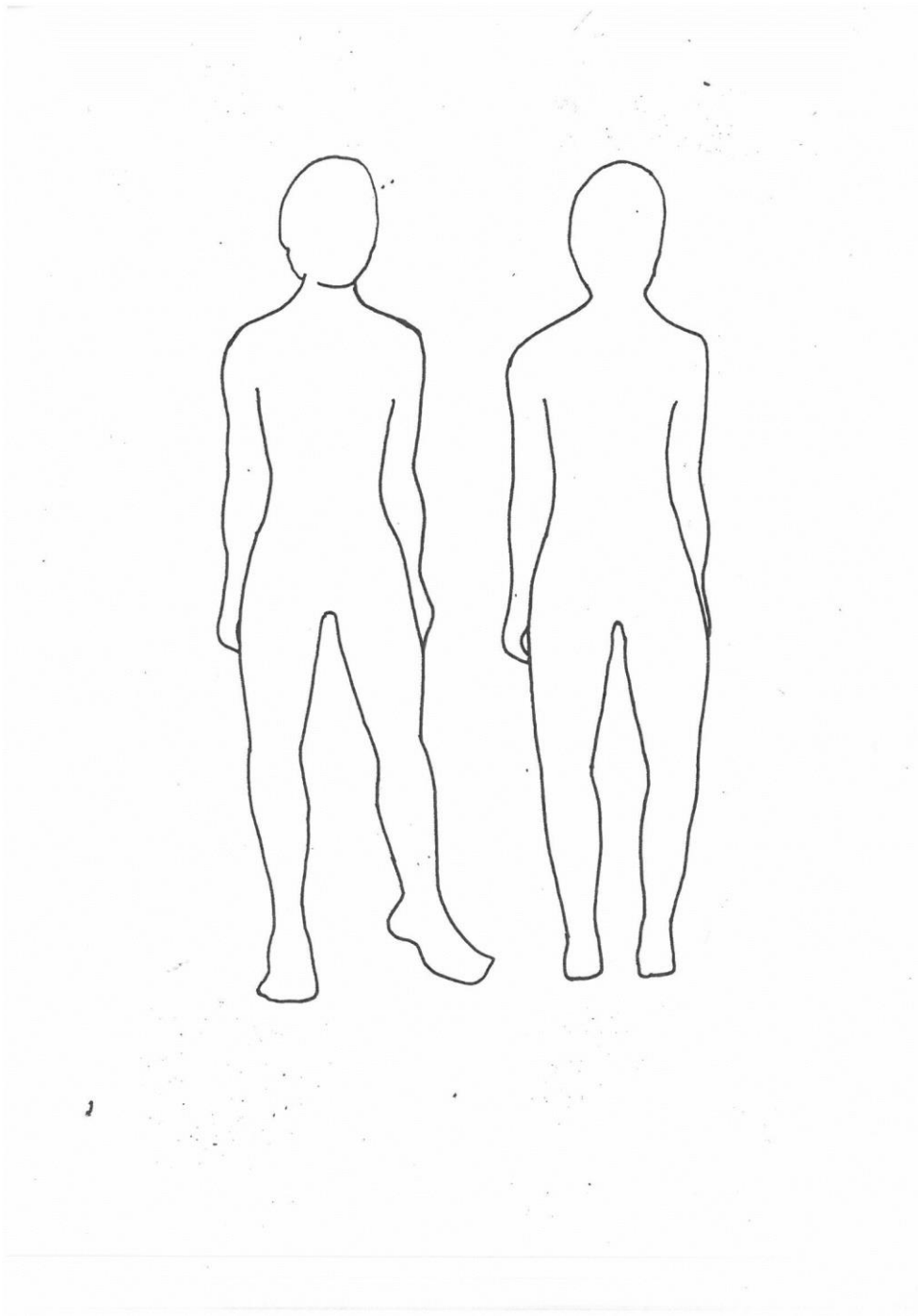
Sefton (Southport): <http://seftonlscb.co.uk/> Sefton Council Tel. 0845 140 0845 (minicom 0151 934 4657) between 8am and 6pm. Outside office hours (from 5.30pm Mon to Thurs, and 4pm Friday and weekends), contact the emergency duty team on Tel. 0151 920 8234.

North Yorkshire (incl. Skipton): <http://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/> During Office Hours: 0845 034 9410 or Email: social.care@northyorks.gov.uk Outside Office Hours Emergency Duty Team (for evenings, weekends and bank holidays): 0845 034 9417 Further info at: <http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3199>

Appendix A - Record of concern

Record of concern

<i>To be filled in by the person reporting a concern:</i>	
Pupil name:	Pupil class:
Person reporting:	
Date:	Time:
Details of concern: (Please state if any attachments)	
Please hand this record of concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.	
<i>To be filled in by Designated Safeguarding Lead receiving the record of concern:</i>	
Designated Lead:	Date received:
Action taken or if no action, reasoning for no action:	
Follow up/comments/notes:	



Appendix B – Child Protection Incident Reporting Form (to be completed if appropriate)

Child Protection Incident Reporting Form

1. Please indicate what you are reporting:

- ☐ I have concerns that abuse may be occurring (complete sections 2 and 3)
- ☐ I was involved with an incident with a child (complete sections 2 and 4)
- ☐ I was a witness to an incident with a child (complete sections 2 and 4)
- ☐ I have received an allegation of abuse (complete sections 2 and 5)
- ☐ A child has told me that they are being abused (complete sections 2 and 3)

2. Important information:

Your name: _____

Name of child concerned: _____

Capacity in which child is known to you: _____

Description of any physical signs of abuse _____

Do not remove clothing to inspect a child

3. Concerns abuse may be occurring

Please use the space below to record the concerns that you may have regarding a child or adult who has contact with children. These may include a child being unusually distressed, being sexually aroused, appearing to be attracted to an adult, an adult appearing to be attracted to a child, a relationship that a child and adult are having, a change in a child's attitude or behaviour.

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary

4. Incident with a child

Please tick which of the following has occurred:

- ☐ I accidentally hurt a child
- ☐ A child misinterpreted or misunderstood something I have done
- ☐ I have had to use reasonable physical restraint
- ☐ I was a witness to one of the above (please indicate which one)

Please provide further information, including any action you may have taken so far and the

reasons for doing so.

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary

5. Allegation / disclosure of abuse

Allegation received from: _____

Allegation received on: _____

Name of person about whom allegation has been made: _____

Please use the space below to record the details of the allegation or disclosure you received. This should be a factual account of the information you have received only. Do not include assumptions or opinions of others. Make sure you record details of dates and times and any other potentially useful information. If the disclosure has come from the child who is claiming they are being abused, the conversation should be recorded in their words.

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please submit this report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately and attach any rough notes you may have made.

Appendix C - Safeguarding Urgent Initial Assessment

Safeguarding Urgent Initial Assessment

In accordance with the safeguarding policy, the purpose of the assessment is to determine:

- the nature of the suspicion or allegation
- the validity of the suspicion or allegation based on the evidence
- the likelihood of future harm to the child

The DSL will refer to:

- Confidential files on issues of child protection (held by the DSL)
- School medical records
- Registers
- Pupil files

On the basis of the urgent initial assessment, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, usually in consultation with the Principal, will decide an appropriate course of action. The urgent initial assessment should be completed promptly and if at all possible, within 24 hours of the allegation or suspicion being reported.

