Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

The Abbey School, Reading

Reviewed by:	Executive Head	August 2023
Ratified by:	Council of Governors	25 September 2023
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Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Senior School)	Charlotte Hart, Director of Sixth Form
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Head (Junior School)	Nisha Kaura
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Head	William le Fleming
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	Telephone number: 01189 872256
Chair of Governors	Elizabeth Harrison
	Telephone number: 01189 872256
Nominated Safeguarding Governor	Sue Colebrook
	Telephone number: 01189 872256

External contacts

Brighter Futures for Children	
Address	Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU
Telephone number	For general enquiries, call 0118 937 3641. For concerns/emergencies, use the Children's Single Point of Access details below.
Email	info@BrighterFuturesforChildren.org

Children's Single Point of Access	The Children's Single Point of Access is for any concerns about a child, which includes safeguarding and child protection. It is a single point of contact for all early help and children's services, including disabled children. The line is open to all practitioners and the general public. There are two ways to contact the team: · Using a web form, which is the most secure and effective way of requesting help for a child. The form can be found at: https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/professionals/report-or-refer-concerns-about-a-child/ · Call the team on 0118 937 3641
Reading LADO	Telephone number: 0118 937 2684 Email: LADO@brighterfuturesforchildren.org More information: https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/for-parents-carers/schools/allegations-against-people-in-a-position-of-trust/

The local police non-emergency contact number for **FGM reporting** is **101.**

Prevent reporting is managed using the Children's Single Point of Access as above. More information is available from the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Thames Valley Police (the link to Thames Valley Police may need to be copied into a browser window):

https://www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/professionals/prevent-1

https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/t/prevent/prevent/

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (**NSPCC**) whistleblowing helpline can be contacted on:

NSPCC
Weston House
42 Curtain Road London EC2A 3NH
Telephone: 0800 028 0285 (from 8am to 8pm)
Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

1 Policy statement

1.1 Every student should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse and neglect. The Abbey School is committed to a whole-school approach to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and to acting always in the best interests of the child. The Abbey requires everyone who comes into contact with children and their families to share this commitment.

1.2 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (**KCSIE 2023**) defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

1.3 The School provides a safe and caring environment so that every student can learn in safety. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and anyone, not just staff, can make a referral to Local Safeguarding agencies.

1.4 Guidance, advice and legislation

1.4.1 The School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (**Policy**) has regard to the following guidance, advice and legislation:

(a) *Keeping Children Safe in Education* 2023 (**KCSIE 2023**), including the additional information in Annex B on specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues, incorporating previous DfE guidance on sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges;

(b) *Working Together to Safeguard Children* 2023;

(c) *Domestic Abuse Act 2021*

(d) *Disqualification under the Childcare Act* 2006 (updated 2018);

(e) *Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales* 2015 (updated 2021);

(f) *Prevent duty: Departmental advice for schools and childminders* 2015

(g) *The use of social media for on-line radicalisation* 2015;

(h) *Channel duty guidance: protecting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism* 2021;

(i) *Multi-agency statutory guidance on FGM* 2016 (updated 2020)*;*

(j) *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education* 2019 (updated 2021);

(k) *Children missing education* 2013 (updated 2016);

(l) *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners* 2015;

(m) *Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services* 2015 (updated 2023);

(n) *Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people* 2020

(o) *Children Acts* 1989 and 2004

(p) *Education Act (Section 175)* 2002

(q) *The Serious Crime Act* 2015

1.5 Local context and external agencies

1.5.1 Reading is a large community with a population of well over 250,000. There is a high level of diversity. In specific relation to children and safeguarding, Reading has a nationally high level of domestic abuse and Thames Valley police have raised the issue of county lines and criminal exploitation. In Autumn 2018, a dedicated Children's Services Company, known as **Brighter Futures for Children** and wholly owned by RBC, was set up to deliver children's services, education and early help on the Council's behalf.

1.5.2 A 'Single Point of Access' referral system has been introduced whereby all referrals are made through this system.

1.5.3 **Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership**. The Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) across the West of Berkshire (Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham) have merged to become the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership. In line with *Working Together 2023*, this partnership takes the lead on safeguarding issues.

1.5.4 **Reading Headteachers Engagement Group**. It is recognised that schools play a pivotal role, and the primary function of the Education Safeguarding Engagement Sub Group is to ensure a two-way dialogue with leaders and partners in the Berkshire West Safeguarding arrangements.

1.6 Undertakings

1.6.1 The School will:

(a) follow the local inter-agency procedures of the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership;

(b) ensure that we practise safer recruitment in checking the suitability of staff, Governors and volunteers (including staff employed by another organisation) to work with children and young people. See the School's separate Safer Recruitment Policy;

(c) be alert to signs of abuse both in the School and from outside and to protect each child from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another child;

(d) deal appropriately with every suspicion or complaint of abuse and support children who have been abused in accordance with any agreed child protection plan;

(e) design and operate procedures which, so far as possible, ensure that teachers and others who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations;

(f) be alert to the needs of children with physical and mental health conditions;

(g) operate robust and sensible health and safety procedures and operate clear and supportive policies on drugs, alcohol and substance misuse;

(h) assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, based on an understanding of the potential risk in the local area;

(i) identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, and know what to do when they are identified; and

(j) consider and develop procedures to deal with any other safeguarding issues which may be specific to individual children in the School or in the local area.

1.7 Application and accessibility

1.7.1 This is a whole-school policy including the Early Years Foundation Stage (**EYFS**) provision and applies wherever staff, Governors and volunteers are working with students even where this is away from the School, for example an educational visit.

1.7.2 This policy is published on the School website and is available in hard copy on request. It can be made available in large print or another accessible format if required.

1.8 Related policies

1.8.1 The following policies, procedures and resource materials are also relevant to the School's safeguarding practices:

(a) staff code of conduct;

(b) digital guidance and AUP for staff and students;

(c) staff social media policy;

(d) whistleblowing policy;

(e) safer recruitment policy and policy on the employment of ex-offenders;

(f) online safety policy;

(g) anti-bullying policy;

(h) behaviour and discipline policy;

(i) Health and Safety Policy;

(j) missing student policy;

(k) SEND policy;

(l) mental health and wellbeing policy;

(m) policy on the administration of medicines and supporting students with medical conditions;

(n) staff and parent handbooks

(o) educational visits policy

1.8.2 These policies, procedures and resource materials are available to staff on the School's intranet 'Infobank' and hard copies are available on request.

2 Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

2.1 The School's Governing Council has appointed Designated Safeguarding Leads (**DSLs**) for the Junior and Senior Schools. The DSLs are senior members of staff of the School's leadership team with the necessary status and authority to take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems in place, and lead responsibility for safeguarding children in the EYFS setting.

2.2 The DSLs shall be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to enable them to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters, to take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings - and / or to support other staff to do so; to contribute to the assessment of children and where appropriate have the responsibility to escalate as necessary.

