

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2021

Based on guidance issued by the Secretary of State, the latest of which is Keeping Children Safe in Education, Department for Education (DfE), September 2019.

This policy includes our school's procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff.

### **Purpose**

Special Schools are required to have a Safeguarding Policy and the governing body is responsible for the safeguarding of all pupils and staff at our school.

Our vision is to provide pupils with the confidence, skills, and ambition to achieve a successful and productive life. We aim to ensure they leave us with the opportunities and are able to become positive members of their communities.

To do this, we have 3 principles that underpin our policies, practices and everything we do:

- Everyone can learn, achieve, and has the potential to be successful
- Positive relationships are key to success and are underpinned by mutual trust, respect and caring for one another
- We have high expectations in everything we do

### **KEY CONTACTS (DSL has contact details for other Local Authorities)**

Designated Safeguarding & Prevent Lead:  
Noreen Rahman, Headteacher,  
info@sevaeducation.com  
020 8422 2999

Deputy Safeguarding Lead  
Miriam Lloyd, Deputy Headteacher,  
info@sevaeducation.com  
020 8422 2999

The LADO for Ealing is:  
Paul Andrews [asv@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:asv@ealing.gov.uk) / [child.protection@ealing.cjsm.net](mailto:child.protection@ealing.cjsm.net)  
020 8825 8930

<https://www.egfl.org.uk/services-children/safeguarding/child-protection/contacts-advice-and-support> for all Safeguarding info / referrals.

## INTRODUCTION

Seva Independent School (SSS) understands that our work in safeguarding and protecting children must always have regard for the national guidance issued by the Secretary of State and should be in line with local guidance and procedures. This policy is therefore written with due regard to statutory guidance, from Department for Education (the department) issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015; Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2019) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). Our schools' procedures for safeguarding children are also compliant with the London Child Protection Procedures produced by the London Safeguarding Children Board.

For the purposes of this Policy children includes everyone under the age of 18 or 25 for those with a ECHP.

This policy is available to everybody, in hard copy or email from SSS or from our website and will be an integral part of our Induction process.

SSS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our pupils, especially those who are most vulnerable, and expects all staff to share this commitment. Our training mantra and philosophy is to always

'think the unthinkable'.

All staff must be clear about their own role and that of others in providing a caring and safe environment for all children and must know how they should respond to any concerns about an individual child that may arise.

To achieve this, SSS will ensure that all staff know that Noreen Rahman, Schools Headteacher, is our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has overall responsibility for child protection and safeguarding. Though some of the duties inherent to this role can and will be delegated to the deputy DSLs in order that work is completed most efficiently, the ultimate responsibility remains with the DSL.

In the absence of the DSL, the deputy DSL will undertake the DSL's duties.

All safeguarding leads and the head teacher have received advanced level training in order to undertake their roles and are also safer recruitment trained. All safeguarding leads receive updated training at least every two years via the Local Authority; and in addition, keep up-to date with safeguarding developments at least annually.

## **Part one: SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION FOR ALL STAFF.**

### **A child centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined 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

All children deserve the opportunity to achieve their full potential and the purpose of all intervention is to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child. For those staff who engage with children who experience discrimination in their daily lives or who are from cultures different to those of the professionals, assumption and stereotyping must not be part of our practice.

Every effort must be made to ensure that cultural issues are understood and that each individual case is dealt with on its own merits. Teachers and those working in school have daily contact with children in their classes and around the school buildings, and as a result have first-hand knowledge of child development and behavioural norms.

This places these professionals in a unique position to identify children who would benefit from 'early help' and who are/ or are at risk of abuse. However, teachers, therapists and support workers do not decide if something is or is not a child protection issue. Any concerns MUST be passed onto the designated safeguarding lead and/or a member of the senior leadership team and referred using the CFC system (or directly to the LADO, local authority or Channel, if appropriate).

Staff must follow SSS safeguarding and child protection procedure ('CFC' system) if they have any concern regarding a child. However, staff should also be aware that if there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral can and should be made to children's social care immediately and that anybody can make a referral. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration.

### **Staff Induction and Training.**

All staff will receive appropriate Level 2 Safeguarding and child protection training, which is updated least annually with periodic updates throughout the academic year (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

All staff at SSS know that a range of other school policies are central to many aspects of the schools' child protection & safeguarding policy. Our policy is regularly updated by the designated safeguarding lead. Regular safeguarding updates are disseminated to all staff via emails and safeguarding briefings which are provided on most of staff training days and staff inductions.

This document should therefore be read in conjunction with our policies for:

- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance
- Behaviour Policy
- Online safety
- Equalities
- First Aid & Medication
- Health & Safety
- Healthy Schools
- Risk Assessment
- Staff behaviour policy (code of conduct)
- 'Who we are and What We Do' at SSS
- 'How We Do' It at SSS
- Whistleblowing

### **The role of school and college staff.**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners 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.

All staff at SSS are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating. All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

All adults working with, or on behalf of, our schools must always follow all of our procedures. All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. 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.

### ***Identifying a child or young person who may benefit from early help***

Signs that a child or young person may benefit from early help include:

- displaying disruptive or anti-social behaviour
- being bullied or bullying others
- having poor attendance at school
- being involved in, or at risk of, offending
- having poor general health
- having anxiety, depression or other mental health issues
- misusing drugs or alcohol
- having a particularly challenging relationship with parents or appearing to be unusually independent from their parents
- experiencing difficulties at home, such as domestic abuse, parental substance abuse or parental mental health problems

(Department for Education (DfE), 2018).

Some groups of children may be more likely to need early help than their peers.

These include children who:

- have been excluded from school
- have special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan);
- are disabled
- are in care
- are leaving or preparing to leave care
- are young carers
- are young parents (or about to become young parents)
- are experiencing housing issues

Staff must remain vigilant as multiple safeguarding issues will overlap with each other, such as sexual abuse and county lines as well as extra familiar harms.

### **CHILD PROTECTION – RECOGNITION AND RESPONSE TO ABUSE**

Owing to the nature of the day-to-day relationship children at SSS have with staff, all adults working in the school are particularly well placed to notice any physical, emotional or behavioural signs that a child may be suffering significant harm. We understand that harm means the ill-treatment or impairment of a child's health and/or development, including that caused as a result of witnessing the ill-treatment of another person. Some groups of children are potentially at a greater risk of harm, such as pupils missing from education.

All staff must remain vigilant as multiple safeguarding issues will overlap each other, be alert to any possible indicators that a child is suffering harm and report any concerns to the DSL.

All adults working in the schools will receive at least annual whole-school child protection training in order that their awareness to the possibility of a child suffering remains high.

### **SAFEGUARDING – PROVIDING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

All families of children attending SSS must feel secure in the knowledge that they are entrusting their children to adults who will strive to keep them safe at school.