Name:

DOB:

Record of concerns:

Historical information:

Any previous concerns:

Family arrangements:

Pattern of attendance:

Previous communications with parents:

Course of action:

Outcomes of course of action:

Completed by:

Date:

Appendix D - Partnership with Parents Policy

Partnership with Parents Policy (EYFS)

Westholme recognises that parents/carers are the first educators of their children, and our aim is to work in partnership with parents and carers in providing an environment that supports that and involves them in the work of the setting. We will:

- Inform all parents/carers about the setting, how it operates, opening times and policies and procedures through written information, parental newsletters and informal communication.
- Assign each child with a key person with whom the parents will have regular communication. At Westholme the Key Person is the Class Teacher.
- Provide information on our fee structure and payment policy.
- Provide all parents with access to our complaints procedure and we will ensure that any complaints are dealt with effectively in accordance with the complaint's procedure.
- Provide opportunities for parents/carers to access information about the framework/activities offered in School and contribute to their child's learning in the setting and how they can be involved at home.
- Provide opportunities for parents/carers to contribute their own skills, knowledge and interest to the activities of the setting.
- Ensure all parents/carers are aware they can discuss their child's progress and development at any time.
- Involve parents/carers in the shared development record keeping about their child, either formally or informally and ensure they have access to their child's written learning and development records.
- Inform parents/carers through newsletters and letters of all news and developments within the setting and ensure that parents are aware that they are welcome to contribute in any way they feel able.
- Welcome suggestions and will actively seek parental views via whole school parent questionnaires, therefore ensuring that we are meeting the needs of both children and families.
- Listen to all suggestions and acknowledge that children, parents, and staff have the right to be consulted and be heard.
- Encourage parents/carers to participate in activities, visits or outings.
- Ensure parents/carers have access to their child's developmental records at any time and access to other records in line with the access to personal information procedure within the Confidentiality policy.
- Ensure all aspects of the child's achievements, experiences and friendships are shared and discussed with the parents. We welcome parents at any time to discuss their child's development and will hold parent events/evenings throughout the academic year.

Appendix E - Key Person Approach Policy (EYFS)

Key Person Approach Policy (EYFS)

Purpose

1. At Westholme School we listen to the needs of our families and engage in the moment to give each child and parent (when we refer to parent, we mean parent or carer) our full attention, one of the ways we work in partnership is through our Key Person approach.
2. We believe that good parental partnership is vital in establishing a healthy trusting relationship between staff and parents which will benefit the child in all aspects of school life. The Key Person approach is in place to maintain continuity of care for an individual child and to provide support for both the child and parents, by establishing a key relationship with one member of staff. We assign a Key Person to each and every child, who assumes special responsibility for that child, coordinating their care and learning and is responsible for communication with the child's parents. At Westholme School the Key Person is the child's Class Teacher.
3. A Key Person approach will:
 - Make sure that, each child feels special and individually cherished and thought about by someone in particular while they are away from home
 - Ensure each child in the EYFS will experience a close relationship that is affectionate and reliable
 - Improve care and learning for children
 - Assist staff to be better satisfied and engaged because they form personal relationships
 - Develop an environment that parents are able to feel trust and have confidence in competent devoted and professional staff
 - A Key Person does not work exclusively with his/her key children or shadow the child throughout the session. They do not prevent other adults from developing a relationship with key children. At Westholme School the whole team works with all of the children and supports the Key Person, for example by helping with observations.

The Key Person's Role

4. A Key Person is someone who:
 - Forms a unique and special attachment with a child and his/her parents.
 - Is a warm reliable and consistent significant other in a child's life outside of the home.
 - Is professional in their relationship with the child's parent/s
 - Works in partnership with the child's parent/s
 - Supports the child during significant changes in their life e.g. new baby, going to hospital
 - Ensures a flow of information between the parent and the school, especially in relation to the child.
 - Maintains supports, extends and assesses the child's *Learning Journey*,
 - Meets with the parent/s regularly to discuss progress, celebrate learning and development and plan for learning.
 - Provides opportunities for and supports a child's home language.

- Acts (where there is a need) to Safeguard Children
- Supports Special Educational Needs for their key children.
- Ensures that there is a 'buddy' person in the life of the child and the parent/s. and let the parent(s) know who the secondary Key Person is. At Westholme the 'Buddy' for Prep R children will be the Early Years Practitioner based in the Reception Class.

Assigning a Key Person/Secondary Key Person

5. The PLT is responsible for assigning Key Persons (Class Teacher) and ensuring that the Key Person Approach is fully implemented.

6. After the child's initial visit to the school, and subsequent take up of a place, a member of staff will be allocated to each child and parent/carer to act as their Key Person. At Westholme School the Key Person in Prep R is the Class Teacher. A Secondary Key Person, 'buddy' will also be appointed and will work with the Key Person to ensure that the needs of the family are met. At Westholme the 'Buddy' for Prep R children will be the Early Years Practitioner based in the Reception Class.

Change of Key Person and/or Secondary Key Person

8. There are times when there will be a need for a change of Key Person (Class Teacher). We value the importance of high-quality continuous care and stable attachments and where a change is needed then we need to work in partnership with the child's family to ensure a smooth transition to a new Key Person.

9. Prior to any change of Key Person there are a number of steps that should be taken. The EYFS Lead or PLT should:

- Inform the parent at the earliest opportunity of the change in Key Person that will occur.
- Provide the reasons for the change.
- Where possible provide an approximate change over date/period.
- Provide opportunities for the parent and the new Key Person to be introduced, both formally and informally.

10. The new Key Person (Class Teacher) also has a role to play at this stage and will: -

- Liaise with the current Key Person to exchange information on the child through Information and Consent Forms, Personal Information Sheets, Learning Journeys, observations and dialogue.
- Meet with the parent to build up a relationship and arrange a joint Parent and Key Person meeting with old and new Key Person and parents.
- Help with the handover and adopt full Key Person responsibilities in line with the policy on The Key Person Approach.

11. In the event of a new Secondary Key Person (Prep R Early Years Practitioner) the same procedure can be followed. Where a new Key Person and Secondary Key Person are to be introduced, there needs to be sensitivity with time as the Parent needs to familiarise themselves and build up a relationship with two new individuals.

Appendix F - Supervision Meeting Record (EYFS)

Supervision Meeting Record (EYFS)

Name of Supervisee:	Name of Supervisor:	Date:	Number of Key Children:
Review	<i>This allows a staff member to reflect on how they feel generally, what's been happening or pre-occupying the staff member since the last supervision.</i>		
NOTES OF DISCUSSION - This relates to day-to-day work and priorities and should provide opportunities to discuss successes and challenges.			
• Safeguarding	<i>Staff know that safeguarding concerns are reported immediately. The purpose of this section is to discuss any concerns that they have regarding training or to share ideas.</i>		
• Health and Safety	<i>This includes general health and safety issues, as well as welfare issues which could include issues such as stress and timekeeping.</i>		
• Wishes	<i>Includes discussion of activities that will help/have helped or concerns the supervisee with regards to their role. This may include working with other colleagues, training or other activities.</i>		
• Worries			
• Specific Children	<i>Staff converse frequently with the Class Teacher about children of concern; however, this section acts as a record of discussions around specific children.</i>		
• Other	<i>This is about establishing how a staff member feels at the end of supervision and an ongoing opportunity for the staff member to constructively feedback any issues raised. Staff members are encouraged to make reasonable and realistic suggestions about how their supervisor could support them better.</i>		
AGREED ACTIONS			
Specific Area	Agreed Actions	By Whom	By When
	•		
	•		
	•		
	•		
Date of next meeting			
Supervisee's signature			
Supervisor's signature			

Employee Evaluation of Supervision

Please evaluate the supervision you have received as it relates to the areas listed below.