2.3 The name and contact details of the DSLs are set out in the School contacts list at the front of this Policy. The main responsibilities of the DSL are set out in Annex C of KCSIE 2023.

2.4 If either DSL is unavailable, the activities of the DSL will be carried out by one of the Deputy DSLs. The Deputy DSLs' details are also set out in the School contacts list at the front of this Policy. In this Policy, reference to the DSL includes the Deputy DSL where the relevant DSL is unavailable.

3 Duty of staff, Governors and volunteers

3.1 All staff, Governors and volunteers of the School have responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn: this is a whole-school approach to safeguarding. They are under a general legal duty:

3.1.1 to protect children from abuse, including child-on-child abuse;

3.1.2 to be aware of the terms and procedures in this Policy and to follow them;

3.1.3 to know how to access and implement the procedures in this Policy, independently if necessary;

3.1.4 to keep a sufficient record of any concerns, discussions and decisions in accordance with this Policy; and

3.1.5 to report any matters of concern in accordance with this Policy.

3.2 Staff connected to the School's Early Years and to provision for childcare for children under the age of eight (ie in Before and After School Care) are under an ongoing duty to inform the School if their circumstances change which would mean they meet any of the criteria for disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006. Staff should refer to the School's safer recruitment policy for further information about this duty and to their contract of employment in respect of their ongoing duty to update the School.

3.3 The Governing Council ensures that:

3.3.1 safeguarding arrangements at school comply with statutory requirements and have regard to KCSIE 2023;

3.3.2 there are appropriate policies and procedures in place in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare;

3.3.3 the School's safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership, including understanding and reflecting local protocols for assessment and the Reading Threshold Guidance;

3.3.4 the School contributes to inter-agency working, including providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and support to children subject to child protection plans;

3.3.5 Appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place to support online safety, are regularly reviewed, and the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness of the provisions in place; and

3.3.6 the School complies with its legal obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, which specifies that harassment, violence and/or abuse may breach rights under Articles 3, 8, 14 and Protocol 1, Article 2; and the Equality Act

2010, which specifies that there must be no unlawful discrimination against students with protected characteristics.

3.4 The Head will ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Council, particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, are followed by all staff.

3.5 The Governing Council has nominated one of its members to take leadership responsibility for the School's safeguarding arrangements. The Nominated Safeguarding Governor is Mrs Susan Colebrook, whose contact details are set out in the School contacts list at the front of this Policy. A second Lead Governor for Safeguarding, Mrs Elisabeth West, has also been appointed.

4 Training

4.1 Safeguarding training for all staff is included as a key area in all induction procedures and is regularly referred to when reminding staff of key procedures at the start of each academic year, noting any changes to the procedures or to the relevant contact details. All training is carried out in accordance with Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

4.2 Induction

4.2.1 All staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, will be provided with induction training explaining the systems within the school that support safeguarding and child protection. This includes appropriate online safety and Prevent training, which covers an understanding of expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to online filtering and monitoring. They are required to read and understand key documents:

(a) the safeguarding and child protection policy;
(b) the staff code of conduct;
(c) the whistle-blowing policy;
(d) Part 1/Annex A of KCSIE 2023. Staff working directly with children also receive Annex B. Any staff who may have difficulty accessing written policies have training with HR to ensure that they understand KCSIE via Annex A.

4.2.2 Permanent and casual but regular staff are introduced to the Infobank, containing all relevant policies, and given:

(a) the behaviour policy
(b) the anti-bullying policy
(c) digital guidance and the AUP for staff

4.2.3 Temporary staff and volunteers are given any further policies directly on a risk- and need-assessed basis.

4.3 Child protection training

4.3.1 All staff including the Head will receive annually a copy of this Policy; KCSIE Part 1 and Annex B for those working directly with children, or Part 1 / Annex A for other staff; the whistle-blowing policy; and the staff code of conduct, and will be required to confirm that they have read and understand these.

4.3.2 The Head and all staff members will undertake appropriate child protection training, which will be updated every three years and following consultation with the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership. In addition, all staff

members will receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required and at least annually.

4.3.3 Additionally, the School will make an assessment of the appropriate level and focus for staff training and responsiveness to specific safeguarding concerns such as child-on-child abuse, radicalisation, child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, cyberbullying, domestic abuse and mental health; to online safety, filtering and monitoring; and to ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked after children safe.

4.3.4 All members of the Governing Body will receive appropriate safeguarding training; this will include training on induction as a governor and at least annual updates on child protection and safeguarding matters. The Nominated Safeguarding Governor and the Chair of Governors will receive additional training to enable them to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. At least one member of the Governing body will receive appropriate Safer Recruitment training. Training for Governors will enable them to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place are effective and that there is a robust whole-school approach to safeguarding.

4.3.5 The School has mechanisms in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities and to ensure that they have the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

4.4 Designated Safeguarding Leads

4.4.1 DSLs and Deputy DSLs will, following consultation with the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership, undertake training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training includes Prevent awareness training and will be updated at least every two years. In addition, their knowledge and skills will be refreshed at regular intervals, at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

4.4.2 Prevent duty training will be consistent with Home Office guidance and may include WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) training.

4.5 Teaching students how to keep themselves and others safe

4.5.1 The School teaches students about safeguarding through the curriculum, pastoral system and PSHE, including guidance on adjusting behaviour to reduce risks, building resilience to protect themselves and their peers, and providing information about who they should turn to for help. Particular emphasis is placed on online behaviour and safety.

4.5.2 Relevant issues may be covered through Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education as part of the PSHE programme. See the RSE policy for more details.

4.5.3 The safe use of technology is reinforced as part of assemblies and tutorial/pastoral activities. The School has particular regard to the four key areas of risk associated with online activity: content; contact with other users; conduct online; and commerce – for instance, risks associated with scams, online gambling, and inappropriate advertising. Appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to manage risk without imposing unnecessary restrictions on learning. School filters decrypt secure sites for the purposes of appropriate filtering and security. The school internet safety methods comply with UK e-safety and counter terrorism legislation; meet or exceed KCSIE and PREVENT guidelines on age-appropriate filtering and monitoring; and are registered with UK Safer Internet Centre (UKSIC) and the Internet Watch

Foundation. Governors ensure the effectiveness of these arrangements. See the online safety policy and digital guidance and AUPs for more information.

4.5.4 There is a wealth of further information available to support schools and parents/carers to keep children safe online. The School endeavours to keep parents/carers regularly informed of ways in which they can educate their children with regard to online safety.

5 Procedures

5.1 The child protection training provided to staff considers the types and signs of abuse and neglect staff must be aware of. The types of abuse and neglect and examples of specific safeguarding issues are set out in Appendix 1 and more information is available in KCSIE 2023 Annex B.

5.2 Staff should refer to the guidance in Appendix 2 in the event of receiving a disclosure from a child and for guidance about recording concerns.

5.3 Staff members working with children should 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**.

5.4 **If staff are ever unsure, they must always speak to the DSL.**

5.5 Early help (see Appendix 5)

5.5.1 The School understands that providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help 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.