#### **We will do this by:**

- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the schools.
- Ensuring that our staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding and child protection according to their role and responsibilities and keep an up to date record of all training undertaken.
- Encouraging the self-esteem and self-assertiveness of all children through the curriculum so that the children themselves become aware of danger and risk and what is acceptable behaviour and what is not Working in partnership with all other services and agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
- Always following Safer Recruitment procedures when appointing staff.

- Welcoming visitors in a safe and secure manner (all visitors must sign in, read key safeguarding information and wear a visitor's badge).
- Undertaking risk assessments when planning out-of-school activities or trips.
- Parents and carers are also able to make direct referrals to the local authority children's service duty team if they have a concern about a child or the local authority designated officer (LADO) if they have a concern about a member of staff working at SSS.

## **SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION IN SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES**

### **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN WITH SEN & DISABILITIES**

All children deserve the opportunity to achieve their full potential and the purpose of all intervention is to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child. We are aware that our pupils, most of which have special educational needs and/or disability are more vulnerable to be subject to abuse and neglect. For example, there could be a reluctance to believe children with special educational needs and/or disability are being abused, limited opportunities for these children to seek help from someone else or a lack of access to support services. Staff have an awareness that behaviour, mood and injury may relate to possible abuse and not just their SEN or disability.

Our pupils may have a higher risk of being isolated from their peers, left out of group activities or bullied. As a school, we strive to help safeguard these pupils by ensuring that they are heard, have unlimited access to therapeutic support and liaise with external support services on the family's behalf.

### **ATTENDANCE & CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME)**

We know that a child's unexplained absence from school could mean that they are at risk of harm and that a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

We have a clear attendance policy, and:

- Our school is small, and thus attendance is easy to track closely. Any child going missing from education will always get immediate attention from the DSL.
- Staff are trained to be alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage
- We will always seek to clarify the reason for a child's absence from school with the child's parent or carer as soon as is practicable on the first day, the reason for absence will be recorded on the register. If we are unable to obtain the reason for a pupil being absent, we will attempt to contact the pupil's emergency contacts. We ask for at least two emergency contacts for every pupil. At this stage, if we have been unable to contact the family or emergency contacts, a home visit will be carried out. As a last resort, if the school has not been able to ascertain where a pupil is after following the steps above, the pupil will be classed as a 'missing child' and they will be reported to the police.

- We will also always report an unexplained absence of a child with a Child Protection Plan to the child's social worker within one day.
- We will always report a continued absence (10 or more school days) about which we have not been notified by the parent or carer to the Local Authority's SEN Team and Education Welfare Service.
- We will always report to the local authority the name of any child who has been newly registered to attend our school but does not arrive on the expected day.
- We will always report to the Education Welfare Service the continued absence of a child known or thought to have been taken overseas if the child does not return to school on the expected return date.
- We maintain accurate attendance and admissions registers (all pupils are on both), in line with statutory requirements. This includes paying careful attention to off-rolling pupils in association with the local authority and knowing, and recording, pupil destinations consistently on the admissions register. Where a pupil destination is unknown, and unable to be sought after significant follow-up, the local authority, education welfare service and/or social care services will be informed.
- We do not 'delete' pupils from the admissions register. We alert the child's local authority immediately if:
  - the pupil has been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated.
  - outside the school system e.g. home education § the pupil has ceased to attend school.
  - the pupil has been certified as medically unfit to attend school.
  - the pupil is in custody.

Keeping local authorities up to date is crucial so that they can check if children of compulsory school age are missing education, and therefore might be in danger of not receiving an education and be at risk of abuse or neglect.

On the rare occasions that we exclude pupils for a fixed-term (usually a day), we put this in writing to both the family and the placing local authority. While we provide the pupil with work to complete during their external exclusion, we are not responsible for the pupil's safety and welfare during their time at home.

### **EXTREMISM & RADICALISATION (THE PREVENT DUTY AND CHANNEL)**

Since 2010, when the Government published the 'Prevent Strategy' (the key prevention aspect of Contest), there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people, and families from extremism. There have been several occasions, both locally and nationally, in which extremist groups have attempted to radicalise vulnerable children and young people to hold extreme views including views justifying political, religious, sexist, or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

SSS values freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs and ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Both children and teachers have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

The current threat from terrorism in the United Kingdom may include the exploitation of vulnerable people, to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism. The normalisation of extreme views may also make children and young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation.

SSS is clear that exploitation and radicalisation is viewed as a safeguarding concern and must be dealt with accordingly. ALL staff at SSS must complete Prevent and Channel training as part of their induction and will receive regular briefings and update training.

## **FORCED MARRIAGE & HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE**

A 'forced' marriage is distinct from a consensual 'arranged' marriage because it is without the valid consent of both parties and where duress is a factor. A child who is forced into marriage is at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Information about a forced marriage may come from the child themselves, of the child's peer group, a relative or member of the child's local community or from another professional.

Forced marriage may also become apparent when other family issues are addressed, e.g. domestic violence, self-harm, child abuse or neglect. Forced marriage may involve the child being taken out of the country for the ceremony, is likely to involve non-consensual/under-age sex and refusal to go through with a forced marriage has sometimes been linked to 'honour killing'. Honour-based violence is an ancient cultural tradition that encourages violence towards family members who are considered to have dishonoured their family. It is rooted in domestic violence and is often a conspiracy of family members and associates, meaning victims are a risk for their parents and families.

School staff should respond to suspicions of a forced marriage or honour-based violence by alerting the DSL who will make a referral to Children's Social Care and if the risk is acute, to the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team. School staff should not treat any allegations of forced marriage or honour-based violence as a domestic issue and send the child back to the family home. It is not unusual for families to deny that forced marriage is intended, and once aware of professional concern, they may move the child and bring forward both travel arrangements and the marriage.

For this reason, staff should not approach the family or family friends, or attempt to mediate between the child and family, as this will alert them to agency involvement. Further information and advice can be obtained from the Forced Marriage Unit,

[www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage](http://www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage) or 020 70080151 and the Honour Based Violence Helpline 0800 599 9247.

Again, as with all concerns, please alert the DSL as soon as possible.



## **FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION**

Female genital mutilation (sometimes referred to as female circumcision) refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

Female Genital Mutilation affects girls particularly from North African countries, including Egypt, Sudan, Somalia and Sierra Leone. Although our schools have no children from these backgrounds and consider our tiny number of girls in our schools to be safe from FGM, we will continue to review our policy annually and to include it in annual update training for all staff. School staff should be alert to the following indicators:

- The family comes from a community that is known to practise FGM.
- A child may talk about a long holiday to a country where the practice is prevalent.
- A child may confide that she is to have a 'special procedure' or to attend a special occasion.
- A child may request help from a teacher or another adult.
- Any female child born to a woman or has a sister who has been subjected to FGM must be considered to be at risk, as must other female children in the extended family.