The rating scale is as follows:

1	Strongly disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neutral
4	Agree
5	Strongly agree

Evaluation:

My supervisor provides me with appropriate training opportunities.	
My supervisor is a good teacher/coach.	
My supervisor understands my job and what I do well enough to help me improve my work.	
My supervisor clearly defines what he/she expects of me.	
My supervisor and I discuss who I can grow and advance.	
My supervisor listens well.	
My supervisor is accessible when I have a problem.	
My supervisor is a good problem-solver.	
My supervisor gives clear, helpful feedback and how I am doing my job.	
My supervisor expresses appreciation of my work.	
My supervisor communicates clearly about work plans. I understand how my job fits into the "big picture" of the work setting.	
My supervisor is a strong advocate for me.	
My supervisor expresses appreciation for my ideas and comments.	
My supervisor is prepared for my supervision.	
My supervisor reviews what we agreed from the last supervision.	
My supervisor gives me appropriate notice for my supervision.	
I benefit from having supervision.	
I feel motivated after a supervision session.	
I understand the purpose of my supervision.	
I feel my supervision is worthwhile.	
<u>What are the specific strengths you see in your supervisor?</u>	
<u>How could your supervisor improve your supervision experience?</u>	
<u>Additional comments:</u>	

Date: _____

Appendix G - Student & Volunteer Policy

Student & Volunteer Policy

Westholme EYFS recognises that the quality and variety of work which takes place in a childcare setting makes it an ideal place for students and volunteers to gain work experience or training. We aim to provide an environment in which students and volunteers, under the guidance of a skilled staff team, experience of quality practice:

- Students and volunteers under the age of 17 will not be counted in ratios and will be supervised at all times.
- Students and volunteers aged 17 and over who are undertaking a long-term placement, may be included in ratios only when we are satisfied that they are competent enough to be unsupervised.
- All students and volunteers will be DBS checked before service commences.
- We recognise that the needs of the children are paramount and students and volunteers will not be included into ratio numbers if that hinders the essential work of the provision.
- We will provide the students and volunteers with full information about the role and responsibilities within the setting during their time with us.
- We will ensure students and volunteers are known and introduced to parents and carers.
- We will provide students and volunteers with a full induction and a staff mentor.
- We will ensure all students and volunteers are supervised.
- We will ensure that any information gained by the students and volunteers about the children, families or other adults in the provision remains confidential in accordance with the confidentiality policy.
- We will provide training opportunities to support professional development.

Procedure

- An informal interview will be conducted prior to acceptance of any students and voluntary service being undertaken.
- We will request references for the students and volunteer.
- DBS checks will be undertaken, prior to acceptance of any students and voluntary service being undertaken.
- Students and volunteers will only be included in ratios when they are DBS cleared and we are satisfied that they are competent enough to be unsupervised.
- All students and volunteers will be included on the visitor/staff register (recording start and finish times).
- A personnel file will be established, to include a record sheet completed with emergency contact details.
- A students and volunteer agreement will be explained and signed and dated by the volunteer and the manager/owner /officer of the committee.

- All students and volunteers will be required to complete an induction program in accordance with the setting's induction policy with regular review sessions.
- We will ensure all students and volunteers read and sign to declare they understand all policies and procedures that are deemed needed for their role e.g. Code of Conduct.
- We will retain all records after the volunteer has ceased to work at the provision.

Appendix H - Westholme School Supervision Meetings Policy

Westholme School Supervision Meetings Policy

What is supervision?

“Supervision is primarily a tool to support the management of practice, and therefore a key part of staff supports systems and a leader or manager’s role. Where successful, it should provide practitioners with a route through which to raise any professional queries, to discuss career progression, to clarify roles, responsibilities, and work tasks, to support performance management and to build their confidence in supporting children’s development ... It should also be an opportunity for practitioners to raise any concerns that they might have about children in their care, and to receive support to help them deal with difficult or challenging situations at work.”

(The Early Years: Foundations for life, health and learning)

Supervision is a statutory requirement of the revised Early Years Foundation Stage framework (2021). It states that:

1. Providers must put appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families. Effective supervision provides support, coaching and training for the practitioner and promotes the interests of children. Supervision should foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.
2. Supervision should provide opportunities for staff to:
 - discuss any issues – particularly concerning children’s development or well-being
 - identify solutions to address issues as they arise
 - receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness.

Frequency of Supervision meetings

A cycle of meetings will be introduced so that meetings will take place once per term. However, the frequency of supervision meetings may vary dependent on particular support needs that have previously been identified.

What will happen in the Supervision meeting?

Both the supervisor and the supervisee will contribute to the meeting, using the supervision record sheet as a prompt. This includes safeguarding, health and safety, specific children, wishes, worries, and other comments. It is vital however that staff members do not wait until a Supervision meeting to raise issues which may need addressing with greater urgency. Staff should always prioritise the reporting of safeguarding, health and safety, and matters regarding children. The DSL, Deputy DSL or PLT are available daily to discuss any matters of concern. Staff meetings are also a communication platform where non-urgent issues can be raised.

Meetings will take place in a quiet room in order to be free from interruptions and enable privacy. A record of the meeting will be created, and a copy provided for the supervisee.

Completing the written record of the supervisory meeting

A handwritten record of the meeting will be completed by the supervisor as the meeting progresses. The record may, where appropriate, include points for action with clear timescales and identified responsibilities. At the end of the meeting, the supervisor and supervisee will agree on the content, by both signing the record.

Appendix I - Mandatory Safeguarding Training Requirements for Staff

Westholme School

Mandatory Safeguarding Training Requirements for Staff

When starting employment at Westholme School, the correct level of safeguarding training as prescribed below **in red** must be completed by the new member of staff and certificates passed to HR. The new member of staff will also meet with one of the school's Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) for further safeguarding training and to go through Westholme's specific safeguarding procedures and policy (also see Staff Induction and Safer Recruitment policies).

All current staff must ensure that they have completed the appropriate level and amount of training (**see below in red**) and ensure qualifications are updated when required.

All members of staff should also ensure that they have read at least Part One and Annex A of the most recent version of KCSIE and the Statutory Framework for EYFS September 2025.

All certificates should be emailed to HR.

NB – In many circumstances (although not all) 'regulatory' means staff have unsupervised access to pupils, 'non-regulatory' means staff must be supervised.

All Westholme School staff will receive updates on safeguarding and child protection at least annually in addition to the mandatory training explained below. Examples of how this will take place include during staff training, via email, staff meetings or via online courses.