5.5.2 The School's safeguarding training includes guidance about the early help process and prepares all staff to identify children who may benefit from early help. Staff are mindful of specific safeguarding issues and those students who may face additional safeguarding challenges.

5.5.3 A member of staff or volunteer who considers that a student may benefit from early help should in the first instance discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will consider the appropriate action to take in accordance with the Reading Threshold Guidance produced by Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership and will support staff in liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate.

5.5.4 If early help is appropriate, the matter will be kept under review and consideration given to a referral to children's services if the student's situation does not appear to be improving.

5.6 Concerns about a student's welfare

5.6.1 If a member of staff is concerned about a student's welfare, the matter should be reported to the DSL as soon as possible. The DSLs and DDSLs are always available to discuss safeguarding concerns. If for any reason they are not available this should not delay appropriate action: staff should consult with other senior colleagues or in exceptional circumstances contact the Children's Single Point of Access using the details at the front of this policy. In such instances the DSL should be informed as soon as possible.

5.6.2 See paragraph 5.9 below and Appendix 3 for the procedures for dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers.

5.6.3 On being notified of a concern, the DSL will consider the appropriate course of action in accordance with the Reading Threshold Guidance. Such action may include early help or a referral to children's services under section 17: child in need.

5.6.4 If it is decided that a referral is not required, the DSL will keep the matter under review and will refer to children's services if the student's situation does not appear to be improving.

5.7 If a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm (Section 47: child protection)

5.7.1 If a student is in **immediate** danger or has suffered or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children's services and/or the police immediately and certainly within 24 hours. In an emergency contact 999.

5.7.2 Anybody can make a referral in these circumstances. See section 5.8 below for details on making a referral. If a referral is made by someone other than the DSL, the DSL should be informed of the referral as soon as possible.

5.8 Making a referral

5.8.1 The relevant contact information is set out at the front of this Policy. If the referral is made by telephone, this should be followed up in writing within 24 hours.

5.8.2 Confirmation of the referral and details of the decision as to what course of action will be taken should be received from the local authority within one working day. If this is not received, the DSL (or the person that made the referral) should contact children's services again.

5.8.3 If after a referral the student's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL (or the person that made the referral) should press for reconsideration to ensure their concerns are addressed and that the student's situation improves.

5.8.4 Where relevant, the School will co-operate with the Channel panel and the police in providing any relevant information so that each can effectively carry out its functions to determine whether an individual is vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The School will respond to requests for information from the police promptly and in any event within five to ten working days.

5.9 Dealing with allegations against teachers, the Head, Governors, supply teachers, volunteers, contractors and other staff

5.9.1 The School has procedures for dealing with allegations against teachers, the Head, Governors, volunteers and other staff who work with children that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff and volunteers from false or unfounded allegations. These procedures are set out in Appendix 3 and follow Part 4 of KCSIE 2023.

5.9.2 The local authority has designated a particular officer, or team of officers, to be involved in the management and oversight of allegations against people that work with children (**Designated Officer(s) or LADOs**). The Designated Officer(s) will be informed immediately and in any event within one working day of all such allegations that come to the School's attention and appear to meet the criteria set out in paragraph 1 of Appendix 3.

5.9.3 Detailed guidance is given to staff, Governors and volunteers to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place students or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a student. This guidance is contained in the staff code of conduct and includes details of additional safeguarding arrangements where staff engage in one-to-one teaching and meetings with students.

5.9.4 Staff and volunteers should also feel able to follow the School's separate whistleblowing policy to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practices at the School or potential failures by the School or its staff to properly safeguard the welfare of students, and be reassured that such concerns will be taken seriously. The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns about child protection failures internally (see the front of this policy for the relevant contact details).

5.10 Allegations against students

5.10.1 The conduct of students towards each other will, in most instances, be covered by the School's behaviour and discipline policies. However, some behaviour by a student towards another may be of such a nature that safeguarding concerns are raised. Examples of behaviour by a student which may raise safeguarding concerns may include:

(a) violence, including gender-based violence;

(b) threatening or intimidating behaviour;

(c) blackmail;

(d) misconduct of a sexual nature, including indecent exposure or touching or serious sexual assaults;

(e) consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images;

(f) encouraging others to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour;

(g) any form of inappropriate behaviour by an older student towards a younger or more vulnerable student;

(h) bullying, including cyberbullying.

5.10.2 The School takes steps to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse as outlined in Appendix 1. The School has robust anti-bullying procedures in place (see the School's anti-bullying policy) and students are taught at all stages of the School about acceptable behaviour and how to keep themselves safe. Risk assessments are carried out and appropriate action taken to protect students identified as being at risk.

5.10.3 Allegations against students should be reported in accordance with the procedures set out in this Policy.

5.10.4 A student against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation and the School's policy on behaviour, discipline and sanctions will apply. The School will take advice from children's services on the investigation of such allegations and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all students involved including the student or students accused of abuse.

5.10.5 If it is necessary for a student to be interviewed by the police in relation to allegations of abuse, the School will ensure that, subject to the advice of children's services, the student's parents are informed as soon as possible.

There are circumstances in relation to ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and in relation to police investigations where an appropriate adult must be present when students are interviewed. The DSL will liaise with children's services and other appropriate authorities to ensure students' rights are properly respected.

5.10.6 Where an allegation is made against a student, both the victim and the perpetrator will be treated as being at risk and safeguarding procedures in accordance with this Policy will be followed. Appropriate support will be provided to all students involved, including support from external services as necessary.

5.11 Informing parents

5.11.1 Parents will normally be kept informed as appropriate of any action to be taken under these procedures. However, there may be circumstances when the Designated Safeguarding Lead will need to consult the Head, the Designated Officer(s), children's services and/or the police before discussing details with parents. In all cases, the DSL will be guided by the Reading Threshold Guidance.

5.11.2 In relation to Channel referrals, the DSL will consider seeking the consent of the student (or their parent/guardian) when determining what information can be shared. Whether or not consent is sought will be dependent on the circumstances of the case but may relate to issues such as the health of the individual, law enforcement or protection of the public.

5.12 Use of school premises by out-of-school providers

5.12.1 Where school premises are used by other bodies providing services or activities to children, the School will seek assurances that appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies are in place, including requesting a copy of the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures. The School will ensure mechanisms to liaise with all such providers in the event of any allegations or concerns. Anyone involved with an out-of-school provider who has a concern may raise it directly with the school using the contact details available on page 3 of this policy and the appropriate response will be considered and taken, including a referral as necessary.

6 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

6.1 Staff should ensure that they are not putting themselves in a situation that will risk harm or allegations of harm to a student e.g. in one-to-one interaction to include providing personal care. The Abbey recognises that due to the young age and needs of some of the children, staff may need to use touch and use physical intervention when working with them. Staff acknowledge the importance of ensuring that this touch is safe, welcomed and is used in an appropriate way. At least one authorised adult will supervise a child who has soiled themselves and the toilet door will remain open.