It is illegal in the UK to allow girls to undergo FGM either in this country or abroad. It is important to note that all staff have a duty to report personally any concerns they may have about girls at risk of FGM to the police.

Any concerns must be immediately shared with the DSL and teachers are aware that they have a mandatory duty to report known cases of FGM.

## **BULLYING (AND ALL FORMS OF, INCLUDING PEER ON PEER ABUSE)**

We understand that bullying, including cyber-bullying, is harmful to children. We have an antibullying policy that sets out our aim of ensuring no child becomes a victim of any form of bullying and the work that we carry out in school to foster an environment where bullying behaviour is known to be unacceptable. We will always take seriously any reports of bullying and respond appropriately.

We understand that bullying may take different forms and may include, as examples, racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic and biphobic behaviours. Any such reported or observed incident will be dealt with in accordance with our anti-bullying policy.

## **ONLINE SAFETY**

We recognise that children's use of the internet is an important part of their education but that there are risks of harm associated with its use. We have robust security system to protect users and data and an online safety policy that addresses how we seek to minimise those risks in school and work closely with parents to teach children how to stay safe when using the internet in their lives outside of school. We also recognise that all members of staff must always be mindful of the need to follow our policy of acceptable use of our IT equipment.

New technologies have become integral to the lives of children and young people in today's society, both within schools and in their lives outside of school. The requirement to ensure that children and young people are able to use the internet and related communications technologies appropriately and safely is addressed as part of our wider duty of care to which all who work in schools are bound.

The use of these exciting and innovative tools in school and at home has been shown to raise educational standards and promote achievement. Unfortunately, the use of these new technologies can put pupils at risk within and outside the school; pupils are not allowed to have any mobile device on them during the school day, this helps to safeguard pupils and ensure they are not accessing any inappropriate material on their personal devices. While filters should not over block, as it may place unreasonable restrictions on what pupils can be taught, it is also fundamental to be aware of some of the potential dangers that the internet can pose, including:

- Access to illegal, harmful or inappropriate images, video games or other content
- Unauthorised access to/loss of/sharing of personal information
- The risk of being subject to grooming
- The sharing/distribution of personal images and data without an individual's consent or knowledge
- Inappropriate communication/contact with others, including strangers
- Sexting
- Implications of geolocation
- Cyber-bullying
- An inability to evaluate the quality, accuracy and relevance of information on the internet
- The potential for excessive use which may have a negative impact on the social and emotional development and learning of the young person.

Material published by children and staff in a social context which is considered to bring the schools reputation into disrepute or considered harmful to, or harassment of, another child or member of the organisation will be considered a safeguarding issue and a breach of conduct and behaviour and treated accordingly, as per behaviour, equality, anti-bullying and/or staff conduct policies/procedures. SSS will review our approach annually, including a risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks pupils face.

## **SEXTING**

### **The sharing of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos.**

The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) have produced guidance for schools on how to tackle sexting and 'youth produced sexual imagery' as sharing photos and videos online is part of daily life for many people, enabling them to share their experiences, connect with friends and record their lives.

This increase in the speed and ease of sharing imagery has brought concerns about young people producing and sharing sexual imagery of themselves. This can expose them to risks, particularly if the imagery is shared further, including embarrassment, bullying and increased vulnerability to child sexual exploitation.

Making, possessing and distributing any imagery of someone under 18 which is 'indecent' is illegal. The relevant legislation is contained in the Protection of Children

Act 1978 (England and Wales) as amended in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales). Specifically, it is an offence to possess, distribute, show and make indecent images of children. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales) defines a child, for the purposes of indecent images, as anyone under the age of 18.

Although the production of such imagery will likely take place outside of school, these issues often manifest in schools working with children and young people. Staff respond swiftly and confidently to ensure that children are safeguarded, supported, and educated.

The response to these incidents should be guided by the principle of proportionality and the primary concern at all times should be the welfare and protection of the young people involved.

- All incidents involving sexting and youth produced sexual imagery should be responded to in line with the school's CFC system.
- The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff.
- There should be subsequent interviews with the young people involved (if appropriate).
- Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm.
- At any point in the process if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

## **CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)**

Sexual exploitation can take many forms from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for attention/affection, accommodation, or gifts, to serious organised crime and child trafficking. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power within the relationship.

The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim, increasing the dependence of the victim as the exploitative relationship develops. SSS attempts to identify young people who are vulnerable to, or at risk of, sexual exploitation and who need services and interventions to keep them safe. We will pass on any information about CSE issues affecting the schools, for example concerns about adults hanging around the school, to the police.

## **GANGS**

Many of our pupils come from background where gangs are prevalent and our pupils (some with gang membership pasts) are vulnerable to gang membership or re-membership. Older pupils may also attempt to recruit younger pupils using any or all of the above methods. It is also well documented that pupils suffering from sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people, under threat of violence.

## **CHILD ABDUCTION**

**Child** abduction is defined as the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or carer. It can be committed by a parent or other family members, people known but not related to the victim (e.g. neighbours, friends and acquaintances), and by stranger.

### **MINIMISING THE RISK**

It is inevitable in our schools that some pupils will present a safeguarding risk to other pupils. A robust induction system ensures that we are informed as to whether a pupil arrives or re-joins presenting a safeguarding concern, for example after coming back into school following a period in custody or having experienced serious abuse themselves. Intelligent timetabling, groupings, supervision and personalised risk assessments, including daily dynamic risk assessments, are central to the effective management of safety in our schools. In itself, this dramatically reduces the possibility of negative conduct against other pupils, and therefore of allegations.

### **RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN**

All children at SSS must be able to place their trust and confidence in any adult working in the school. They must feel sure that they can speak about any worries or concerns they may have and that they will be listened to, taken seriously and responded to appropriately.

All staff must therefore know what to do if a child chooses to talk to them about any matter which raises child protection concerns.

#### **All staff must:**

- Listen to what the child is saying without interruption and without asking leading questions.
- Respect the child's right to privacy but not promise confidentiality.
- Reassure the child that he/she has done the right thing in sharing.
- Explain to the child that in order to keep him/her safe from harm the information that has been shared must be passed on.
- Report what has been disclosed to the DSL as soon as possible, or in their absence, one of the DDSL or Head Teacher.
- Record, as soon as is practicable, but within 24 hours, the concern on the schools' CFC system.
- Remember that if there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral can and should be made to children's social care immediately and that anybody can make a referral.
- If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration.
- The DSL will: Assess any urgent medical needs of the child.
- Consider whether the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm.
- Check whether the child is currently subject to a Child Protection Plan or has been previously subject to a Plan.
- Confirm whether any previous concerns have been raised by staff.
- Only inform the family of the child of any concerns once the duty team leader at social care services has been consulted and their advice sought.
- Consider whether the matter should be discussed with the child's family or whether to do so may put the child at further risk of harm because of delay or the family's possible actions or reactions.
- Seek advice if unsure that a child protection referral should be made.