<u>Staff</u>	<u>Mandatory Training Requirements</u>
<u>Introduction/Basic Awareness/</u> - Grounds and Maintenance staff - Kitchen and Cleaning staff - Finance Department - Principal's PA - Systems Manager - Science Technicians - Non-regulatory staff including - regular volunteers and Sports Coaches - Governors	This is a basic introduction to what these staff should be aware of and who to contact if they have a concern. They must be updated every 3 years. The online Safeguarding Children and Adults Awareness course must be completed. LSCB E-Learning Course: Safeguarding Children and Adults Awareness course, self-Registration is through the following link: https://blackburn.melearning.university/course_centre (NB- when registering, 'sector' is 'education' and via drop down select the Westholme School. The 3 yearly updates can either be completed through in-house training by a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or by completing the online training again. See the end of the document for further non-mandatory courses that are available for those wishing to increase their safeguarding knowledge further.
<u>Intermediate/ Experienced Awareness</u> - Commercial Director - Reception staff - Marketing Department	E-Learning Course: Safeguarding Children Levels One and Two (these are completed together as one course). Self-Registration is through the following link:

- Data Manager - Voluntary staff (regulatory) - Teaching Staff - Teaching Assistants - Student Teachers - I.T. Support Department - LRC Manager - Music/Dance/LAMDA/ Sports Coaches/Teachers (regulated activity)	https://blackburn.melearning.university/course_centre (NB- when registering, 'sector' is 'education' and please just input 'other' in both the 'service' and 'group' boxes. Under where it says 'Welcome' click on the right-hand box called 'self-register'. Complete the required fields: -username is anything you want it to be -where it says 'Sector', choose 'Schools - Blackburn with Darwen' · you should then be able to choose Westholme from the drop down for 'Service' · No need to add a photo(!) · then at the bottom click 'send log-in request) Plus, in-house safeguarding training from a DSL at least annually Staff must also complete the Prevent general awareness. This can be completed via the following link: http://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk Prevent is supporting people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and how to refer them to the Channel programme. This will be completed at least once every three years See the end of the document for further non-mandatory courses that are available for those wishing to increase their safeguarding knowledge further.
<u>Advanced Awareness</u> <i>Designated Safeguarding Leads- DSLs</i> - Principal - PLT - Deputy Heads - Assistant Heads - Heads of Year - Assistant Heads of Year - School Nurse - Wellbeing Advisor - Nominated Governors	All DSLs Safeguarding Children Level 3 – Designated Officer online course (this will be completed at least once every two years). The Westholme Finance team can purchase the link to the course – an email will then be sent through with the link attached. Sexual Abuse and an Introduction to CSE - Complete the E-Learning Course. This only needs to be completed once https://blackburn.melearning.university/course_centre Prevent - Working to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) – Prevent is supporting people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and how to refer them to the Channel programme. All staff at this level will need to undertake this 45 minute Prevent training https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/home or receive face to face training. These needs updating at least every three years.
<u>Safer Recruitment Training</u> - Principal - Commercial Director - HR Manager - Deputy Heads - Nominated Safeguarding Governors	At least one member of any recruitment/selection panel must have undertaken 'Safer Recruitment Training'. This must be updated every 3 years. This can be provided by the SCP and can be booked via the following link: https://blackburn.melearning.university/user/login

	Once logged in (you may need to set up a new user login) go to 'courses' on the top menu bar and select 'online courses. Safer recruitment is there – 2-hour course.
<u>Any member of staff wishing to increase their safeguarding knowledge above and beyond the requirements set out above</u>	<u>Non-Mandatory</u> Staff should pass on electronic or hard copies of any completed courses to HR. - Staff can also read the information 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' by following this link: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What to do if you re worried a child is being abuse d.pdf - The following online courses can be completed by accessing this link: https://blackburn.melearning.university/course_centre • Online safety – Risks to children • Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage • Safeguarding Against Radicalisation - the Prevent Duty • Safeguarding Children with Disabilities • Safeguarding Children and Adults Awareness • Hate Crime • Domestic Abuse Awareness - Prevent general awareness. This can be completed via the following link: http://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk Prevent is supporting people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and how to refer them to the Channel programme. - Prevent is supporting people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and how to refer them to the Channel programme. - Prevent - Working to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) – Prevent is supporting people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and how to refer them to the Channel programme. To undertake this 45 minute, Prevent training, follow this link: https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/home

Records of attendance and/or completion of training will be held by the HR department

Appendix J – Pupil injury sustained out of school



WESTHOLME SCHOOL

Pupil injury to sustained out of school

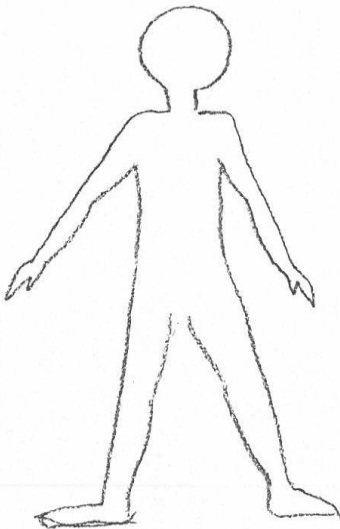
Date _____
Name of pupil _____
Class _____
Name of member of staff who first saw the injury _____
Description of the injury _____

Please mark position on body map below

Child's explanation _____

Parent/Carer's explanation _____

Signed _____
Signature of Head teacher _____



Appendix K – High Risk Factors

High Risk Indicators

Those elements which, by their presence, do constitute a risk:

- Previous involvement in child physical and sexual abuse/neglect
- History of being significantly harmed through neglect as a child
- Seriousness of abuse (and impact on the child)
- Age of the child (particularly if less than three years old)
- Incidence of abuse (how much abuse over how long a period of time)
- Record of previous violent/sexual offending (against both children and adults)
- Evidence of disorganised attachment in the adult
- Older child removed or relinquished
- Unexplained bruising (particularly in pre mobile children)
- Uncontrolled mental health difficulties (including periods of hospitalisation)
- Personality disorders
- Chaotic drug/alcohol misuse
- Denial/failure to accept responsibility for abuse/neglect
- Unwillingness/inability to put child's needs first and take protective action
- Cognitive distortions about the use of violence and appropriate sexual behaviour
- Inability to keep self safe
- Unrealistic, age inappropriate expectations of the child

This list is extensive but not exhaustive.

Underlying Risk Factors

Those elements that are often present in risk situations but which do not, of themselves, constitute a risk:

- Poverty
- Poor housing
- Lack of support network/isolation
- Experiences of poor parenting
- Low educational attainment
- Physical/learning disability (adult / child)
- Mental health difficulties (adult / child)
- Drug and alcohol use/misuse
- Victimisation from abuse/neglect
- Disordered/discordant relationships
- Previous history of offending
- Rejecting/antagonistic to professional support
- Behavioural/emotional difficulties in parent
- Behaviour/emotional difficulties in child
- Young, inexperienced parent
- Physical ill health (adult / child)
- Unresolved loss or grief

ACEs aware: Parental history of ACE may serve as a marker of risk for child adversity. Identification of parental ACE may enable early targeted interventions for children at risk. Parents who have experienced toxic stress themselves may have difficulty providing the safe, stable and nurturing relationship that is key for resilience in a child. Parents with 4 or more ACEs are more at risk.