6.2 The security system on the doors leading into and out of the Early Years Centre must be maintained at all times.

6.3 Parents must inform the School if a different adult is collecting a child.

6.4 Staff are reminded regularly about the importance of internet safety. Staff, visitors and parent helpers must not use their own personal mobile phone, cameras or devices with image capturing and sharing capabilities to take pictures of the children at any time, either within the school or on any educational visits. The school will provide a mobile

within the school premises or on educational visits. In the Early Years classrooms and any location where Early Years children might be present, mobile phones, tablets or any personal communication devices must be stored securely and not used within the setting whilst the children are present. Staff are only permitted to use their phone in their non-contact times and during breaks when children are not present. School cameras and videos can be used to record such as sports day and class assemblies.

6.5 In EYFS photos are taken for recording a child or group of children participating in activities and are an effective form of recording progress. Images taken and stored on a school phone or iPad must be downloaded on site by a designated member of staff and then deleted. These images/videos are only stored on the school computers, servers, cloud-based and tape storage. They are kept only as long as they are relevant and are deleted when no longer required or in response to a request to have data removed. School activity mobile phones (trip and Outdoor Learning), video cameras and iPads are secured in the school buildings overnight and are only to be removed for authorised school purposes. A spot check may be carried out at any time to ensure that the devices are being used according to the guidelines.

6.6 Visitors to the school, including parents, must not use their mobile phone near or in the presence of any children either at school or on trips. In the case of school productions/school events/class assemblies, parents are permitted to take photographs/videos of their own child. However, these images are strictly for private use only and should not be posted on social media. See Parent Handbook.

7 Children potentially at greater risk of harm

7.1 Some Abbey children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances.

7.2 A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health. An Abbey education may be crucial to helping address these disadvantages.

7.3 Once the local authority has informed the School that a child has a social worker, the DSL should hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. This should be considered as a matter of routine. There are clear powers to share this information under existing duties on both local authorities and schools and colleges to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The DSLs will work closely with the form tutors, Heads of Year and guardians / careers for the looked after child to ensure they have the support they need to access the curriculum and wider opportunities the school offers.

7.4 Where children need a social worker, this should inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services).

7.5 The School recognises that when a child has a social worker, it may be an indicator that the child is at more risk than most students. This may mean that they are more vulnerable to further harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and poor mental health.

7.6 We take these needs into account when making plans to support students who have a social worker, by for instance, facilitating meetings in school time, and having a

specific member of staff to whom the child can go at any time. Where appropriate, this includes working with Virtual School Heads, dedicated members of local authority staff in charge of promoting the achievement of looked after children.

8 Children absent and missing from education

8.1 Children absent from education, particularly persistently, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. The School is committed to doing all possible to identify such abuse and help prevent the risk of them becoming children missing education in the future.

8.2 The School shall follow the provisions of the statutory guidance *Children missing education*. In particular the School will inform the local authority of any student who is going to be added to or deleted from the School's admission register at non-standard transition points in accordance with the requirements of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended). This will assist the local authority to:

8.2.1 fulfil its duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing from education; and

8.2.2 follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse, neglect or radicalisation.

8.3 The School shall inform the local authority of any student who:

8.3.1 fails to attend School regularly; or

8.3.2 has been absent without the School's permission for a continuous period of ten school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the School and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).

8.4 School attendance registers are carefully monitored to identify any trends. Action should be taken in accordance with this Policy if any absence of a student from the School gives rise to a concern about her welfare.

8.5 Where a parent has expressed an intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home (Elective Home Education – EHE), we would seek a meeting with all concerned to ensure this decision meets the best interests of the child.

9 Special educational needs and disabilities

9.1 The School welcomes students with special educational needs and disabilities and will do all that is reasonable to ensure that the School's curriculum, ethos, culture, policies, procedures and premises are made accessible to everyone. See the School's policy on special educational needs and learning difficulties and disability policy.

9.2 Additional barriers can exist when detecting the abuse or neglect of students with a special educational need or disability creating additional safeguarding challenges for those involved in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of this group of children. The School is mindful in particular that:

9.2.1 a child's special educational needs may mask abuse;

9.2.2 there may be assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the student's special educational need or disability and are not subject to further exploration;

9.2.3 students with a special education need or disability can be disproportionately vulnerable to child-on-child abuse, peer group isolation, bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) without outwardly showing any signs;

9.2.4 there may be communication barriers which are difficult to overcome to identify whether action under this policy is required; and

9.2.5 there may be issues with cognitive understanding regarding the facts of what may have occurred in physical or online interactions and repetition of any such behaviours without awareness of the consequences.

9.3 Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will therefore require close liaison with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and the SENDCO.

10 Children who are lesbian, gay, bi or trans (LGBT)

10.1 There is no inherent risk factor in children being LGBT. However, those children and children perceived to be LGBT may be targeted by others and risks may be compounded where such children lack a trusted adult with whom they feel able to be open. The School is committed to supporting equality, diversity and inclusion and to countering any form of prejudice-based bullying including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic abuse. Staff should be particularly alert to any concerns in this area.

11 Use of mobile phones and cameras

11.1 The School's Digital Guidance and Acceptable Use policy for students sets out the expectations on students from Junior School to Sixth Form. In the EYFS setting, students are not permitted to bring mobile phones or any camera or device with image capturing and sharing capabilities onto the premises. See Section 6 above.

11.2 Staff and volunteers should use mobile phones and cameras in accordance with the guidance set out in the staff code of conduct.

11.3 Parents may bring mobile phones onto the premises but in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) Act (2018), parents are not permitted to take film footage and photographs during school events unless invited to do so.

12 Record keeping, confidentiality and information sharing

12.1 All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded in writing.

12.2 Staff must record all concerns about a child on CPOMS. Guidance on record keeping is part of the staff induction programme, and reminders are given annually to all staff. Records should include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of how it was followed up, and notes of any actions taken and decisions reached.

12.3 Following a report made to the DSL of a child protection concern, the DSL will record all discussions with both colleagues and external agencies, decisions made and the reasons for them and detail of the action taken on CPOMS.

12.4 The School will keep all child protection records confidential, allowing disclosure only to those who need the information in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

12.5 The School will co-operate with police and children's services to ensure that all relevant information is shared for the purposes of child protection investigations under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

12.6 Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and in promoting children's welfare.

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

12.8 Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure relevant staff have due regard to data protection principles, which allow them to share personal information, as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR. Relevant staff should be confident of the processing conditions under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR which allow them to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information which is sensitive and personal, and should be treated as 'special category personal data'. 'Safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share such special category personal data. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent where there is good reason to do so. Where the sharing of information would enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner but it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, nor does so if gaining consent would place a child at risk. Schools should not under the UK GDPR as supplemented by the Data Protection Act 2018 provide students' education data where the serious harm test under that legislation is met. Therefore, in a situation where a child is in a refuge, this could mean that schools can withhold education data under the UK GDPR; they should do so where the serious harm test is satisfied.