- If the child discloses sexual abuse or sexual abuse is suspected, the child must not be questioned, and the parents must not be informed until social care services and the police child abuse investigation team has been informed and advice given.
- Information will be shared on a 'need to know' basis and must be treated in absolute confidence. Staff must not discuss allegations with the child, family members or colleagues.

The DSL will either make a referral to the child's local authority children's services duty or referral and assessment team or, if a referral is not considered appropriate at that stage, make full written records of the information that they have received, detailing the reasons for the judgement that the matter was not referred to the local authority.

The DSL keeps a written record of all contact with other agencies. All paperwork relating to child abuse is kept securely.

All children who are subject to a child protection plan will have core group meetings and case conferences organised by social care services. A member of the safeguarding leadership team (DSL/DDSL/Director) will attend these on behalf of the school. Children are aware that these meetings take place and that the school will be presenting a report at the meetings and is responsible for Children Looked After (CLA), they will liaise accordingly with Virtual School headteachers.

They will provide update information that will be collated for their Pupil Education Plan (PEP) and or ECHP.

All staff, including leaders, teachers, therapists and our school nurse monitors children who are subject to a social care services Child Protection (CP) or Child In Need (CIN) Plan.

## **MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST OTHER PUPILS**

All staff members treat this abuse very seriously and never consider it as 'banter' or part of growing up. When an allegation is made by a pupil against another pupil, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern:

- The DSL should be informed as per the usual CFC system.
- A factual record should be made of the allegation, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances.
- The DSL will contact social care services to discuss the case. It is possible that social care services are already aware of safeguarding concerns around the pupil. The DSL will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a social care services referral where appropriate.
- The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion, and any outcome.
- If the allegation indicates a potential criminal offence has taken place, the police will be contacted at the earliest opportunity and parents informed (of both the pupil being complained about and the alleged victim). It may be appropriate to exclude the pupil being complained about for a period of time, as per our 'How We Do It' and anti-bullying policies.

- Where neither social care services nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough school investigation will take place in any case, using our internal procedures.
- In situations where the DSL considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan which will be monitored and evaluated with all adults working with the pupil. Individual risk assessments will also be amended accordingly.
- Both the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) will be supported by the school, what this looks like may vary depending on the case, however it may include: additional therapeutic support, home visits, personalised timetable, family support and ongoing communication with external agencies.

### **CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION: COUNTY LINES**

The criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity; drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and areal areas, market and seaside towns.

Staff are aware that a key indicator to look out for is missing episodes; if a child has periods of going missing it is possible that they have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs. This is another reason as to why our absence procedure is so important; we inform the police if we have been unable to obtain a reason for a child's absence as the pupil is classed as a 'missing child'.

Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, child criminal exploitation can affect any child under the age of 18. It can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual, there is usually some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. It can also involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Staff should raise the concern with the DSL as soon as possible and log any information relating to child criminal exploitation on a CFC.

### **HOMELESSNESS**

A pupil's welfare can be affected if they are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The DSL will be able to assist families in getting them support; in addition to discussions and supporting letters that can be provided to the Local Housing Authority, it may be deemed necessary to make a referral to children's social care if the child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

It should also be recognised in some cases 16 and 17-year olds could be living independently from their parents or carers, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support.

Children's services will be the lead agency for these young people and the DSL will ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances.

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness includes household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviours as well as the family being asked to leave a property.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live.

## **DRUG AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE**

SSS recognises that young people are at risk from a range of both legal and illegal substances and that substance misuse is an increasing social problem that can have devastating consequences for individuals, their families and the community as a whole.

The school is committed to the health, safety and welfare of children and will take action to help safeguard their well-being as well as providing support, advice and education about drugs and substance misuse as appropriate. The schools will never condone the misuse of substances, and the possession or supply of illegal drugs, and it will be viewed as a safeguarding concern.

## **CHILDREN AND THE COURTS SYSTEM**

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There is guidance available on the government website that explains the process and support that are available for children.

Making child arrangements via the family courts following a relationship breakdown can be an extremely stressful time for the whole family. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool which parent/carer(s) may find helpful as it offers clear information in the dispute resolution service.

Further information on the court system can be found at:

<https://helpwithchildarrangements.service.justice.gov.uk/>

## **CHILD EMPLOYMENT**

Only children over the age of 13 may be employed to do light work. Regulations determine the type of work and restrict the hours a child may be employed for. Children working in the UK who are still of compulsory school age are required to have a work permit in all cases; it is illegal for a child to work and not have a work permit, even if this is in a family business. Different regulations apply to children in entertainment, where children under thirteen may be licensed to perform in commercial performances under strict guidelines and controls. Further information on children in employment can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/child-employment>

## **PRIVATE FOSTERING**

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately, without the involvement of a Local Authority, for the care of a child under the age of 16 years of age by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

Each party involved in the private fostering arrangement has a duty to refer it to the Local Authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to begin, and not to do so would be an offence. The school has a duty to inform social services if we become aware of a private fostering arrangement that has not been shared with the Local Authority.

Although there is no duty for the school to be informed of private fostering arrangements it would be helpful if the family could pass on the information to ensure support can be put in place. Further information on private fostering can be found at <https://www.privatefostering.org.uk>

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

We have a risk assessment policy and health & safety policies for every school site, which demonstrate the consideration we give to minimising any risk to the children when on the school premises and when undertaking activities out of school under the supervision of our staff. This also includes alternate provisions, where the school is responsible for the safeguarding of pupils; risk assessments, site visits and a written statement is obtained from the provider stating that they have completed all the required vetting and barring checks that are necessary on their staff.

The school acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard all pupils in potentially vulnerable situations such as changing rooms, while also acknowledging the child's right to privacy. A professional judgement is made based on the age and the developmental needs of the pupils; appropriate supervision is achieved by staff being in close proximity to the changing room and pupils should be aware of this, knowing that adults will enter the room if necessary. Showers at local gym and leisure facilities are available for pupils to make use of if required.