ACE	Mother	Father	Other	Date. How knowledge was gathered. Other information
1. Emotional abuse				
2. Physical abuse				
3. Sexual abuse				
4. Emotional neglect				
5. Physical neglect				
6. Mother treated violently				
7. Household substance abuse				
8. Household mental illness				
9. Parental separation or divorce				
10. Incarcerated household member				
11. Bullying (by another child or adult)				
12. Witnessing violence outside the home				
13. Witness a brother or sister being abused				
14. Racism, sexism, or any other form of discrimination				
15. Being homeless				
16. Natural disasters and war				

Appendix L – Use of Force Incident Record

USE OF FORCE TO CONTROL OR RESTRAIN PUPILS: INCIDENT RECORD

Details of pupil or pupils on whom force was used by a member of staff (name/class)	
Date, time and location of incident	
Names of staff involved (directly or as witnesses)	
Details of other pupils involved (directly or as witnesses), including whether any of the pupils were vulnerable for SEN, disability, medical or social reasons.	
Description of incident by the staff involved, including any attempts to de-escalate and warnings given that force might be used.	
Reason for using force and description of force used.	
Any injury suffered by staff or pupils and any first aid and /or medical attention required.	
Reasons for making a record of the incident	
Follow-up, including post incident support and any disciplinary action against pupil	
Any information about the incident shared with staff not involved in it and external agencies.	
When and how those with parental responsibility were informed about the incident and any views they have expressed	
Has any complaint been lodged (details should not be recorded here)	
Report compiled by:	Report countersigned by:
Name and role:	Name and role:
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:

This form should be completed and given to the Lead DSL or the Principal without delay

Appendix M – Risk Management Form

Child and staff risk assessment during an investigation of an allegation (low level concern)

RISK MANAGEMENT FORM for:

Incident/ Allegation	
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Suspension RA:

Risks	Additional detail (specific details of risk in table below)	Likelihood			
		Highly	Likely	Unlikely	Highly Unlikely
Could the continued presence in the school be a risk to the individual (i.e. physical or emotional well-being)?	See below			X	
Could the continued presence in the school be a risk to others (i.e. pupils, colleagues, third parties)?	See below				X
Could the individual's continued presence in the workplace make it difficult for a full and proper investigation of the incident/ allegation	XXXX is needed for the investigation and has expressed she wants to continue to work				X
Could the individual's continued presence in the workplace cause significant disruption to school activities (i.e. service provision, anxiety for colleagues)?	Ensuring XXXX has support in the classroom whilst the investigation carries on means that others will lose out on TA support			X	
Would the continued presence in the school pose a risk to the reputation of the school?	XXXX is a well-known, long serving member of the school who is well respected and has had no previous accusations brought against her of this nature				X
Would suspension be in the public interest? Is the allegation one that may lead to or involve significant legal action, e.g. fine,	Accusation is worrying and warrant investigation but it is felt it does not warrant either criminal investigation or suspension				X

imprisonment, etc (and could the continued presence in the school compromise a criminal investigation)?					
Are there any other risks (e.g. financial)? Please specify.	Reputational damage for school and potentially member of staff				X

Outcome of assessment: Suspension not required at this point

Risks and Proposed control measures and safeguards:

Area being assessed & those affected – who is at risk	Issue/ factors that place them at risk	What is the risk?	Control Measures and Action to reduce risk	Other factors to be considered	What additional agreed controls are being put in place?	Risk level after control measures (H/ M/ L)
The child	The child is in school and so is in contact with the class teacher (alleged perpetrator)	The child may feel nervous, uncomfortable, under threat, alleged incident may reoccur	Child is monitored to ensure that they are happy Suspension of teacher considered and discussed (this can be reconsidered at any point during the investigation) Investigation carried out in line with policy	Wishes of parents considered (in this case they want her to be in class and for things to carry on 'as normal' Member of staff has had no allegations against them in the past and no concerns of this nature raised before	Heightened visibility of members of staff TA to be used more in the room – where possible until investigation is concluded to ensure that child/ staff have support Parents appraised during investigation and on its conclusion	L

			SLT and member of staff made aware of investigation			
Other children in the class	Teacher remains within the setting (alleged perpetrator)	Member of staff has been accused of physicality by another child	Children are monitored to ensure that they are happy Suspension of teacher considered and discussed (this can be reconsidered at any point during the investigation) SLT and member of staff made aware of investigation	Member of staff has had no allegations against them in the past and no concerns of this nature raised before – investigation	Heightened visibility of members of staff TA to be used more in the room – where possible until investigation is concluded to ensure that children/ staff have support	L
The member of staff	Possibility of false accusation and damage to reputation, confidence, mental health, stress Allegation is founded	Possibility of false accusation and damage to reputation, confidence, mental health Allegation is founded – reputational damage, disciplinary hearing, reputational damage to school	Support member of staff through the process – designated member of staff as peer support. HR support Investigation carried out in line with policy LADO informed	Effect on class teaching, relationship with other children and child who has made the accusation	Heightened visibility of members of staff TA to be used more in the room – where possible until investigation is concluded to ensure that children/ staff have support XXXX to be advised she can seek union support	L

Date: _____ Signed: _____(Line Manager) Date: _____

Appendix N - Allegations Made About Staff, including Supply Teachers, Volunteers and Contractors

Westholme School has procedures for dealing with concerns and/or allegations made about staff (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) that aim to strike a balance to protect children from abuse (the overriding principle) but also to protect these staff from false or unfounded allegations. At any stage of consideration or investigation, all unnecessary delays should be eradicated. If an allegation of abuse is made about a member of the teaching staff, support staff, governing body, someone working for externally managed services within the school or a volunteer, the Principal should be informed immediately. (Allegations against the Designated Lead and Commercial Director should go to the Principal). If the Principal is not available, the Chairman of the Governors should be informed without delay. The colleague about who the allegation has been made should not be informed until the LADO has been consulted. Allegations regarding the Principal should be made to the Chairman of the Governors without notifying the Principal first. Allegations regarding the Chairman of the Governors and a situation where there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to the Principal, should be reported directly to the LADO. In a case of serious harm, the police should be informed from the outset.

There are two sections covering the two levels of allegation/concern:

1. Allegations that may meet the harms threshold.
2. Allegation/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold – referred to for the purposes of this guidance as ‘low level concerns’.

Full details of our process for Managing Allegation against Staff, including Supply Teacher, Volunteers and Contractors can be found in Appendix N

Section 1 - Allegations that may meet the harms threshold

This section is about managing cases of allegations that might indicate a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children in school. This guidance should be followed where it is alleged that any member of staff working in the school that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors has:

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

The last bullet point above includes behaviour that may have happened outside of school or college, that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children, this is known as transferable risk. Where appropriate an assessment of transferable risk to children with whom the person works should be undertaken. If in doubt seek advice from the local authority designated officer (LADO). A “case manager” will lead any investigation. This will be the Principal, or, where the Principal is the subject of an allegation, the chair of governors.

The initial response to an allegation

Where the school or college identify a child has been harmed, that there may be an immediate risk of harm to a child or if the situation is an emergency, they should contact children's social care and as appropriate the police immediately.

There are two aspects to consider when an allegation is made:

1. Looking after the welfare of the child - the DSL is responsible for ensuring that the child is not at risk and referring cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care
2. Investigating and supporting the person subject to the allegation - the case manager should discuss with the LADO, the nature, content and context of the allegation, and agree a course of action.

When dealing with allegations, Westholme School should:

- apply common sense and judgement;
- deal with allegations quickly, fairly and consistently; and
- provide effective protection for the child and support the person subject to the allegation.

Westholme School will follow the local authority arrangements for managing allegations, including contacting the LADO, (01254) 666926 as soon as possible.

Before contacting the LADO, school will conduct basic enquiries to establish the facts to help them determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation. For example:

- was the individual in the school or college at the time of the allegations?
- did the individual, or could they have, come into contact with the child?
- are there any witnesses? and,
- was there any CCTV footage?

These are just a sample of example questions.

When to inform the individual of the allegation should be considered carefully on a case-by-case basis, with guidance as required from the LADO, and if appropriate children's social care and the police. If there is cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, a strategy discussion involving the police and/or children's social care will be convened in accordance with the statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. If the allegation is about physical contact, for example restraint, the strategy discussion or initial evaluation with the LADO should take into account that teachers and other school and college staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain children in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour.