12.9 Where allegations have been made against staff, the School will consult with the Designated Officer(s) and, where appropriate, the police and children's services to agree the information that should be disclosed and to whom.

12.10 When children leave the School, the DSL will ensure their child protection file is copied for any new school or college within five days for an in-year transfer or within the first five days of the start of a new term. This will be transferred separately from the main student file, ensuring secure transit and confirmation of receipt will be obtained. Additionally, all obligations to inform the local authority of arrivals and departures at non-standard transition points will be met within the relevant timescales in accordance with *Children Missing Education*.

12.11 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 victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

13 Monitoring and review

13.1 The Designated Safeguarding Leads will ensure that the procedures set out in this Policy and the implementation of these procedures are updated and reviewed regularly, working with the Governors as necessary and seeking contributions from

staff. The DSLs will update the Junior and Senior Leadership Teams regularly on the operation of the School's safeguarding arrangements.

13.2 Any child protection incidents at the School will be followed by a review of these procedures by the DSL and a report made to the Governing Council. Where an incident involves a member of staff, the Designated Officer(s) will be asked to assist in this review to determine whether any improvements can be made to the School's procedures. Any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to child protection arrangements at any time will be remedied without delay.

13.3 The full Governing Council will undertake an annual review of this Policy and the School's safeguarding procedures, including an update and review of the effectiveness of procedures and their implementation and the effectiveness of inter-agency working. The DSL will work with the Nominated Safeguarding Governor, preparing a written report commissioned by the full Governing Council. The written report should address how the School ensures that this Policy is kept up to date; staff training on safeguarding; referral information; issues and themes which may have emerged in the School and how these have been handled; and the contribution the School is making to multi-agency working in individual cases or local discussions on safeguarding matters.

13.4 The full Governing Council should also consider independent corroboration, such as inspection of records or feedback from external agencies including the Designated Officer(s). The full Governing Council will review the report, this Policy and the implementation of its procedures and consider the proposed amendments to the Policy before giving the revised Policy its final approval. Detailed minutes recording the review by the Governing Council will be made.

Appendix 1: Types and signs of abuse and specific safeguarding issues

1 Types of abuse

1.1 Abuse is 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. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

1.2 Staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label and in most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

1.3 All staff should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, and radicalisation.

1.4 All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist 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.

1.5 In all cases, if staff are unsure, they should always speak to the DSL or DDSL.

1.6 **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.

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

1.8 **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex)

or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse 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.

1.9 **Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

2 Signs of abuse

2.1 Where students disclose abuse, staff should follow the procedures laid out in Appendix 2. However, there are possible signs of abuse to which staff should be alert. These include, but are not limited to:

2.1.1 students asking questions or making comments that give rise to a concern;

2.1.2 there is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a student's injury, the injury is unusual in kind or location or there have been a number of injuries and there is a pattern to the injuries, such as bilateral injuries (for example two bruised eyes);

2.1.3 the student's behaviour stands out from the group as either being extreme model behaviour or extremely challenging behaviour, or there is a sudden or significant change in the student's behaviour, including a sudden lack of concentration and learning;

2.1.4 excessive overreaction to mistakes, continual self-deprecation, rocking, thumb sucking, hair twisting;

2.1.5 sexual awareness inappropriate to age, including provocative comments and behaviour

2.1.6 the student asks to drop subjects with a particular teacher and seems reluctant to discuss the reasons;

2.1.7 the student's development is delayed, the student loses or gains weight or there is deterioration in the student's general wellbeing;

2.1.8 the student appears neglected, e.g. dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed;

2.1.9 the student is reluctant to go home, or has been openly rejected by his / her parents or carers;

2.1.10 the student makes strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends, without an obvious reason;

2.1.11 the student is reluctant to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities;

2.1.12 the student talks about being left home alone, with inappropriate carers or with strangers;

2.1.13 the student is regularly missing from school or education;

2.1.14 the student has poor school attendance and punctuality, or is consistently late being picked up;

2.1.15 the parents are dismissive and non-responsive to practitioners' concerns;

2.1.16 the parents collect their children from school when drunk, or under the influence of drugs;

2.1.17 the student is involved with alcohol or drugs;

2.1.18 the student is concerned for younger siblings without explaining why;

2.1.19 the student talks about running away;

2.1.20 the student shies away from being touched or flinches at sudden movements;

2.1.21 the student expresses extreme views, perhaps repeating a learned script using language inappropriate to their age;

2.1.22 a pattern of inappropriate use of the internet identified through the violation reports from the school's web filtering.

2.2 Concerns may be raised by inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff or any other person working with children, for example inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one to one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role or responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images. Any staff with concerns should follow the procedures laid out in Appendices 3 and 4.

2.3 The Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership can provide advice on the signs of abuse and the DfE advice *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused* (2015) provides advice in identifying child abuse. The NSPCC website is also a good source of information and advice.

3 Specific safeguarding issues

3.1 Part 1 of KCSIE 2023 provides particular information on the following safeguarding issues:

3.1.1 Child-on-child abuse
3.1.2 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
3.1.3 Domestic abuse
3.1.4 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
3.1.5 Mental Health
3.1.6 Serious Violence

3.2 In addition, Part 5 of KCSIE 2023 includes detailed information on child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment.

3.3 Information on all of these issues is included below. Staff should also refer to KCSIE 2023 if in doubt or for further clarification or speak to the DSL or DDSL. Information about further safeguarding issues is included in Annex B of KCSIE 2023 and is summarised with a link to further information in section 3.10 below.

3.4 **Child-on-child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment and Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)**

3.4.1 All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children and all staff should be clear about the arrangements in this policy. As outlined in KCSIE 2023, such abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

(a) bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
(b) abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
(c) 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)
(d) 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)
(e) sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
(f) 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
(g) consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
(h) 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
(i) 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).

3.4.2 The School maintains a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse. Abuse must never be passed off as banter or part of growing up: unacceptable behaviour must be recognised and addressed.

3.4.3 All staff should be aware that a lack of reports do not mean that abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment are not happening – they may just not be reported.

3.4.4 Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) is an umbrella term for problematic sexual behaviour online and in person. It allows for consideration of the nature of sexual behaviour between children with regard to differences in age and status. Guidance on HSB is available in Part 5 of KCSIE 2023 with further support via Annex B.

3.4.5 The initial response to a disclosure is important and **schools should ensure the victim is taken seriously and supported.** 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.

3.4.6 The school will act in the best interests of the child. The needs and wishes of the child should be paramount (along with protecting the child) in any response.

3.4.7 Children who are victims of sexual violence or harassment are likely to find the experience distressing. It is more likely that girls will be victims of sexual violence and harassment, but girls can also be perpetrators of child on child abuse.

3.4.8 Victims of sexual harassment or violence may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse verbally. It is vitally important that victims of sexual harassment or abuse are listened to carefully and compassionately, in a non-judgemental manner, and that staff can ask open questions – what, where, when, how. See Appendix 2 for more information.

3.4.9 Following a disclosure, the wishes of the victim must be taken into account as to how they want to proceed. Victims should be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions affecting how the report is progressed and what support they will be offered. This is balanced by the School's duty of care.

3.4.10 Where the alleged perpetrator and the victim attend the Abbey, the school will seek to remove any contact between them whilst any investigations take place. This may mean removing the alleged perpetrator from the same class or area. The school will seek to act in a proportionate way.

3.4.11 Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL taking a leading role, and supported by other agencies such as children's services or the police.

3.4.12 The School will make a risk and needs assessment in cases of a report of sexual violence (the need for a risk assessment following a report of sexual harassment should be decided on a case by case basis). The assessment should consider the victim, alleged perpetrator and other children at the school, as well as intra-familial harm and impact on siblings, and be recorded and kept under review.

3.4.13 Further information about how to respond to child-on-child sexual violence and harassment is available in Part 5 of KCSIE 2023.

3.5 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

3.5.1 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.

3.5.2 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 be forced or manipulated into carrying drugs, money or weapons such as knives and into threatening or committing acts of violence. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

3.5.3 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.

3.5.4 Child Sexual Exploitation (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 nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include noncontact 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 for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.

3.5.5 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 for example they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

3.6 Domestic Abuse

3.6.1 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. 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).

3.7 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

3.7.1 Annex B provides details of the mandatory reporting duty for teachers where Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. **Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out.** Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should also discuss any such case with the DSL, who will involve children's services as appropriate.

3.7.2 The report should be made orally by calling 101, the single non-emergency number, by the end of the next working day at the latest, unless the teacher believes there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm and the child is in immediate danger, in which case 999 should be called. If the teacher is unsure whether this reporting duty applies, they must refer the matter to the DSL in accordance with this policy.

3.8 Mental Health

3.8.1 All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Education staff 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. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following this policy, and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

3.9 Serious violence

3.9.1 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 increased absence from school or college, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or 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.

3.10 Further safeguarding issues (Annex B)

3.10.1 In addition to the issues addressed above, KCSIE 2023 provides further information on the following safeguarding issues via Annex B:

(a) Child abduction and community safety incidents;
(b) Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
(c) County lines
(d) Children and the court system;
(e) Children absent from and missing education;
(f) Children with family members in prison;
(g) Cybercrime;
(h) Domestic abuse;
(i) Homelessness;
(j) Mental health;
(k) Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism;
(l) Preventing radicalisation
(m) The Prevent duty
(n) Channel
(o) Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (see also Part 5 of KCSIE);
(p) Serious Violence
(q) So-called 'honour'-based abuse, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage.

3.10.2 Annex B is updated annually. All staff working directly with children are required to read and familiarise themselves with Annex B every year and new staff who work with children must read Annex B as part of their induction.

3.10.3 As outlined in Section 5 of this policy, all staff are encouraged to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' with regard to all of the issues highlighted above and in Annex B.

3.10.4 Staff should refer to Annex B for more information on the issues listed here and their attention is drawn in particular to the additional resources listed for reference from page 155 onwards.

3.10.5 With regard to radicalisation and terrorism, staff are reminded that normal referral processes apply for any children where there is a concern, alongside specialist provision under the Prevent duty, Channel etc.

3.10.6 The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 came into force on 27 February 2023. The Act raises the minimum marriage and civil partnership age to 18, removing all previous consent requirements. Staff should be aware of the minimum marriage age when considering the information in KCSIE relating to forced marriage.

Appendix 2: guidance for staff and volunteers on suspecting or hearing a safeguarding concern

1 Receiving a disclosure

1.1 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 may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or threatened for a range of reasons. Staff should be professionally curious and speak to the DSL if they have concerns.

1.2 A member of staff or volunteer hearing a safeguarding concern:

1.2.1 must listen carefully to the child and keep an open mind. The member of staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place;

1.2.2 must reassure the child that they will be taken seriously, supported and kept safe. The child should never be made to feel that they are creating a problem by making a disclosure. It is important that children and young people know that the law is in place to protect them;

1.2.3 must not ask leading questions, i.e. a question which suggests its own answer; and

1.2.4 must reassure the child but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff should explain that they need to pass on the information in accordance with this Policy so that the correct action can be taken.

2 Suspicion of abuse

2.1 Where there is no disclosure but staff suspect abuse, they should report the suspicion to the DSL or Head, who will take the appropriate action.

2.2 Staff may be in a situation where it is appropriate to ask casual open questions about a passing concern e.g. bruises, marks, change in behaviour, etc. “Can you tell me about…?”.

2.3 Where this prompts a disclosure, staff should follow the guidance above.

3 Recording the concern

3.1 Staff must record all concerns about a child in writing.

3.2 It may well not be appropriate to record the details of a disclosure as the disclosure is being made. As soon as possible thereafter, the details should be recorded on CPOMS, or if on paper, uploaded to CPOMS, ensuring that the Confidential DSL tag is used.

3.3 The report should be as thorough as possible, including anything that can be remembered verbatim. Staff should be aware that written records may become part of a statutory investigation.

3.4 The account should include:

3.4.1 date, time and place of the event / concern and of the disclosure;

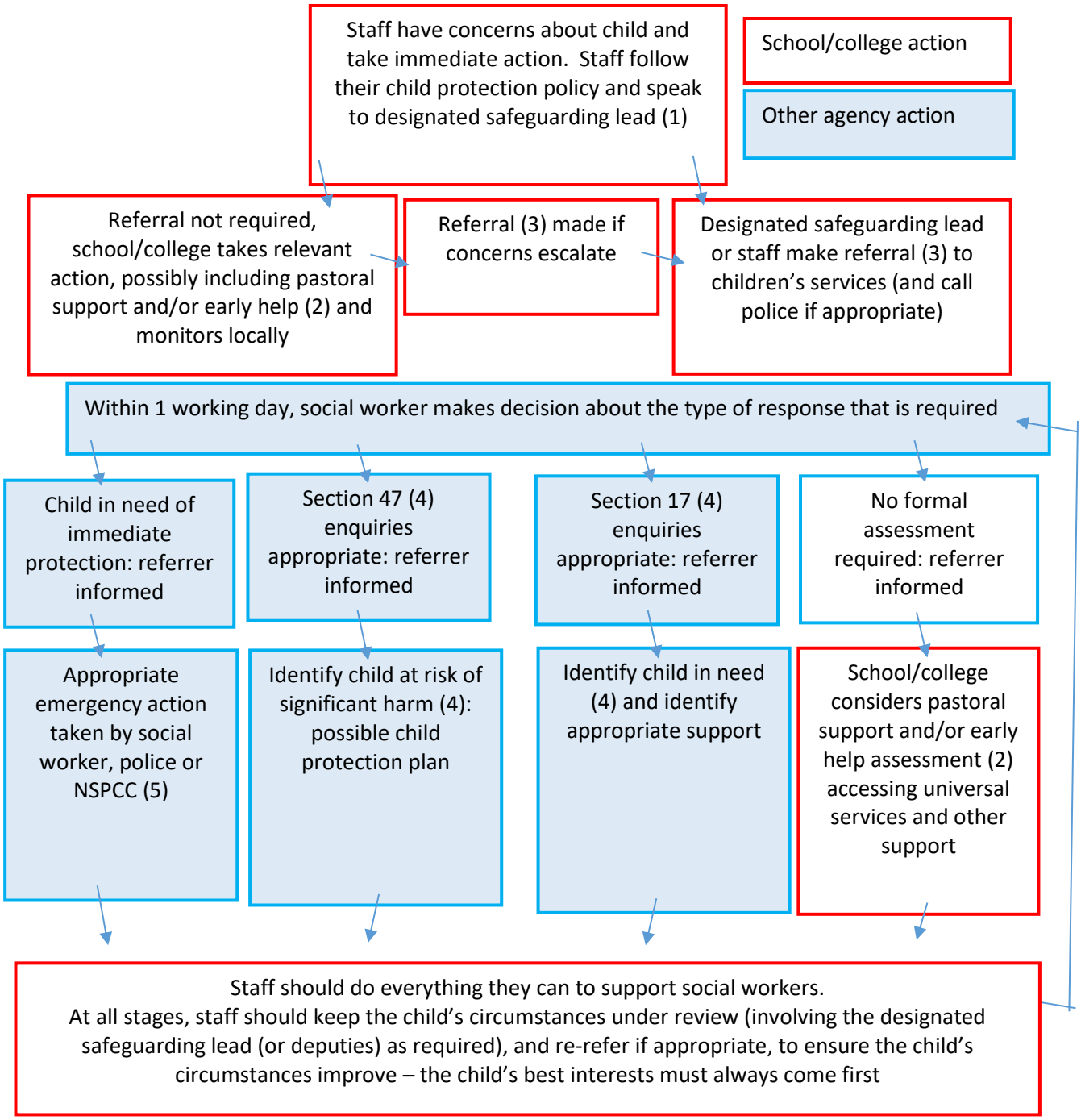
3.4.2 the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence;

3.4.3 the action taken and by whom.

3.5 The person to whom the disclosure has been made should inform the DSL or DDSL as soon as possible in person

3.6 All other evidence, for example, scribbled notes, mobile phones containing text messages, clothing, computers, must be kept securely and passed on when reporting the matter in accordance with this Policy.

Actions where there are concerns about a child



(1) In cases which also involve a concern or an allegation of abuse against a staff member, see Appendix 4.
(2) Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. Where a child would benefit from co-ordinated early help, a joint approach can be delivered through a Family Hub model based on a clear understanding of local needs. Chapter one of Working Together to Safeguard Children provides detailed guidance on the early help process.
(3) Referrals should follow the process set out in the local threshold document and local protocol for assessment as per Chapter Three of Working Together to Safeguard Children.
(4) Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, it has a duty to make enquiries to decide whether to take action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Full details are in Chapter one of Working Together to Safeguard Children.
(5) This could include applying for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO)

Appendix 3: Dealing with allegations against teachers, the Head, Governors, volunteers and other staff

1 The School's procedures

1.1 The School's procedures for dealing with allegations made against staff (including supply staff and volunteers) will be used where the teacher, the Head, Governor, volunteer or other member of staff has:

1.1.1 behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;

1.1.2 possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;

1.1.3 behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if he or she works regularly or closely with children; or

1.1.4 behaved or may have behaved, either in or outside school, in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

1.2 Any allegations not meeting these criteria will be dealt with in accordance with the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures. Advice from the Designated Officer will be sought in borderline cases. See Appendix 4: low level concerns.

1.3 All such allegations must be dealt with as a priority without delay. The Designated Officer(s) will be informed immediately and in any event within one working day of all allegations that come to the School's attention and appear to meet the criteria in paragraph 1.1 above.

1.4 Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching and historical allegations will be referred to the police.

2 Reporting an allegation

2.1 The reporting requirements for allegations against a teacher, the Head, Governor, supply staff, volunteer or other member of staff are set out below. In all cases, the member of staff making the allegation may consider discussing his / her concerns with the DSL and making a referral via him / her. The only circumstances in which this would not be appropriate is if the allegation is against the DSL.

2.2 Where an allegation or complaint is made against any member of staff (other than the Head), including the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a volunteer, the matter should be reported immediately to the Head. The allegation will be discussed immediately with the Designated Officer(s) before further action is taken. Where appropriate, the Head will consult with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

2.3 Where an allegation or complaint is made against the Head, the matter should be reported immediately to the Chair of Governors or the Nominated Safeguarding Governor, without first notifying the Head. The allegation will be discussed immediately with the Designated Officer(s) before further action is taken. The Chair of Governors will consult the Nominated Safeguarding Governor, and vice versa.

2.4 Where an allegation is made against any Governor, the matter should be reported immediately to the Chair of Governors or the Nominated Safeguarding Governor. If either the Chair of Governors or the Nominated Safeguarding

Governor are the subject of an allegation, the matter should be reported to the other. The allegation will be discussed immediately with the Designated Officer(s) before further action is taken. Where appropriate, the Chair of Governors will consult the Nominated Safeguarding Governor, and vice versa.

2.5 If it is not possible to report to the Head or Chair of Governors or Nominated Safeguarding Governor in the circumstances set out above, a report should be made immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take action in accordance with these procedures and will as soon as possible inform the Head or, where appropriate, the Chair of Governors and the Nominated Safeguarding Governor.

2.6 The person taking action in accordance with the procedures in this Appendix is known as the "Case Manager".

3 Supply Teachers

3.1 In some circumstances the School may have to consider an allegation against an individual not directly employed by them, where its disciplinary procedures do not fully apply, for example, supply teachers provided by an employment agency or business. Any supply teachers are under the supervision, direction and control of the School when working even if their employer is a different body. The School will inform the relevant employer of its process for managing allegations in any such instance.

3.2 Where the School is not the employer it will nevertheless ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In no circumstances would the School cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the local authority designated officer (LADO) to determine a suitable outcome.

4 Disclosure of information

4.1 The Case Manager will inform the accused person of the allegation as soon as possible after the Designated Officer(s) has been consulted.

4.2 The Parents or carers of the child / children involved will be informed of the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it. They may also be kept informed of the progress of the case, including the outcome of any disciplinary process. The timing and extent of disclosures, and the terms on which they are made, will be dependent upon and subject to the laws on confidence and data protection and the advice of external agencies.

4.3 Where the Designated Officer(s) advises that a strategy discussion is needed, or the police or children's services need to be involved, the case manager will not inform the accused or the parents or carers until these agencies have been consulted and it has been agreed what information can be disclosed.

4.4 The reporting restrictions preventing the identification of a teacher who is the subject of such an allegation in certain circumstances will be observed.

5 Further action to be taken by the School

5.1 A school has a duty of care towards its employees and as such, it must ensure that effective support is provided for anyone facing an allegation. The School will take action in accordance with Part Four of KCSIE 2023 and the School's employment procedures.

6 Outcome

6.1 The following definitions will be used when determining the outcome of investigations:

6.1.1 Substantiated: there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation

6.1.2 False: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation

6.1.3 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

6.1.4 Unsubstantiated: there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence

6.1.5 Unfounded: to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis to support the allegation being made.

6.2 Criminal proceedings: The school will consult with the LADO following the conclusion of a criminal investigation or prosecution as to whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and if so, how to proceed. The options will depend on the circumstances of the case, including the result of the police investigation or trial and the standards of proof applicable.

6.3 Return to work: If it is decided that the person who has been suspended should return to work, the school should consider how to facilitate this, for example, a phased return may be appropriate and / or the provision of a mentor to provide assistance in the short term. The school should also consider how to manage the contact with the child[ren] who made the allegation.

7 Ceasing to use staff

7.1 If the School ceases to use the services of a member of staff or volunteer because they are unsuitable to work with children, a settlement agreement (formerly known as a compromise agreement) will not be used and a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) will be made promptly if the criteria for a referral are met. Any such incidents will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures within the School, with a report being presented to the Governors without delay.

7.2 If a member of staff or volunteer tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide his or her services, any child protection allegations will still be followed up by the School in accordance with this policy and a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service will be made promptly if the criteria for referral are met.

7.3 Separate consideration will be given as to whether a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) should be made where any person in regulated activity has been dismissed, or would have been dismissed had he/she not resigned, because of unacceptable professional conduct, conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, or a conviction at any time for a relevant offence. Where safeguarding concerns are involved there is a legal obligation to refer to the TRA.

8 Malicious allegations

8.1 Where an allegation by a student is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the Head will consider whether to take disciplinary action in accordance with the School's behaviour and discipline policy.

8.2 Where a parent has made a deliberately invented or malicious allegation the Head will consider whether to require that parent to withdraw their child or children from the School on the basis that they have treated the School or a member of staff unreasonably.

8.3 Whether or not the person making the allegation is a student or a parent (or other member of the public), the School reserves the right to contact the police to determine whether any action might be appropriate.

9 Learning lessons

9.1 At the conclusion of all cases there should be a process of considering the facts and lessons learned, involving the LADO where appropriate.

10 Record keeping

10.1 Details of allegations found to be false or malicious will be removed from personnel records.

10.2 For all other allegations, full details will be recorded on the confidential personnel file of the person accused.

10.3 An allegation proven to be false, unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious will not be referred to in employer references. In accordance with KCSIE, a history of repeated concerns or allegations which have all been found to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious will also not be included in any reference.

10.4 The School will retain all safeguarding records and relevant personnel records for so long as reasonably required.[1]

[1] In accordance with the terms of reference of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse all Schools are required to retain information which relates to allegations (substantiated or not) of organisations and individuals who may have been involved in, or have knowledge of child sexual abuse or child sexual exploitation; allegations (substantiated or not) of individuals having engaged in sexual activity with, or having a sexual interest in, children; institutional failures to protect children from sexual abuse or other exploitation.

Appendix 4: Low level concerns

1 Rationale

1.1 It is vital to maintain a culture in which all concerns about adults are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately. This encourages an open and transparent approach, in which staff feel able to self-refer. It minimises the risk of abuse; and ensures that adults working in or on behalf of the School or college are clear about professional boundaries and act within them.

1.2 Low-level concerns are those which do not meet the criteria for harm as laid out in Appendix 3. There may be a concern, sense of unease or doubt that an adult may have acted in a manner inconsistent with the staff code of conduct. This may be inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour or behaviour that causes concern due to the specific circumstances. Examples as given in Part 4 of KCSIE 2023 include:

- 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;
- humiliating children.

1.3 Advice from the Designated Officer will be sought in borderline cases where there is a possibility that the threshold of harm may have been met.

2 Reporting a low-level concern

2.1 The reporting channels for low-level concerns follow the process set out in Appendix 3 section 2. In general, low level concerns should be reported to the Head unless the process indicates otherwise. Staff are reminded that reporting a low-level concern is a positive and supportive act that helps to ensure an active culture of safety within the school community. Staff are encouraged to self-refer if in doubt or worried they have found themselves in a situation that may be misinterpreted.

2.2 Low-level concerns which are shared about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

2.3 Records of low-level concerns will be kept confidentially and in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR.

3 Further action to be taken by the School

3.1 Where a low-level concern is raised, the Head or person receiving the concern will gather as much information and evidence as possible in a manner appropriate to the circumstance. A wide range of different actions may be appropriate, from clarifying that the circumstances do not give rise for concern, to noting the concern, to following the School's disciplinary policy.

3.2 All low-level concerns and resulting actions will be recorded in writing, including details of the concern and the context in which the concern arose. 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.

3.3 Records will be regularly reviewed so that potential patterns of behaviour can be identified and where thresholds are met, a referral made to the LADO.

Appendix 5: Early Help

1 Any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help and may also wish to use the Early Help System Guide to assist with assessment, for a child who

1.1 is disabled and has specific additional needs;

1.2 has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health or care plan);

1.3 has a mental health need;

1.4 is a young carer;

1.5 is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including being affected by gang involvement, county lines and organised crime groups and/or serious violence, including knife crime

1.6 is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;

1.7 is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation; also see The National Referral Mechanism and Independent Child Trafficking Guardians

1.8 is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;

1.9 is being bullied (including cyber-bullying);

1.10 has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending;

1.11 is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems and domestic abuse;

1.12 is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves;

1.13 has returned home to their family from care;

1.14 is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage;

1.15 is a privately fostered child; or

1.16 is missing education, or is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day;

1.17 is bereaved;

1.18 is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate online content (for example, linked to violence), or developing inappropriate relationships online

1.19 has a parent in custody

1.20 has experienced multiple suspensions and is at risk of, or has been permanently excluded

2 ALL staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help.

3 Guidance on threshold levels for early help may be found here: https://www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/

Appendix 6: Protocol for Visiting Speakers

1 When staff plan for visiting speakers to come into school they must complete the relevant permission and event form. This outlines the name, organisation, subject, date, time, room allocation and the activity/audience.

2 Visiting speakers will always be talking to, or working with, students with members of school staff present. Suitable online checks including PREVENT will be undertaken and approved by a member of JLT or SLT to ensure that the information and views speakers provide align with the school's values and with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance.

3 Once the visit is confirmed the visitors will report to reception when they arrive, show photo ID and be given a visitor's badge on a red lanyard to indicate the need for constant chaperoning.

4 They will be met by the host organising the activity and accompanied around the school site for the duration of their visit and return their lanyard. They will be signed out at the end of their visit.