## **WORKING WITH CHILDREN'S FAMILIES**

A child's family is considered as those that care for and have responsibility for a child within the school. Families can take many forms and the school makes every effort engage and communicate with each family unit and its stakeholders appropriately

## **PART TWO: THE MANAGEMENT OF SAFEGUARDING**

Disabled children and young people to greatest risk of abuse are those with behaviour or conduct disorders. Other high-risk groups include:

- children with learning difficulties/disabilities
- children with speech and language difficulties
- children with health-related conditions
- d/Deaf children

Full safeguarding training, drawing upon the latest national and local guidance and Teacher Standards (with the expectation that teachers manage behaviour effectively for a safe environment), is provided to all staff on an annual basis and has regard to the. Regular safeguarding updates are provided throughout the year to ensure that staff have the most up to date relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

All staff must read, and signed to acknowledge their understanding of, Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2019. At SSS, we ensure that our mechanisms are in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their roles and responsibilities as set out in part one of this policy.

The training programme focuses on topics such as the 'Prevent' duty, equality, online safety, child criminal exploitation and sexual violence and sexual harassment. Staff who are employed during the school year will receive safeguarding training at the very beginning of their induction period, and at least annually thereafter. Staff will sign an induction form agreeing that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities, and have read and understood all relevant safeguarding guidance, policies and procedures and agree to implement them.

### **GOVERNANCE - MONITORING & REVIEWING POLICY & PRACTICE**

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations apply a duty to proprietors of independent schools to ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The body of governance at SSS consists of a director and the director ensures that SSS complies with its duties under legislation and fulfil their duty to remedy any weaknesses that are identified.

The Proprietor and governing bodies will ensure that SSS approach to safeguarding and child protection is at the forefront of everything we do and underpins all relevant aspects of process and policy development.

The proprietor and governing body will ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

The proprietor will utilise the experiences of the staff team when shaping safeguarding policies and provide regular opportunities for staff to contribute to and shape the safeguarding arrangements and policy

Duties and responsibilities include ensuring that:

- Policies and procedures are effective and comply with the law and that SSS safeguarding and Child protection policies reflect SSS online safety, peer-on-peer abuse, SEND and safer recruitment policy.
- To ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place, across all of the sites to ensure that pupils are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate material online.
- High quality training is provided to all staff, at all levels. This includes induction training, annual whole school safeguarding training, and regular safeguarding training throughout the year. This is integrated, aligned and considered part of the whole school safeguarding approach.
- Serious violence is reflected in our child protection policy
- There are policies on SEND and supporting pupils with medical conditions and that these reflect safeguarding
- All staff have read and understood the child protection and safeguarding policy, code of conduct policy, and part one of the Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE September 2019 statutory guidance.

Noreen Rahman has been appointed to the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who has overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection across the three sites, with deputy designated safeguarding leads in place at the school

- The DSL will continually monitor our child protection and safeguarding practices and bring to the notice of the governing body any weaknesses or deficiencies at the half termly governing body meetings, via an oral report which is recorded via minutes.
- The DSL has a termly meeting with the chair of the proprietorial board, who is also the Designated Safeguarding Director (DSD).
- SSS recognises the importance of information sharing and works very closely with external agencies such as other schools/colleges, social care services, the police and health services to promote the welfare of pupils, and to protect them from harm.
- DSL will work closely with mental health leads where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health.
- Promote positive and supportive relationships are built with all of our families, and appropriate support is put in place.
- DSL will continuously work to promote the educational outcomes of children in need by knowing and helping to address issues they're experiencing or have experienced, by
  - Ensuring the school knows who is in the cohort of children who currently, need a social worker, understand their academic progress and attainment and maintaining a culture of high aspirations.
  - Support teaching staff to feel confident to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who need or have a social worker reach their potential, recognising the lasting impact there can be on children's educational outcomes,

- The DSL should be supported in developing knowledge and skills to understand the difficulties that children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication.
- Those with disabilities and those with relevant health needs will also be listed under children in need, so that the DSL is alert to the specific needs of the child.

Supervision is made available to those staff who are involved in the management of allegations of child abuse. The child protection register is maintained by the DSL and all staff working with pupils are informed of all matters relating to children in their classes. In addition to our child protection register, the DSL keeps a live safeguarding log which records any and all concerns raised, and the actions taken, on a CFC. The DSL provides regular feedback to the governing body on all safeguarding issues.

- A child protection file will be transferred to a new school or college within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within 5 days of start of a new term.

### **Part 3: SAFER RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES**

*SSS ensures that there are effective systems in place to recruit new staff, including agency staff, volunteers and coaches. Safer Recruitment is not only about vetting people before they start, but to also ensure that the staff code of conduct is strong enough to identify inappropriate behaviour in appointed staff.*

SSS will always follow safer recruitment procedures so that we can be confident that all adults working in our school are safe to do so. All senior leaders and the proprietor are Safer Recruitment trained. All interviews are undertaken by senior leaders.

#### **The Recruitment Process**

A key aspect of safeguarding is the vetting of applicants and prospective volunteers working within SSS to make sure they are suitable in accordance to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2019 (Part Three).

**Advertisements** will always include a statement about our commitment to keeping children safe.

**Applicant information pack** will include an overview of our safer recruitment process so that candidates understand what information will be sought from them and why, and what will be expected of them at each stage of the process.

**Self-disclosure form** will be included to give candidates the opportunity to tell SSS confidentially about any relevant criminal convictions, child protection investigations or disciplinary sanctions they have on their record.

#### **Collecting information about criminal offenses.**

All persons who carry out regulated activity with children have an Enhanced DBS check and list 99 check prior to working at the school. An individual may commence work only with a completed DBS check and review with two satisfactory references and a cleared barred list check. Information on European Economic Area (EEA) regulating authority teacher sanctions and restrictions will be reviewed in line with the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

SSS are aware that the nature and detail of information provided (were available) can vary in different countries. Although there is no requirement to carry out an enhanced DBS check for an applicant from abroad who's previously worked in the UK, SSS will request one to ensure that we have up-to-date information. SSS will carry out checks on all individuals who have lived or worked abroad for more than 3 months during their adult life; undertake a risk assessment and other means to check suitability and do a risk assessment.

The DSL and Director will, if informed in advance by the staff member undergoing the DBS check, risk assess the member of staff if the check includes a record of anything that could potentially be cause for concern including any police caution, conviction, reprimand or warning.

Whether this risk assessment supports the appointment of the staff member or not, this risk assessment with any supporting investigative documentation will be kept securely and confidentially on file. If a member of staff does not declare anything that could potentially be cause for concern, including any relevant police caution, conviction, reprimand or warning, the applicant will not be appointed to the school.

### **Visitors to the School**

All visitors will read key safeguarding information on arrival, while being required to bring appropriate identification. Any visitors to the school will be accompanied at all times by a member of staff, including social workers, inspectors and external therapists to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils.