See further guidance on Use of Reasonable Force within this policy.

Where the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the member of staff's family, they should discuss these concerns with the DSL and make a risk assessment (Appendix M) of the

situation. It may be necessary for the DSL to make a referral to children's social care. Where it is clear that an investigation by the police or children's social care is unnecessary, or the strategy discussion or initial assessment decides that is the case, the LADO should discuss the next steps with the case manager.

No further action

Where the initial discussion leads to no further action, the case manager and the LADO should:

- record the decision and justification for it; and,
- agree on what information should be put in writing to the individual concerned and by whom.

Further enquiries

Where further enquiries are required to enable a decision about how to proceed, the LADO and case manager should discuss how and by whom the investigation will be undertaken. In straightforward cases, the investigation should normally be undertaken by a senior member of the school's staff. Where there is a lack of appropriate resource within the school, or the nature or complexity of the allegation requires it, the allegation will require an independent investigator. School will ensure they secure the services of a person who is independent of the school. The case manager should monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible in a thorough and fair process. Reviews should be conducted at fortnightly or monthly intervals, depending on the complexity of the case. Wherever possible, the first review should take place no later than four weeks after the initial assessment. Dates for subsequent reviews, ideally at fortnightly intervals, should be set at the review meeting if the investigation continues. The LADO will provide advice and guidance to the school when considering allegations against adults working with children. The LADO's role is not to investigate the allegation, but to ensure that an appropriate investigation is carried out, whether that is by the police, children's social care, the school, or a combination of these.

Supply teachers and all contracted staff

In some circumstances school will have to consider an allegation against an individual not directly employed by them, where its disciplinary procedures do not fully apply because agencies will have their own policies and procedures; for example, supply teachers or contracted staff provided by an employment agency or business. Whilst schools and colleges are not the employer of supply teachers, they should ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In no circumstances will school decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the LADO to determine a suitable outcome. The Governing body should discuss with the supply agency or agencies where the supply teacher is working across a number of schools or colleges, whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, whilst they carry out their investigation. Agencies should be fully involved and co-operate with any enquiries from the LADO, police and/or children's social care. The school will usually take the lead because agencies do not have direct access to children or other school staff, so they will not be able to collect the facts when an allegation is made, nor do they have all the relevant information required by the LADO as part of the referral process. Supply teachers, whilst not employed by the school, are under the supervision, direction and control of the governing body when working in the school. They should be advised to contact their trade union representative if they have one, or a colleague for support. The allegations management meeting which is often arranged by the LADO should address issues such as information sharing, to ensure that any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency or agencies are taken into account by the school or college during the investigation. When using a supply agency, schools and colleges should inform the agency of its process for managing allegations but also take account of the agency's policies and their duty to refer to the DBS

as personnel suppliers. This should include inviting the agency's human resource manager or equivalent to meetings and keeping them up to date with information about its policies.

Governors

If an allegation is made against a governor, schools will follow the local procedures. Where an allegation is substantiated, they should follow the procedures to consider removing them from office.

Suspension

Suspension should not be an automatic response when an allegation is reported. All options to avoid suspension should be considered prior to taking that step. The case manager must consider carefully whether the circumstances warrant suspension from contact with children at the school or college, or until the allegation is resolved. It should be considered only in cases where there is cause to suspect a child or other children at the school is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. If in doubt, the case manager should seek views from their personnel adviser and the LADO, as well as the police and children's social care where they have been involved. Where a school is made aware that the Secretary of State has made an interim prohibition order, in respect of an individual who works at a school or sixth form college, they should take immediate action to ensure the individual does not carry out work in contravention of the order. This means that pending the findings of the TRA investigation, the individual must not carry out teaching work. School should have clear policies on pay arrangements whilst the person is suspended or where there is an interim prohibition order in place. In many cases, an inquiry can be resolved quickly and without the need for suspension. The employer will decide on whether the individual should continue to work at the school or college, based on consultation with the LADO who will provide relevant information they have received from the police or children's social care on whether they have any objections to the member of staff continuing to work during the investigation of the case. The case manager should be as inventive as possible to avoid suspension. Based on advice from the school or college's HR provider and/or a risk analysis drawn up with the LADO, the following alternatives should be considered by the case manager before suspending a member of staff:

- redeployment within the school or college so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned;
- providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children;
- redeploying to alternative work in the school or college so the individual does not have unsupervised access to children;
- moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the member of staff, but this decision should only be made if it is in the best interest of the child or children concerned and takes accounts of their views. It should be made clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted; or
- temporarily redeploying the member of staff to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school or college or where available.

These alternatives allow time for an informed decision regarding the suspension, this will, however, depend upon the nature of the allegation. The case manager should consider the potential permanent professional reputational damage to employees that can result from suspension where an allegation is later found to be unfounded, unsubstantiated, malicious, or false.

If immediate suspension is considered necessary, the case manager should record the rationale and justification for such a course of action. This should also include what alternatives to suspension have been considered and why they were rejected. Where it has been deemed appropriate to suspend the person, written confirmation should be given within one working day, giving as much detail as appropriate for the reasons for the suspension. It is not acceptable for an employer to leave a person who has been suspended without any support. The person should be informed at the point of their suspension who their named contact is within the organisation and provided with their contact details. Children's social care or the police may give their view to the LADO but they cannot require the case manager to suspend a member of staff or a volunteer, although the case manager should give appropriate weight to their views. The power to suspend is vested in the governing body who are the employers. However, where a strategy discussion, or initial assessment, concludes that there should be enquiries by the children's social care, and/or an investigation by the police, the LADO should canvass police and children's social care for views about whether the accused member of staff should be suspended from contact with children. Police involvement does not make it mandatory to suspend a member of staff; this decision should be taken on a case-by-case basis having undertaken a risk assessment about whether the person poses a risk of harm to children.

Supporting those involved

Duty of care

The welfare of a child is paramount and this will be the prime concern in terms of investigating an allegation against a person in a position of trust. However, when an allegation or safeguarding concern is being investigated it is likely to be a very stressful experience for the adult subject of the investigation, and potentially for their family members. It is important that an employer offers appropriate welfare support at such a time and recognises the sensitivity of the situation. Information is confidential and should not ordinarily be shared with other staff or with children or parents who are not directly involved in the investigation. Employers have a duty of care to their employees. They should:

- manage and minimise the stress caused by the allegation;
- inform the individual as soon as possible, explaining the likely course of action, guided by the LADO, and the police where necessary;
- advise the individual to contact their trade union representative, or a colleague for support;
- appoint a named representative to keep the person informed about progress of the case;
- provide access to counselling or medical advice where appropriate. For staff in schools maintained by the local authority this may include support via the local authority's occupational health arrangements; and
- not prevent social contact with work colleagues and friends, when staff are suspended, unless there is evidence to suggest this may prejudice the gathering of evidence.
- Parents or carers of the child or children involved should be:
 - formally told about the allegation as soon as possible. The case manager should consult the LADO and where involved children's social care and/or the police on what information can be disclosed;
 - kept informed about the progress of the case, only in relation to their child - no information can be shared regarding the staff member; and
 - made aware of the requirement to maintain confidentiality and unwanted publicity about any allegations made against teachers in schools whilst investigations are in progress as set out in section 141F of the Education Act 2002.

Confidentiality and Information sharing

In an allegations management meeting or during the initial assessment of the case, the agencies involved should share all relevant information they have about the person who is the subject of the allegation, and about the alleged victim. Where the police are involved, wherever possible the school or college should ask the police to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the employer's disciplinary process. This should be done as their investigation proceeds and will enable the police to share relevant information without delaying the conclusion of their investigation or any court case.

Children's social care should adopt a similar procedure when making enquiries to determine whether the child or children named in the allegation are in need of protection or services, so that any information obtained in the course of those enquiries which is relevant to a disciplinary case can be passed to the employer without delay. School will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. The Education Act 2011 amended the Education Act 2002, to introduce reporting restrictions. These provisions made it an offence (except in the limited circumstance expressly permitted by the legislation), for any person to publish any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher in a school who has been accused by, or on behalf of, a child from the same school (where that identification would identify the teacher as the subject of the allegation). The reporting restrictions apply until:

- the point that the accused person is charged with a relevant offence; or
- the Secretary of State¹²² or the General Teaching Council for Wales publishes information about an investigation or decision in a disciplinary case arising from the allegation.

The reporting restrictions are disapplied if the individual to whom the restrictions apply effectively waives their right to anonymity by going public themselves or by giving their written consent for another to do so or if a court lifts the reporting restrictions in response to a request to do so. The legislation prevents the "publication" of material by any person that may lead to the identification of the teacher who is the subject of the allegation. "Publication" includes "any speech, writing, relevant programme or other communication in whatever form, which is addressed to the public at large or any section of the public." This means that a parent who, for example, published details of the allegation on a social networking site would be in breach of the reporting restrictions (if what was published could lead to the identification of the teacher by members of the public).

In circumstances where schools need to make parents aware about an allegation, they should make parents and others aware that there are restrictions on publishing information. In accordance with the Authorised Professional Practice published by the College of Policing in May 2017, the police will not normally provide any information to the press or media that might identify an individual who is under investigation, unless and until the person is charged with a criminal offence. In exceptional cases where the police wish to depart from that rule, for example an appeal to trace a suspect, they must apply to a magistrates' court to request that reporting restrictions be lifted. The case manager should take advice from the LADO, police and children's social care to agree the following:

- who needs to know and exactly what information can be shared;
- how to manage speculation, leaks and gossip;
- what, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation; and
- how to manage press interest if, and when, it should arise.

Allegation outcomes

The definitions that should be used when schools and colleges determine the outcome of an allegation are set out below:

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation;
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm to the person subject of the allegation;
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation; • **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence; or,
- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

Ultimately the options open to school depend on the nature and circumstances of the allegations and the evidence and information available. This will range from taking no further action, to dismissal or a decision not to use the person's services in future. Suspension should not be the default position; an individual should be suspended only if there is no reasonable alternative. If the allegation is substantiated and:

- the person is dismissed; resigns, or otherwise ceases to provide his or her services; or
- the employer ceases to use the person's services.

The employer has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required. The case manager must consider whether to refer the matter to the TRA to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching. There is a legal requirement for employers to make a referral to the DBS where they consider an individual has engaged in conduct that harmed (or is likely to harm) a child; or if a person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child.

Following a criminal investigation or a prosecution

The police should inform the LADO and the employer immediately when:

- a criminal investigation and any subsequent trial is complete,
- it is decided to close an investigation without charge, or
- it is decided not to continue to prosecute after the person has been charged.

In those circumstances, during the joint assessment meeting the LADO should discuss with the case manager whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed. The information provided by the police and/or children's social care should also inform that decision. The options will depend on the circumstances of the case and the consideration should take into account the result of the police investigation or the trial, as well as the different standard of proof required in disciplinary and criminal proceedings.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegations

If an allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO, case manager and DSL should consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or

may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate. If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school or college, should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per their own behaviour policy.

Returning to work

Where it is decided on the conclusion of a case that a person who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager should consider how best to facilitate that. Guidance and advice are usually provided via HR or the LADO. Most people will benefit from some help and support to return to work after a stressful experience. Depending on the individual's circumstances, a phased return and/or the provision of a mentor to provide assistance and support in the short term may be appropriate. The case manager should also consider how the person's contact with the child or children who made the allegation can best be managed if they are still attending the school or college.

Managing the situation and exit arrangements

Resignations and 'settlement agreements'

'Settlement agreements' (sometimes referred to as compromise agreements), by which a person agrees to resign if the employer agrees not to pursue disciplinary action and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference, should not be used, where there are allegations that indicate the person is a risk or poses a risk of harm to children or deemed not suitable to work with children. Such an agreement will not prevent a thorough police and/or school or college investigation where that is appropriate. School will not cease their investigations if the person leaves, resigns or ceases to provide their services. It is important that every effort is made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations bearing on the safety or welfare of children, including any in which the person concerned refuses to cooperate. Wherever possible, the accused should be given full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations about it. The process of recording the allegation and any supporting evidence and reaching a judgement about whether it can be substantiated or otherwise on the basis of all the information available, should continue even if the accused does not cooperate. It may be difficult to reach a conclusion in those circumstances, and it may not be possible to apply any disciplinary sanctions if a person's period of notice expires before the process is complete, but it is important to reach and record an outcome wherever possible. The person concerned should be notified of the conclusion of the allegations and sanctions that might be posed. Other than where allegations are false, malicious, unsubstantiated, or unfounded, the outcome should be made clear when providing references to prospective employers. This is particularly important where the person moves into another position involving working with children. It is not appropriate to reach a settlement/compromise agreement if the person subject to the allegation resigns or their services cease to be used. However, in limited circumstances schools and colleges sometimes use settlement agreements to end the employment relationship on agreed terms, but not where there is an allegation that the individual poses a risk to children. Where a settlement/compromise agreement is used, schools and colleges should not let it prevent the employer from:

- fulfilling their legal duty to refer cases to the DBS where the referral criteria are met. Non-compliance of this duty is a criminal offence; or
- providing a reference to potential employers when requested; or
- considering whether to make a referral to the Teaching Regulations Agency where the criteria are met

Record keeping

Details of allegations following an investigation that are found to have been malicious or false should be removed from personnel records, unless the individual gives their consent for retention of the information. However, for all other allegations, it is important that the following information is kept on the file of the person accused:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation;
- details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved;
- a note of any action taken, and decisions reached and the outcome as categorised above;
- a copy provided to the person concerned, where agreed by children's social care or the police; and,
- a declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference.

The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference. It will provide clarification in cases where future DBS checks reveal information from the police about an allegation that did not result in a criminal conviction and it will help to prevent unnecessary re-investigation if, as sometimes happens, an allegation re-surfaces after a period of time. Schools and colleges have an obligation to preserve records which contain information about allegations of sexual abuse for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry (further information can be found on the IICSA website). All other records should be retained at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer. The Information Commissioner has published guidance on employment records in its Employment Practices Code and supplementary guidance, which provides some practical advice on record retention. This can be found on the ICO website.

References

Cases in which an allegation was found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious should not be included in employer references. Any repeated concerns or allegations which have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious should also not be included in any reference. Substantiated allegations should be included in references, provided that the information is factual and does not include opinions.

Learning lessons

Throughout the process in handling allegations and at conclusion of a case in which an allegation is substantiated, the LADO should review the circumstances of the case with the case manager to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the school's procedures to help prevent similar events in the future. This should include issues arising from any decision to suspend the member of staff, the duration of the suspension and whether or not suspension was justified. Lessons should also be learnt from the use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. The LADO and case manager should consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual. For all other cases the case manager should consider the facts and determine whether any improvements can be made.