We have a clear vetting procedure, including risk assessment to ensure that any visiting speaker is suitable and appropriate. Key staff will always try to select visiting speakers from an established organisation, and appropriate checks should be undertaken to establish the suitability of the person, such as internet searches and/or contacting other schools where the person has spoken previously. Even if only visiting for a day all staff details will be added to a single central record (SCR), this is to also include trainees. Their details will be removed once they no longer work at the school.

## **Part 4: HANDLING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF**

SSS School is clear about its duty to refer a person who is deemed unsuitable to work with children to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS).

Specifically, we refer to the DBS any member of staff who:

- has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child.
- has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or if there is reason to believe that the individual has committed a listed relevant offence
- is dismissed or receives disciplinary action because of misconduct relating to a child.
- leaves their employment during an investigation related to misconduct relating to a child.

The DBS will then consider whether to bar the person. Referrals will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual.

### **SAFE PRACTICE**

We ensure that all staff are clear about the expectations we have of their behaviour towards all children and that any incident that falls below our expected standards will be dealt with appropriately, as per our staff conduct and disciplinary procedures.

### **CHILDCARE DISQUALIFICATION**

SSS is fully aware of the legislation relating to childcare disqualification which can be (for example) for inclusion on the Children's Barred List, being cautioned for specific offences against children/adults, grounds related to the care of children, having childcare/children's home registration refused or cancelled and/or for being disqualified from private fostering. It can also be 'disqualification by association' which is when an employee lives in the same household as somebody who is disqualified. However, as we do not offer early or later years (no children who are aged 8), no childcare provision and no employees at

SSS undertake childcare in their roles, it is unlawful for us to ask employees about childcare disqualification or disqualification by association.

### **SUPERVISION OF STAFF AND THE MANAGEMENT OF ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST STAFF**

Our procedures for managing allegations of abuse against members of staff are simple and clear – the quick resolution of any allegation is an absolute priority. Put simply, allegations made should be reported straight away, normally to the associate executive head with safeguarding responsibility, executive head or the proprietor. The school must then involve the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if the allegations require investigation.

In response to an allegation, suspending the member of staff is not the default response, unless there is no reasonable alternative. If suspension is deemed appropriate, the reasons and justification will be recorded by the school's leaders (or proprietor) and the individual notified of the reasons.

Allegations that are found to have been malicious will be removed from personnel records and any that are not substantiated, are unfounded or malicious will not be referred to in employer references.

Pupils who have made malicious allegations are likely to have breached the schools' behaviour policy and will receive an appropriate sanction which is likely to be a fixed-term exclusion.

The procedures for dealing with allegations should be applied with common sense. However, it is important that even allegations that appear less serious are followed-up.

**Our procedure is:**

1. The recipient of an allegation must report it to the DSL/Head Teacher as soon as possible and never try to investigate it themselves. If a member of the leadership team is implicated, it must be reported to the head. If the head is implicated, it must be reported to the director of operations, and if the director of operations is implicated, it must be reported to the LADO.
2. A record of the report must be made by the relevant member of staff (depending on point 1) which must be timed, dated and include a clearly written name and signature.
3. If the allegation is serious and credible and alleges that a member of staff has
  - behaved in way that has harmed or may have harmed a child,
  - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or
  - behaved towards children in a way that indicated he/she is unsuitable to work with children, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be informed on the same day.
4. If unsure, call the LADO in any case to discuss the allegation.
5. Such consultation in point 3/4 will enable the LADO and the school leader to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action.
6. If this leads to a decision that no further action is to be taken this decision and the reasons for it should be recorded by both the school's senior leader and the LADO. They should agree between them the information that should be put in writing to the individual about whom the allegation was made. Both should then consider the action that should follow in respect of that individual and also the person (or persons) who made the allegation.
7. If it is decided that the allegation warrants further action the LADO will take this forward.
8. The DSL, head or director of operations should inform the accused person about the allegation as soon as possible, but only after consulting the LADO about whether this is appropriate at this stage and what information can be given to the person.

9. Consideration must be given as to whether it is necessary to remove the subject of the allegations from contact with children at the schools, pending investigations and procedures arising from the allegation. Suspension should not be automatic, but should be considered if:
  - there is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm,
  - the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or
  - the allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.
10. Any decision to suspend shall be taken only after consultation with the LADO. It will take into account the safety of the child or children involved and the impact on any enquiry.
11. Where it has been deemed appropriate to suspend the person, written confirmation should be dispatched within 24 hours, giving the reasons for the suspension. The person should be informed at that point who their named contact is within the organisation and provided with their contact details.
12. The subject of the allegations (whether suspended or not) shall be:
  - advised to contact her/his trade union or professional association,
  - treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed, processes involved and possible outcomes,
  - kept informed of the progress of the case and of the investigation,
  - clearly informed of the outcome of any investigation and the implications for disciplinary or related processes and
  - provided with appropriate support as appropriate.
13. A school leader, usually the DSL or the head (or the schools' director of operations should the head be the subject of the investigation), shall be responsible for continuing liaison with the Local Authority's LADO and all communication between the schools and other agencies that may be involved in processes following an allegation.
14. Confidentiality is essential and information about an allegation must be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to:
  - protect children,
  - facilitate enquiries,
  - avoid victimisation,
  - safeguard the rights of the person about whom the allegation has been made and others who might be affected and
  - manage disciplinary/complaints aspects.
15. If, following the conclusion of child protection processes, further enquiries are pursued for the purpose of disciplinary, regulatory or complaint investigation, they should be arranged in a way that avoids the repeated interviewing of children or other vulnerable witnesses.
16. Any settlement agreement shouldn't stop SSS providing a reference to potential employers when requested.

## **Part 5: CHILD-ON-CHILD SEXUAL VIOLENCE & SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It may occur through a single child or group of children sexually harassing or being sexually violent towards another child or group of children, it may happen both physically or verbally, online or offline.

Evidence suggests that girls, children with Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) and LGBT children are at greater risk. It is important that all disclosures are taken seriously, victims are supported and there is a clear message that it is never acceptable.

Any experience of sexual violence and sexual harassment is likely to have a significant impact on a pupil's emotional wellbeing and adversely affect their educational attainment.

Staff are to report any concerns about a pupil to the designated safeguarding lead and log it on a cause for concern form (CFC).

Staff do not need to wait for a child to make an disclosure, they should act on any concerns immediately.

Staff can ask children outright if they've been harmed and what the nature of the harm was. Noting that the incident could be made by a group and not just an individual and therefore one should use the term "perpetrator(s)" rather than perpetrator.

### **ALLEGATIONS FROM PUPILS AGAINST OTHER PUPILS**

In most instances, negative conduct of pupils towards each other will be covered by our behaviour and anti-bullying policies. However, some allegations and peer on peer abuse may be of a more serious nature and raise safeguarding concerns. Allegations made against another pupil may include physical abuse (e.g. violence, particularly pre-planned; forcing the use of drugs or alcohol), emotional abuse (e.g. bullying, blackmail, extortion, threats, intimidation), sexual abuse (e.g. indecent exposure, touching, sexual violence and sexual harassment, sexting, forcing the watching of pornography) and/or sexual exploitation (e.g. photographing or videoing indecent acts).

#### **Responding to an initial disclosure**

- Recognise that it may only be the first incident reported, rather than representative of a singular incident and that trauma can impact memory, so children may not be able to recall all details or timeline of abuse.
- Keep in mind that certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.
- Reflect back, using the child's language, when hearing a report

### **After the initial response**

- Balance the victims wishes against your responsibility to protect other children.
- Remember that sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers.
- Think about other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation, and take the potential for sexual violence and harassment in intimate personal relationships into consideration.
- Keep victim and alleged perpetrator(s) a reasonable distance apart on school premises including before and after school activities.

## APPENDIX 1

### INFORMATION & GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

Below is a set of guidelines that staff should take on board when dealing with individual/small groups of children. It is important to be mindful at all times of your behaviour in relationship to individual/small groups of children and of the potential risk of an allegation.

Staff should take necessary precautions in order to minimise the opportunity for an allegation to be made against them. This is generally about exercising common sense, but all staff should specifically take note of the following:

- Whenever possible try not to be alone in a room with a child, regardless of gender. If you are on your own with a child, leave the door open and inform a colleague if possible. Always keep an appropriate distance between you and the child.
- Do not engage in conversations about your personal life with children.
- Keep boundaries very clear between you and children, particularly if the conversation involves relationships, emotions, and sexual content.
- Do not exchange mobile phone numbers with children. If possible, do not have your mobile phone out when dealing with an individual child.
- Do not accept children (or their family members) as 'friends' or links on social networking websites or mobile phone apps.
- If a child wishes to disclose personal information to you, ensure that they understand that you cannot guarantee confidentiality. Do not probe a child about their personal life unless they approach you. Avoid giving advice to children about their relationships.

## APPENDIX 2

### DEFINITIONS & CATEGORIES OF CHILD ABUSE

All children have certain basic needs, which include:

- Physical care and protection
- Affection and approval
- Stimulation and approval
- Discipline and control that is consistent and appropriate to age
- The opportunity to gradually acquire self-esteem, confidence, independence and responsibility that are age appropriate

Individual cases must always be treated on their own merits however in general terms the following definition should provide the bases for action under these guidelines: "A child is considered to be in need of protection when the basic needs of that child are not being met through avoidable acts of either commission or omission".

Before a child is placed on a Child Protection Plan a conference must decide that there is, or is a likelihood of, significant harm leading to the need for a plan. The following are used for the plan.

They are intended to provide definitions as a guide; in some instances, more than one category may be appropriate.

#### NEGLECT

The persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or extreme failure to carry out an important aspect of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Signs to look out for:

- Dirty unkempt appearance of child, in overall poor condition.
- Thin wispy hair. Underweight child, diarrhoea may indicate poor nutrition.
- An undernourished child may be unduly solemn or unresponsive or may be overeager to obtain food.
- An under-stimulated child may not reach expected milestones.
- Behaviour and developmental difficulties that cannot be explained by clinical factors.

Associated factors, neglected children frequently come from homes where there is:

- A parent who is lonely, isolated, unsupported or depressed.
- Poor inter-parental relationship / domestic violence.  
A parent who is abusing drugs or alcohol.
- A large number of children living in cramped or very poor conditions.

#### PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical injury to a child including deliberately poisoning, where there is definite knowledge, or a reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. It should not be assumed that an injury to a part of the body normally vulnerable to accidental injury has necessarily been caused accidentally – it could be non-accidental. All injuries to children, which do not easily come into the category of normal bumps and scrapes, should be seen by a doctor. Certain parts of the body are more commonly subjected to non-accidental injury.

These include the upper arm, where a child may be gripped or shaken, the back, and the buttocks. Multiple injuries of various types, ages and location are common features of physical abuse.

Most non-accidental injuries leave marks on the body. PE teachers are therefore often key people in the identification of this form of abuse, as they regularly see the children partially dressed.

### **Signs to look out for:**

- Children who show a reluctance to undress or to expose parts of their bodies should be monitored as children who may have suffered physical injury.
- Unexplained absences.
- Physical signs of injury.
- Unexplained or confused accounts of how an injury occurred.
- Explanation of an injury which appears to be inappropriate to the nature and age of the injury.
- Common medical/physical factors associated with physical abuse.

### **Bruising**

- Facial bruising around the mouth and ears.
- Groups of small bruises.
- Black eyes without a forehead injury, particularly if both eyes are affected.
- Weal marks or outline of bruising (e.g. hand mark).
- Bruising of soft tissue with no obvious explanation (most bruises occur on bony protuberances such as the temple or shin).
- Bruises on the back, back of legs, stomach, chest or neck.
- Bruises or cuts to mouth or tongue (e.g. split frenulum).
- Pinch marks are found in pairs and may be seen on the back, buttocks, arms or cheeks.

### **Bites**

- Bites leave clear impressions of teeth and some bruising – they are never accidental.
- Parents sometimes claim that bites have been made by other children or animals. It is therefore important to check the size and shape of the injury. If the impression is more than 3cms across it will have been caused by an adult or adolescent.
- Bites can be inflicted almost anywhere on the body.

### **Burns and scalds**

- Children will sometimes suffer minor burns through hot irons etc., but it is uncommon for multiple burns to be caused accidentally.
- A cigarette burn is characteristically round, but may have a tail when dragged against the skin, and is surrounded by an area of inflamed skin.
- Cigarette burns can be found in groups and can be found on any part of the body.
- Scalds from boiling water may result from lack of supervision, or non-accidentally.
- A child is very unlikely to sit down willingly in very hot water; therefore, he cannot scald a bottom accidentally without also scalding the feet.
- Burns and / or scalds are particularly worrying as a degree of sadism may be involved when such injuries are inflicted.

### **Associated factors**

- Injuries not consistent with explanation given by parent (even if agreed by the child).
- Circumstances where parent delays seeking medical advice.
- A history of repeated injuries or presentation to A&E.
- Consent for a medical refused by parent.
- Desire of a parent to attribute blame elsewhere.
- Distant or mechanical handling of the child by the parent.

### **SEXUAL ABUSE**

The involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend and to which they are unable to give informed consent, or that violate the social taboos of family roles.

The traumatic effects of child sexual abuse can be far-reaching and enduring, impacting on a child's cognitive, behavioural and social development. The earlier the abuse occurs, the more adversely subsequent stages of development may be affected. The longer the abuse continues, the more extensive it is e.g. involving penetrative abuse, the greater the number of developmental stages that abuse continues through, the more disturbed the child is likely to be.

Children who have suffered chronic long-term sexual abuse tend to have very negative feelings about themselves and all aspects of their relationships.

### **What is sexual abuse?**

Sexual abuse can be one or more of the following:

- Rape – genital and / or oral intercourse
- Digital penetration or penetration with an object
- Mutual masturbation
- Inappropriate fondling
- Taking pornographic photographs or exposing the child to pornographic materials
- Forcing the child to observe others involved in sexual activities
- Sadomasochistic activities

Both boys and girls can suffer from sexual abuse. Both men and women can be perpetrators – boys and girls who disclose sexual abuse from a female perpetrator are often met with disbelief. It is therefore important to listen to what a child says without being judgemental.

Abusers can be parents, friends, teachers, childcare workers, clergymen or strangers.

Warning children about Stranger Danger should therefore only form part of any child protection programme.

### **Signs to look out for:**

- A child who demonstrates inappropriate sexual interest and activity, through play or drawings.
- Sexualised behaviour, masturbation and sex play which often leaves the peer group confused or embarrassed.
- A child having excessive preoccupation with, or precocious knowledge of adult sexual behaviours.
- A child who shows a marked fear of adults, usually men, but occasionally men and women.
- A child who presents as depressed and where there may be instances of drug or alcohol abuse, suicide attempts or running away.
- A child who suddenly starts to wet or soil.
- A child who takes over the role of wife / mother within the family.
- A child whose concentration and academic performance suddenly deteriorates.
- A child who avoids medical examination or is reluctant to change for PE.
- A child who has low self-esteem and few friends.
- Aggressive behaviour from a normally quiet child, or withdrawn behaviour from a normally boisterous child.
- Frequent unexplained absences or lateness.
- A child who talks of nightmares and being unable to sleep; a child who may be excessively tired.
- Arson
- Pregnancy in young teenagers where the identity of the father is vague or unknown.
- Recurrent urinary tract infections.
- Signs of sexually transmitted infections and overall dishevelled appearance.

### **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. All forms of abuse involve some emotional ill treatment.

Emotional or psychological abuse can be defined as the destruction of the child's competence to be able to function in a social situation. The child may be denied appropriate contact with peers within or outside of school and be forced to take on a particular role in relation to parents, which is detrimental to the child's ability to function appropriately in social contexts. This type of abuse is very difficult to identify as there are no physical signs – symptoms are usually apparent via a child's behaviour and demeanour.

It is important to note that the emotional / psychological abuse is present in all other forms of abuse, but this category is only used when it is the sole form of abuse.

### **Signs to look out for:**

- A child may be inducted into a parental care-taking role and not be encouraged to be involved with appropriate play.
- A child may be used as a parent's confidant to a degree that is harmful to the child's psychological development.
- A child may be ignored, rejected or denigrated by a parent.
- A child may be terrorised by a parent or others so that she / he is overly fearful and watchful.

- A parent who is unable to be responsive to a child's emotional needs, who may be emotionally distant and / or excessively negative and hostile.
- A child (usually of a mentally ill or disturbed parent) who is inducted into a parent's delusionary state or paranoid beliefs.
- A child who is cripplingly over-protected and not given freedom to act at an age appropriate level.
- A parent who provides only conditional love with threats of withdrawal of love.

Behavioural definitions are very difficult to quantify because a) most children experience some of these acts from time to time, and b) because the impact of a single or seldom occurring act of abuse will not have severe and harmful effects.

The harm of emotional maltreatment results from the cumulative effects of repeated acts of psychological abuse.

### **Associated Factors**

Children who suffer from emotional abuse frequently come from homes where there is:

- A mentally ill or disturbed parent.
- Drug or alcohol abuse.
- A parent who is socially isolated, unsupported or depressed, or conversely, a parent who has a very active social life with very little time or energy to give to childcare.
- A parent who has poor social skills, who may have learning difficulties and lack of knowledge about children's age appropriate needs.
- A parent who has suffered severe abuse within her/his own childhood
- A household where there is 'adult on adult' domestic violence.

Many parents who emotionally abuse their children are unaware that what they are doing is harmful. Because of their own life experiences, they may have a distorted view of parenting and their role as a mother/father.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **EXAMPLE OF THE VISITOR INFORMATION WELCOME TO SSS**

Nothing is more important than the safety and wellbeing of our pupils. We ask that you take some time to familiarise yourself with some key safeguarding points.

- SSS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our especially vulnerable pupils and expects all staff and visitors to share this commitment.
- Our philosophy is to always 'think the unthinkable'.
- Any visitor to the school will be accompanied at all times by a member of staff to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils.
- If you have a safeguarding or child protection concern please report what has been disclosed to one of our designated safeguarding leads below as soon as possible, who will record and act, if appropriate, on the information.
- Remember that if there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral can and should be made to children's social care services immediately and that anybody can make a referral.

## Appendix 4

All staff will receive a copy of this policy and will sign and date on a register held by the DSL to ensure they have read and understood it.

### Updates Keeping Children safe in Education 2021

- A link has been added to departmental advice Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges (updated May 2018). This reinforces the emphasis on sexual violence and sexual harassment after Ofsted found this to be a common failing for schools last year. All staff should be able to identify this and know what to do.
- A tweak to wording: Relationships Education (for all primary pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for all secondary pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state-funded schools) which **was made compulsory in** September 2020. Schools have flexibility to decide how they discharge their duties effectively within the first year of compulsory teaching and are encouraged to take a phased approach (if needed) when introducing these subjects (para 94).
- A new resource has been added on homelessness: Homelessness: How local authorities should exercise their functions – Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government guidance and the cyberbullying resource has been removed.
- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/719902/Sexual\\_violence\\_and\\_sexual\\_harassment\\_between\\_children\\_in\\_schools\\_and\\_colleges.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719902/Sexual_violence_and_sexual_harassment_between_children_in_schools_and_colleges.pdf)

Noreen Rahman  
Head Teacher

Date: 15 July 2020 Updated: 01.02.21 (in line with 2021 updates)

Review Date: 15 July 2021

Seva Care Group Ltd  
Company Registration Number: 06496694.  
Registered office address: 14 College Road, Harrow. HA1 1BE.  
Telephone: 020 8422 2999.

### Local Authority Designated Officers

#### Ealing

Paul Andrews (LADO)  
020 8825 8930  
[asv@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:asv@ealing.gov.uk)

#### Harrow

Janice Miller  
020 8736 6435  
[Janice.Miller@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:Janice.Miller@harrow.gov.uk)

#### Hillingdon

Rob Wratten  
01895 250975  
[rwratten@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:rwratten@hillingdon.gov.uk)