Non recent allegations

Where an adult makes an allegation to school that they were abused as a child, the individual should be advised to report the allegation to the police. Non recent allegations made by a child, should be reported to the LADO in line with the local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations. The LADO will coordinate with children social care and the police. Abuse can be reported no matter how long ago it happened.

Section 2: Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold. This policy makes it clear what a low-level concern is and the importance of sharing low-level concerns. The purpose of this section of the policy is to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which Westholme's values and expected behaviour which are set out in the staff code of conduct are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff.

Concerns (including allegations) which do not meet the harm threshold set out above may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

As part of our whole school approach to safeguarding, Westholme School promotes an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all staff working in or on behalf of the school or college (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately (See Confidential Reporting [Whistleblowing] Policy).

Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harms threshold) are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical. This should encourage an open and transparent culture; enabling school to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school or college are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of Westholme.

What is a low-level concern?

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out above. 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 or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, 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.

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; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse. It is crucial that any such concerns, including those which do not meet the allegation/harm threshold are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

Westholme School achieves the purpose of our low-level concerns policy by:

- ensuring their staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others;
- empowering staff to share any low-level safeguarding concerns with the DSL, Principal or Deputy Head of Prep;
- addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage;
- providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised; and,
- helping identify any weakness in the school or colleges safeguarding system.

Sharing low-level concerns

Low-level concerns about a member of staff should be reported to the DSL (or deputy). Where a low-level concern is raised about the DSL, it should be shared with the Principal. (Also see Confidential Reporting/Whistle-blowing policy). The DSL (or deputy) will inform the Principal of all the low-level concerns and in a timely fashion according to the nature of each particular low-level concern. The Principal should be the ultimate decision maker in respect of all low-level concerns, although it is recognised that depending on the nature of some low-level concerns and/or the role of the DSL in some schools/colleges, the Principal may wish to consult with the DSL and take a more collaborative decision-making approach.

Westholme School aims 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.

Where a low-level concern relates to a person employed by a supply agency or a contractor, that concern should be shared with the DSL (or deputy), and/or the Principal, and recorded in accordance with the school's low-level concern/staff code of conduct policy, and their employer notified about the concern, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

If there is any doubt as to whether the information which has been shared about a member of staff as a low-level concern in fact meets the harm threshold, they should consult with their LADO.

Recording low-level concerns

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing by the DSL (or deputy). The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their

concerns should also be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible.

The HR Manager will decide where these records are kept, but they must be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, the school or college should decide on a course of action, either through its disciplinary procedures or where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold, in which case it should be referred to the LADO. Consideration should also be given to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school or college that enabled the behaviour to occur and where appropriate policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

It is for schools and colleges to decide how long they retain such information, but it is recommended that it is retained at least until the individual leaves their employment.

References

KCSiE is clear that schools and colleges should only provide substantiated safeguarding allegations in references. Low level concerns should not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance. It follows that a low-level concern which relates exclusively to safeguarding (and not to misconduct or poor performance) should not be referred to in a reference. However, where a low-level concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated, it should be referred to in a reference.

Responding to low-level concerns

Concerns about safeguarding should be reported to the DSL or their deputy. The DSL will then discuss with the Principal and ensure an action plan is created and followed to investigate further. If the concern has been raised via a third party, the designated safeguarding lead should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

- directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously;
- to the individual involved and any witnesses.

The information collected will help them to categorise the type of behaviour and determine what further action may need to be taken. All of this will be recorded along with the rationale for decisions and action taken.

Westholme will consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant suspension or whether alternative arrangements (such as a risk assessment) should be put in place. School will give due weight to the views of the LADO, KCSiE (2025) and WTSC (2026) when making a decision about suspension. In borderline cases, discussions with the LADO can be held informally and without naming the school or individual.

There is a legal requirement for schools and colleges to make a referral to the DBS where they remove an individual from regulated activity (or would have removed an individual had they not left), and they believe the individual has:

- engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults,

- satisfied the harm test in relation to children and/or vulnerable adults; or
- been cautioned or convicted of a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence.

The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. Detailed guidance on when to refer to the DBS (including what is the harm test and relevant conduct), and what information must be provided, can be found on www.gov.uk Referrals should be made as soon as possible, when an individual is removed from regulated activity. This could include when an individual is suspended, redeployed to work that is not regulated activity, dismissed or when they have resigned. It is important that as much relevant information is provided to the DBS as possible, as it relies on the quality of information provided to them. When an allegation is made, an investigation should be carried out to gather enough evidence to establish if it has foundation, and employers should ensure they have sufficient information to meet the referral duty criteria explained in the DBS referral guidance, which can be found on www.gov.uk Where a school or sixth form college teacher's employer, including an agency, dismisses or ceases to use the services of a teacher because of serious misconduct, or might have dismissed them or ceased to use their services had they not left first, they must consider whether to refer the case to the Secretary of State, as required by sections 141D and 141E of the Education Act 2002. The Secretary of State may investigate the case, and if s/he finds there is a case to answer, must then decide whether to make a prohibition order in respect of the person. Details about how to make a referral to the TRA can be found on www.gov.uk

Staff are required to sign a self-declaration to say that they will inform the Principal or Commercial Director if they are charged or cautioned for a criminal offence. Also, those staff who work in (or employees who are directly concerned in the management of) provision of pupils under the age of 8 (namely early years or relevant later years) must inform the Principal or Commercial Director if they are living in the same household where another person who is disqualified lives or works, as soon as a caution or conviction occurs, even before the person is formally included on the children's barred list. The disqualification by association rule and advice applies not only to employees but others such as volunteers, supply/agency staff, self-employed people, staff of other organisations contracted to provide childcare, governors who volunteer with the relevant groups or are directly concerned with their day-to-day management. By contrast, those who are not involved in childcare are not within the remit of these regulations, for example, cleaners and kitchen staff. As well as being caught by the 'by association' rule, those involved in the childcare of under 8s will also be disqualified if they:

- are on the DBS Children's Barred List;
- are being cautioned for, convicted of or charged with certain violent and sexual criminal offences against children and adults, at home or abroad;
- are the subject of certain other orders relating to the care of children;
- have had refusal or cancellation of registration relating to childcare or children's homes or being prohibited from private fostering.

Disqualification occurs as soon as the above criteria are met e.g. as soon as a caution or conviction occurs, even before the person is formally included on the children's barred list.

School will inform Ofsted where they are satisfied that a person working in a relevant setting falls within one of the disqualification criteria. Staff who are disqualified, including by association may apply to Ofsted for a waiver of disqualification, unless they are barred from working with children, but such staff may not be used unless and until such waiver is confirmed.

Where a teacher has been dismissed (or would have been dismissed if they had not resigned) for 'unacceptable professional conduct', 'conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute' or 'a conviction, at any time, for a relevant offence' that would not reach the threshold for a DBS referral a referral to the TRA should be considered. This may lead to a prohibition order if appropriate.

Westholme School has a culture of valuing staff and of reflective practice. If at any time a member of staff feels there is poor or unsafe practice and/or potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime then they should address this with the DSL in the first instance, followed by the Principal and then the Chairman of Governors if it is felt that the matter has not been dealt with satisfactorily. It is important that staff feel confident in doing this to ensure the safety of all our school community. There will be transparency and accountability in relation to how concerns are received and handled. There will also be provision for mediation and dispute resolution where necessary.

Approved and ratified by Governors 01/09/25: