**Seva Education- South Harrow**

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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| **Agreed By:** | The Seva Governing Body |
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**Important contacts**

| ROLE/ORGANISATION | NAME | CONTACT DETAILS |
|---|---|---|
| Seva Safeguarding Lead | Andre Bailey<br>Lead Executive Headteacher | 020 8422 2999 ext. 227<br>andre@sevaeducation.com |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) | Gary Hawkins<br>Executive Headteacher | gary@sevaedcuation.com<br>020 8422 2999 ext. 219 |
| School Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) | Naila Khan<br>Head of School | naila@sevaeducation.com<br>0208 422 2999 ext 216 |
| Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) | Aisha Shehzide<br>SENCO | Aisha@sevaeducation.com<br>0208 422 2999 ext 229 |
| Local authority designated officer (LADO) | Rosalind South | Rosalind.South@harrow.gov.uk<br>07871987254 |
| Chair of Governors | Peter Behan | 02084222999 ext. 223 |
| Channel helpline | Channel and Prevent Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP) guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) | 020 7340 7264 |
| Out of Hours | | safeguarding@sevaeducation.com |

- **Aims**

The school aims to ensure that:

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding.
- Staff are properly training in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues.

## 2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026).

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- **Section 175 of the Education Act 2002**, which places a duty on schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
- **The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009**, which set out requirements relating to safer recruitment and information recorded on the single central record, where applicable.

- **Part 3 of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (updated April 2026)**, which requires independent schools to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.
- **The Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004**, which provide the statutory framework for the care and protection of children.
- **Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003**, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18.
- **Statutory guidance relating to FGM**, which sets out responsibilities for safeguarding and supporting girls who may be affected by FGM.
- **The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**, together with the relevant exceptions and subsequent legislation, which governs the circumstances in which criminal convictions and cautions may be considered when assessing suitability to work with children.
- **The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**, including Schedule 4, which defines regulated activity in relation to children.
- **Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty,** which explains schools' duties under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.
- **The Human Rights Act 1998**, which sets out the rights and freedoms protected under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Safeguarding arrangements will recognise that harassment, violence and abuse, including abuse of a sexual nature, may engage these rights.
- **The Equality Act 2010**, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against individuals because of protected characteristics. Seva Education and its schools will consider how safeguarding arrangements support pupils with protected characteristics and will make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils where required.
- **The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)**, where applicable, and the principles it establishes in relation to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.
- Schedule 4 of the **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**, which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children.
- **The Childcare Act 2006 and the Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018**, where applicable, which set out requirements relating to disqualification from providing or working in relevant childcare provision.

The Governing Board, senior leaders, DSLs and staff will ensure that safeguarding arrangements remain consistent with current statutory guidance and with the procedures established by the relevant local safeguarding partners.

### 3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply across all Seva Education schools and provisions.

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** means:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.

- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

**Child protection** forms part of safeguarding and refers to the activities undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

**Abuse** is a form of maltreatment of a child and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix 1 provides further information about the different types of abuse.

**Neglect** is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

**Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes** (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery) is where children share nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams. This also includes pseudo-images that are computer-generated images which otherwise appear to be a photograph or video.

**Children** includes everyone under the age of 18.

**Safeguarding partners**

The three safeguarding partners identified in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and defined in the Children Act 2004 are:

- The local authority;
- The integrated care board for an area within the local authority; and
- The chief officer of police for a police area within the local authority area.

These safeguarding partners make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs.

As Seva Education operates schools across different local authority areas, references within this policy to "the safeguarding partners", "local safeguarding partners", "the local authority" or "local safeguarding procedures" mean those relevant to the individual school, child and circumstances concerned.

Where a child lives in a different local authority area from the school they attend, the relevant DSL will ensure that referrals and information-sharing are directed to the appropriate authority and that the correct local safeguarding procedures are followed.

Victim is a widely understood and recognised term. However, we recognise that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way. When managing an incident, staff will be sensitive to the terminology the child feels most comfortable with.

Alleged perpetrator(s) and perpetrator(s) are widely used and recognised terms. However, staff will consider carefully the terminology used, particularly in front of children. In some circumstances, a child displaying harmful or abusive behaviour may themselves have additional safeguarding or support needs. Appropriate terminology will therefore be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## 4. Equality statement

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation, both online and offline, and that additional barriers may exist which affect a child's ability to recognise, understand, communicate or disclose safeguarding concerns.

We are committed to anti-discriminatory and inclusive practice and recognise the diverse circumstances, needs and communication profiles of the children and young people we support. All pupils are entitled to the same protection from harm, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give particular consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or health conditions (see section 11).
- Have communication difficulties, including children who are non-speaking, pre-verbal or who use alternative or augmentative methods of communication.
- May have difficulty recognising, understanding or communicating that they are being harmed or that another person's behaviour towards them is inappropriate.
- Are young carers.
- May experience discrimination because of their race, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or other protected characteristic.
- Have English as an additional language (EAL).
- Are known to be living in difficult circumstances, for example temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance misuse or domestic abuse.
- Are at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation, forced marriage or radicalisation.
- Are asylum seekers or refugees.
- Are at risk due to their own or a family member's mental health needs.
- Are looked after or previously looked after (see section 13).
- Are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeated occasions.
- Have a parent or carer who has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated.

Staff must remain alert to the possibility that behaviours, changes in presentation or communication may be indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation and must not automatically attribute these to a pupil's disability, diagnosis, developmental level or additional needs.

We will make reasonable adjustments to its safeguarding arrangements where required to ensure that pupils are able to understand safeguarding information, communicate concerns and participate in safeguarding processes.

This may include the use of communication aids, symbols, visual supports, accessible information, communication systems familiar to the pupil and support from adults who understand the pupil's individual communication needs.

Safeguarding concerns will always be considered on the basis of the individual child and their circumstances. A child's disability, communication needs or other additional needs must never be a barrier to concerns being recognised, reported or appropriately investigated.

We also recognise that there are occasions when reasonable force is appropriate and that a 'no-contact' policy can leave staff unable to fully support and protect our pupils. The decision to use reasonable force to control or restrain a child is down to the professional judgment of the staff involved and should always depend on individual circumstances. Staff working at the school are appropriately trained in the use of restrictive physical interventions and this training is reviewed

annually. Our school uses Team Teach for behaviour support de-escalation and intervention strategies, which is an accredited programme designed to support the whole school community.

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility.

This policy applies to all staff, agency staff, volunteers, governors and other individuals in the school. It also applies, where relevant, to extended school activities, educational visits, off-site activities and other activities undertaken by the school.

The school has an appropriately trained safeguarding leadership through its Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s).

The current safeguarding leadership arrangements, including the schools or regions covered by each DSL and Deputy DSL, are set out in the **Important Contacts** section at the beginning of this policy.

Staff must familiarise themselves with the safeguarding arrangements applicable to the school or site at which they are working.

Where this policy refers to **"the DSL"**, this means the DSL or, where appropriate, a Deputy DSL responsible for the relevant school or site.

Where this policy refers to **"the Executive Headteacher"**, **"Head of School"** or **"senior leader"**, this means the individual with the relevant responsibility for the school or matter concerned.

Safeguarding arrangements are consistent with the procedures of the relevant local safeguarding partners.

The school plays a crucial role in preventative education. This forms part of a whole-school approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain and maintaining a culture in which sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, sexual violence and sexual harassment are not tolerated.

This approach is underpinned by:

- The Behaviour and Relationships Policy.
- Pastoral support arrangements.
- The school's safeguarding curriculum.
- A planned programme of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE), appropriately adapted to the age, developmental level, communication needs and understanding of pupils.

RSHE and the wider safeguarding curriculum will address, as appropriate:

- Healthy and respectful relationships.
- Boundaries and consent.
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality.
- Body confidence and self-esteem.
- Recognising abusive relationships, including coercive and controlling behaviour.
- The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), together with how to access support.
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why such behaviour is unacceptable.

### 5.1 All staff

All staff will:

- Sign a declaration to state they have read and understand Part One of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and, where relevant to their role, Annex B, and review the required guidance at least annually.
- Know the identity of the DSL and Deputy DSL(s) responsible for the school or site at which they are working and understand how to contact them.
- Understand the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures and know how to report concerns.
- Reinforce the importance of online safety when communicating with parents and carers, including making them aware of what pupils are being asked to do online.
- Provide a safe and supportive environment in which pupils can raise concerns.

All staff will be aware of:

- The systems in the school that support safeguarding, including this policy, the Staff Handbook, the Behaviour and Relationships Policy, Online Safety Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and relevant procedures concerning children who are missing or absent from education.
- The role and identity of the relevant DSL and Deputy DSL(s), as identified in the Important Contacts section of this policy.
- The early help process applicable within the relevant local authority and their role in identifying emerging concerns, liaising with the DSL and sharing information appropriately.
- The process for making referrals to the relevant local authority children's social care service and the statutory assessments that may follow a referral.
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding concern or a child tells them that they are being abused, neglected or exploited.
- The importance of maintaining appropriate confidentiality while sharing information with those who need it for safeguarding purposes.
- The signs and indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation and specific safeguarding issues including child-on-child abuse, grooming, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), serious violence, county lines, FGM and radicalisation.
- New and emerging safeguarding threats, including online harm and the role of technology and social media.
- The importance of reassuring children who report concerns that they are being taken seriously and will be supported and kept safe.
- The fact that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside the home, within school and online.
- The additional barriers that some pupils with SEND and communication difficulties may experience in recognising or disclosing abuse.
- The fact that a child and their family may experience multiple needs at the same time.
- What to look for when identifying children who may need help or protection.

Staff must maintain an attitude of **"it could happen here"** and act immediately where they have safeguarding concerns.

### 5.2 Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

The Important Contacts section at the beginning of this policy identifies the DSL and Deputy DSL(s) responsible for each school and/or region and provides the relevant contact arrangements.

DSLs will be senior members of staff with the appropriate status and authority to carry out the responsibilities of the role.

During term time, an appropriately trained DSL or Deputy DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns.

Appropriate safeguarding cover will also be maintained for school activities taking place outside normal school hours or during school holidays.

Out-of-hours and alternative safeguarding contact arrangements are contained within the Important Contacts section of this policy.

Where the usual DSL is unavailable, staff should contact one of the Deputy DSLs or follow the alternative safeguarding escalation arrangements identified in the Important Contacts section.

The absence or unavailability of a DSL or Deputy DSL must never delay action where a child may be at risk of harm. Where necessary, staff may make a referral directly to children's social care and/or the police and must inform the relevant DSL as soon as practicable.

The DSL will be given sufficient time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- Provide advice and support to staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters.
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so.
- Contribute to assessments of children.
- Make referrals, where appropriate, to children's social care, the Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, police and other relevant agencies.
- Support staff who make safeguarding referrals directly.
- Maintain a good understanding of harmful sexual behaviour.
- Understand the filtering and monitoring systems and processes operating within the relevant school.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate Prevent training and induction.
- Understand the local safeguarding arrangements, thresholds and referral pathways relevant to the school(s) for which they have responsibility.
- Understand what specialist safeguarding support is available locally and how this can be accessed.

The DSL will also:

- Keep the relevant Executive Headteacher and senior leadership informed of significant safeguarding issues, as appropriate.
- Liaise with local authority case managers, children's social care, Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs), police and other safeguarding professionals as appropriate.
- Understand the local response to sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Ensure that safeguarding practice within their area of responsibility reflects relevant local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- Be aware that children must have an appropriate adult to support them where required during a police investigation or search.

- Ensure safeguarding information is appropriately shared where a pupil transfers between Seva Education schools or to another education provider.

The full responsibilities of DSLs and Deputy DSLs are set out within their relevant role descriptions and *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

### 5.3 The Governing Board

The Governing Board will:

- Facilitate a whole-organisation and whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring safeguarding and child protection underpin relevant policy, practice and decision-making across Seva Education.
- Evaluate and approve this policy at each formal review.
- Hold senior leaders to account for the effective implementation of safeguarding arrangements across the schools for which the Governing Board has responsibility.
- Be aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010 and relevant local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- Appoint an appropriate senior board-level safeguarding lead to monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in conjunction with the full Governing Board. This individual will be separate from the operational DSL role.
- Ensure that all staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety.
- Ensure that each school has appropriate DSL and Deputy DSL arrangements and that safeguarding cover is maintained.
- Ensure that DSLs have the appropriate status, authority, time, funding, training, resources and support to carry out their responsibilities.
- Ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place across Seva Education schools and that their effectiveness is reviewed.
- Ensure online safety remains an integral part of the whole-school safeguarding approach.
- Ensure procedures are in place for managing allegations and low-level concerns relating to staff, supply staff, volunteers and contractors.
- Ensure this policy recognises the additional safeguarding vulnerabilities and barriers that may be experienced by children with SEND, health conditions and communication difficulties.

Where another organisation provides services or activities on school premises, the school will:

- Seek appropriate assurance that the organisation has suitable safeguarding and child protection arrangements.
- Establish arrangements for safeguarding information to be shared with the school where appropriate.
- Ensure safeguarding requirements form part of any agreement for use of school premises.
- Take appropriate action where another organisation fails to comply with required safeguarding arrangements.

The Link Governor will act as the **case manager**, where appropriate, where an allegation is made against the relevant Executive Headteacher or other senior leader for whom the Chair has case-management responsibility.

All governors will read the relevant sections of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* required for their role and receive appropriate safeguarding training.

### 5.4 Executive Headteachers and Heads of School

Executive Headteachers and Heads of School are responsible, within their respective areas of responsibility, for ensuring the effective implementation of this policy.

This includes:

- Ensuring staff, including temporary and agency staff, and volunteers are informed about the school's safeguarding arrangements as part of their induction.
- Ensuring staff understand and follow the procedures contained within this policy, particularly those relating to reporting and referring safeguarding concerns.
- Ensuring staff know the identity and contact arrangements of the DSL and Deputy DSL(s) relevant to their school.
- Communicating safeguarding arrangements appropriately to parents and carers when pupils join the school and making this policy available through appropriate channels.
- Ensuring DSLs and Deputy DSLs have sufficient time, training, resources and support to undertake their responsibilities.
- Ensuring adequate safeguarding cover is maintained.
- Supporting effective liaison between the school, DSLs and relevant external safeguarding agencies.
- Ensuring appropriate staffing arrangements are maintained, taking account of pupils' individual needs and safeguarding requirements.
- Overseeing the safe use of technology, mobile phones and cameras within the school.
- Ensuring that local safeguarding procedures and contact information relevant to their school remain current and accessible.

Responsibility for acting as case manager in relation to allegations or low-level concerns involving staff will be determined according to the individual's role, the management structure and the procedures set out in the relevant section or appendix of this policy.

Where an allegation or concern relates to an Executive Headteacher, Head of School or another senior leader, the matter must be escalated in accordance with the safeguarding management structure and LADO procedures and must not be managed by an individual who is the subject of the concern.

### 5.5 Virtual School Heads

Virtual School Heads have statutory and non-statutory responsibilities in relation to looked-after children, previously looked-after children and, where applicable, children with a social worker.

The school will work collaboratively with the relevant Virtual School Head and other professionals to support the education, attendance, safeguarding, attainment and progress of eligible pupils.

This may include engagement between Virtual School Heads and relevant DSLs, SENCOs, social workers, designated teachers, mental health leads and other professionals involved with the child.

## 6. Confidentiality

The safety, wellbeing and protection of pupils are the paramount considerations when decisions are made about confidentiality and the sharing of safeguarding information.

Appropriate and timely information sharing is an essential part of safeguarding children. This applies when information needs to be shared between Seva Education schools, local authorities, safeguarding partners or other agencies involved with a child.

Pupils, parents/carers, staff and other members of the school community should understand that absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where safeguarding concerns exist.

Information will be shared only with those who have a legitimate professional need to know, unless wider disclosure is required in order to safeguard a child or comply with a legal obligation.

**General principles**

- Staff will not discuss individual safeguarding cases with anyone who does not have a direct professional involvement in, or legitimate safeguarding responsibility for, the child concerned.
- Staff will not discuss details of a particular pupil's behaviour, needs or safeguarding circumstances with other pupils or their parents/carers.
- Safeguarding and child protection information will be shared internally on a need-to-know basis.
- Staff who receive confidential information in order to support a pupil must respect its sensitivity and must not disclose it to individuals who are not professionally involved.
- Staff must never promise a child that information about abuse, neglect, exploitation or another safeguarding concern will be kept secret.
- Where appropriate, staff should explain to the child that information may need to be shared with other people in order to keep them or another child safe.
- The child's wishes and feelings will be taken into account when determining how information is shared, but these will be balanced against the school's responsibility to safeguard and protect children.
- Where staff are uncertain whether information should be shared, they should seek advice from the relevant DSL or Deputy DSL. This must not delay action where a child is at immediate risk of harm.

**Governing Board and confidential information**

Safeguarding, pupil, staffing or other confidential matters considered by the Governing Board will be managed appropriately and separately from information intended for general publication.

Governors must maintain the confidentiality of information received through their role and must not disclose information about individual pupils, families, staff members or safeguarding matters to anyone who does not have a legitimate reason to receive it.

Where governors undertake a specific safeguarding or case-management function, information will be shared only to the extent necessary for them to fulfil that responsibility.

**Information sharing and data protection**

All staff must understand that:

- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding.
- Concerns about data protection must not prevent information being shared where this is necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child.
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent or limit appropriate information sharing for safeguarding purposes.

- Where special category personal data needs to be shared for safeguarding purposes, the Data Protection Act 2018 provides relevant conditions which may permit information to be shared without consent.
- Consent is not always required to share safeguarding information, particularly where seeking consent could place a child at greater risk, prejudice a safeguarding response or where another lawful basis for sharing applies.
- Information shared for safeguarding purposes must be relevant, necessary, proportionate, accurate, timely and secure.
- A record should be maintained of significant safeguarding information-sharing decisions, including the reasons for deciding to share or not to share information.

Where a child attends a school in one local authority and safeguarding involvement relates to another local authority, placing authority or external agency, the relevant DSL will ensure that information is shared securely with the appropriate professionals.

Where a pupil transfers between Seva Education schools or to another education provider, relevant safeguarding information will be transferred securely in accordance with the record-keeping requirements in **Section 16** of this policy.

### Disclosures and safeguarding concerns

Where a child makes a disclosure, staff should listen carefully and explain that they may need to share the information with the DSL and other professionals whose involvement is necessary to keep the child safe.

Staff should not unnecessarily repeat or disclose the information to others.

Where a child asks that information is not shared, the DSL will consider the child's wishes and feelings alongside:

- The nature and seriousness of the concern.
- The risk of harm to the child or other children.
- Whether the child is in immediate danger or has already suffered harm.
- Whether there is a legal or statutory requirement to share the information.
- Whether sharing is necessary and proportionate for safeguarding purposes.

Parents and carers will normally be informed about safeguarding concerns where appropriate. However, they will not be informed where doing so may place the child or another person at greater risk, prejudice an investigation or otherwise be contrary to safeguarding advice.

Where required, the DSL will seek advice from children's social care, the police or another appropriate safeguarding agency before information is shared with parents/carers.

### Electronic and physical information

Safeguarding and other confidential information must be stored and transferred securely.

Electronic safeguarding records will be maintained using Seva Education's approved safeguarding recording system and access will be restricted to authorised individuals according to their role and professional need.

Any paper safeguarding records must be stored securely at the relevant school with access restricted to authorised staff.

Information transferred electronically to another Seva Education school, local authority, safeguarding partner or external agency must be sent using an approved secure method appropriate to the information being transferred.

Further requirements concerning safeguarding records, retention, access and transfer are set out in **Section 16 – Record-keeping**.

### Supporting inclusion

There may be circumstances where carefully sharing appropriate information with staff or, exceptionally, a pupil group may support a child's inclusion, safety or wellbeing.

Any such disclosure must be considered carefully and limited to what is necessary and appropriate.

Where information is not required to be shared for safeguarding purposes, appropriate consent will be obtained before confidential personal information is disclosed.

## 7. Recognising abuse and taking action

All staff in the school must be able to recognise indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation and know how to respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.

Staff should maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" and should always act in the best interests of the child.

Where this section refers to "the DSL", this means the DSL or Deputy DSL responsible for the relevant school or site, as identified in the Important Contacts section of this policy.

If a DSL or Deputy DSL is unavailable, this must never delay appropriate safeguarding action.

Staff must not assume that somebody else will take action or share information that may be critical to keeping a child safe.

### 7.1 If a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or is in immediate danger

If a member of staff believes that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm or is in immediate danger, they must take immediate action.

This may include:

- Making an immediate referral to the appropriate local authority children's social care service.
- Contacting the police where a child is in immediate danger or a crime may have been committed.
- Calling 999 where there is an immediate risk to life or safety.

Anyone can make a safeguarding referral.

Where possible, staff should inform the relevant DSL before making a referral. However, obtaining the DSL's agreement is not required and must never delay an urgent referral.

Where a member of staff makes a referral directly, they must inform the relevant DSL as soon as practicable afterwards and record the action taken on Seva Education's approved safeguarding recording system.

The appropriate children's social care service will normally be determined by the child's circumstances and responsible local authority and may not necessarily be the local authority in which the school is geographically located.

Where there is uncertainty, staff should seek advice from the DSL, but uncertainty about jurisdiction must not delay action necessary to protect a child.

### 7.2 If a child makes a disclosure

If a child discloses a safeguarding concern, staff should:

- Listen carefully and give the child their full attention.
- Allow the child to speak freely and at their own pace.
- Avoid asking leading or investigative questions.
- Remain calm and avoid expressing shock, disbelief or judgement.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling someone.
- Take what the child says seriously.
- Never promise confidentiality.
- Explain, in a way appropriate to the child's age, developmental level and communication needs, that the information may need to be shared with people who can help keep them safe.
- Report the disclosure to the relevant DSL as soon as possible.
- Make an accurate record of the disclosure and concern on Seva Education's approved safeguarding recording system as soon as practicable.
- Record the child's own words wherever possible rather than interpreting or paraphrasing what they have said.

Staff should be particularly mindful that some pupils may communicate distress, harm or disclosure through behaviour, signs, symbols, communication aids, gestures or other non-verbal means.

A child's communication needs must never prevent or delay a safeguarding concern being reported.

Staff must not investigate the allegation themselves.

Where there is an immediate risk of serious harm, a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police without waiting for the DSL.

If the child's situation does not appear to be improving following a referral, staff should raise this with the DSL and should be prepared to escalate concerns where necessary.

Information about a disclosure must only be shared with those who have a legitimate safeguarding or professional need to know.

### 7.3 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is illegal in the UK and is a form of child abuse.

Any teacher who, in the course of their professional duties:

- Is informed by a girl under the age of 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- Observes physical signs which appear to show that FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18, and has no reason to believe the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth,

must report this **personally to the police** in accordance with the statutory mandatory reporting duty.

The teacher should also inform the DSL unless specifically advised not to do so.

Any other member of staff who becomes aware that FGM may have been carried out must immediately report the concern to the DSL and follow the relevant local safeguarding procedures.

Where there are concerns that a child may be at risk of FGM, the normal safeguarding procedures apply. The concern must be reported to the DSL and consideration given to referral to children's social care and/or other appropriate agencies.

Staff should refer to the relevant appendix of this policy for further information about indicators and risk factors relating to FGM.

Go to the link for further information: {https://www.harrowscd.co.uk/ (Harrow Safeguarding Children Partnership }

### 7.4 If you have concerns about a child

Where a member of staff has a safeguarding concern about a child, but does not believe the child is currently suffering or likely to suffer immediate harm, they should normally speak to the relevant DSL as soon as possible.

The DSL will consider the concern and determine the appropriate course of action.

If the DSL is unavailable, this must not delay action. Staff should contact a Deputy DSL or appropriate senior leader and/or seek advice directly from children's social care.

Staff may make a referral directly to children's social care in exceptional circumstances, where they consider this appropriate and must inform the DSL as soon as practicable afterwards.

All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions must be appropriately recorded.

### Early help

The school should be alert to the need for early help for a child who:

- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home, or care
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit
- has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending

The school will use, wherever necessary, the Early Help Assessment (Common Assessment Framework) in order to support a child's wellbeing. Early Help will be adopted when there are concerns about a child's progress in terms of their health, welfare, behaviour, or progress and where there are concerns about significant factors and where it is deemed that a child's needs are unclear or broader than a single service can address. In exceptional circumstances, such as in emergency or a genuine concern that appropriate action has not been taken, staff members can refer directly to children’s social care.

Referrals can be made online at the following address:

Harrow Children and Family Services Hub

Address: Harrow Civic Centre, Station Road, Harrow, HA1 2XY

Telephone: 020 8901 2690

Fax: N/A

Email: Duty.Assess@harrow.gov.uk

Where it is appropriate to refer a child to children's social care, the referral will be made to the relevant local authority service for the child concerned.

- The person making the referral should:
- Follow the relevant local authority referral process.
- Provide clear and accurate information about the concerns.
- Record when and how the referral was made.
- Record the name of the professional receiving the referral where available.
- Record any advice, decisions or agreed actions.
- Follow up where necessary.

If a referral is not accepted and concerns remain, the DSL and/or member of staff should consider whether the decision should be challenged or escalated in accordance with the relevant local safeguarding procedures.

The fact that Seva Education works with children placed by a number of different local authorities must not result in delay or uncertainty in responding to safeguarding concerns.

**If you are not happy with the response received from children's social care, please follow the local children's social care / local partnership professional-disagreement escalation route.**

### 7.5 Concerns about radicalisation, extremism or terrorism

Where staff have concerns that a child may be susceptible to radicalisation or becoming involved with or supporting terrorism, they should report the concern to the relevant DSL.

The DSL will assess the concern and determine the appropriate response, which may include consultation or referral to:

- The relevant local authority Prevent/Channel arrangements;
- Children's social care;
- The police; or
- Other appropriate safeguarding agencies.

Where the DSL is unavailable, this must not delay appropriate action.

Where there is an immediate risk to the child or another person, staff must contact the emergency services.

Further information regarding the school's approach to the Prevent duty is contained within the relevant section of this policy and associated policies/procedures.

### 7.6 Mental health concerns

Mental health difficulties can, in some circumstances, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff should be alert to changes in a pupil's behaviour, presentation, emotional wellbeing or communication that may indicate a safeguarding or mental health concern.

Where a mental health concern is also a safeguarding concern, staff must follow the safeguarding procedures within this section immediately.

Where the concern does not appear to involve safeguarding, staff should follow the school's pastoral, SEND and mental health support arrangements and seek advice from the DSL or appropriate senior leader where necessary.

Staff must be particularly careful not to assume that changes in behaviour or presentation are solely attributable to a pupil's SEND, diagnosis or disability.

### 7.7 Concerns or allegations about a member of staff, supply staff, volunteer or contractor

Any safeguarding concern or allegation relating to a member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor must be reported without delay.

The concern should normally be reported to the relevant Head of School or other designated case manager in accordance with Seva Education's safeguarding management arrangements.

Where the concern or allegation relates to a Head of School, it must be reported to the Executive Headteacher or other person identified as the appropriate case manager.

Where the concern or allegation relates to an Executive Headteacher, it must be reported to the Link Governor.

Where the concern relates to the Proprietor, or where there is a genuine conflict of interest in following the normal reporting route, advice should be sought directly from the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The relevant LADO will be determined by the school/site at which the individual works or the incident occurred. Current LADO contact arrangements are contained in the Important Contacts section at the beginning of this policy.

Staff must not investigate allegations themselves.

Where an allegation relates to an individual or organisation using the school premises to provide activities for children, the school's safeguarding procedures (Appendix 3) will be followed and the LADO contacted where appropriate.

Further procedures concerning allegations and low-level concerns are set out in the relevant appendix of this policy.

### 7.8 Child-on-child abuse

Seva Education recognises that children are capable of abusing other children.

Child-on-child abuse will never be tolerated or dismissed as “banter”, “having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or similar behaviour.

All child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

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

- Bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying.
- Abuse within intimate personal relationships between children.
- Physical abuse.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images.

- Upskirting.
- Initiation or hazing-type violence and rituals.
- Abuse occurring online or facilitated through technology.

Where an allegation raises a safeguarding concern:

- Staff must record the concern and report it immediately to the DSL.
- Staff must not undertake their own investigation.
- The DSL will consider whether children's social care, police or another safeguarding agency should be contacted.
- Appropriate support will be provided to all children involved.
- Risk assessments and safety planning will be undertaken where appropriate.
- The wishes and feelings of the child who has experienced the alleged abuse will be considered.
- The needs and safeguarding circumstances of the child alleged to have caused harm will also be considered.

The school will take steps to ensure that children involved can continue to access education safely.

Where children involved attend different Seva Education schools, the relevant DSLs will liaise appropriately while maintaining confidentiality and ensuring clear responsibility for safeguarding action.

Where sexual violence or sexual harassment is reported, the DSL will follow the procedures set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and relevant local safeguarding arrangements.

### 7.9 Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes

Where a member of staff becomes aware of an incident involving the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images, videos or pseudo-images, they must report the matter to the DSL immediately.

Staff must not:

- View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery.
- Ask a pupil to send, share or download the imagery.
- Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it.
- Ask pupils involved to provide detailed information about the imagery.
- Share information about the incident unnecessarily with other staff, pupils, parents or carers.
- Blame or shame any child involved.

If imagery has been viewed accidentally, this must be reported to the DSL.

The DSL will undertake an initial review with appropriate staff and determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to any child.
- Whether children's social care and/or police should be involved.
- Whether the imagery has been shared widely or publicly.
- Whether coercion, exploitation, grooming or other abusive behaviour may be involved.
- Whether any child involved is particularly vulnerable.

- What support and safeguarding action is required.

The DSL will follow current national guidance relating to sharing nudes and semi-nudes and will record the decisions and rationale for the action taken.

Parents/carers will normally be informed at an appropriate stage unless doing so would place a child at additional risk or otherwise be contrary to safeguarding advice.

## 8. Contextual safeguarding

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.

Therefore, children's social care practitioners, child protection systems and wider safeguarding partnerships need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse beyond their front doors." https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of the school, for example factors specific to the local community and population. When assessing, planning, or implementing safeguarding polices, protocols and procedures, staff consider a range of contextual factors contributing to the risk of the individual's safety, wellbeing, and welfare. When making a referral or sharing information with agencies, these risks must also be considered and well documented.

We work with local safeguarding teams to promote assessing risk by considering Context Interplay and Context Weighting; broaden understanding of the 'capacity to safeguard'; promote safeguarding as 'everybody's responsibility'; acknowledge that safeguarding is about the creation of safe spaces (in addition to making referrals and sharing information); assess child relationships and extra-familial contexts in order to build support plans. For more information, please refer to "The legal and policy framework for Contextual Safeguarding approaches: A 2020 update on the 2018 legal briefing." (Firmin and Knowles 2020).

Understanding the contextual safeguarding risks means that we can respond to the experiences which young people face in their wider extra-familial environment. The safeguarding team, along with all school staff, are aware of the potential risks and that pupils may be vulnerable to multiple harms beyond the home. Although our pupil population is drawn from a variety of boroughs, there are contextual risks associated with London Borough of Harrow , surrounding urban transport links (we are close to a tube station) and the Borough they live in. These include CCE, CSE, emotional risk due to links to gang affiliation and/or organised groups, involvement in county lines, and exploitation, alongside drug supply and violent crime.

## 9. Online safety and the use of mobile technology

Seva Education recognises the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material and understands that technology is a significant component of many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

Online safety forms an integral part of safeguarding arrangements across all Seva Education schools.

Each school will:

- Maintain appropriate filtering and monitoring systems to support the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers and visitors.
- Educate pupils about the safe and responsible use of technology in a way that is appropriate to their age, developmental level, communication needs and understanding.
- Ensure staff understand their responsibilities in relation to online safety, filtering and monitoring.
- Establish clear expectations regarding the appropriate use of school technology, personal devices, mobile phones, cameras and smart technology.
- Maintain clear processes for identifying, reporting, responding to and escalating online safeguarding concerns.
- Consider online safety as part of the school's wider safeguarding culture, curriculum and risk-management arrangements.

**The four key categories of online risk**

The school's approach to online safety recognises four broad categories of risk:

**Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, including pornography, misinformation and disinformation, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation and extremist material.

**Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, including peer pressure, inappropriate commercial contact and contact from individuals seeking to groom or exploit children for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

**Conduct** – online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm. This includes online bullying and the making, sending or receiving of explicit images, including consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.

**Commerce** – risks including online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing, financial scams and other forms of financial exploitation.

**Our approach to online safety**

To address these risks, the school will:

- Teach online safety through the curriculum and other appropriate learning opportunities.
- Support pupils to understand how to use social media, the internet and technology safely.
- Support pupils to understand the importance of protecting personal and private information.
- Teach pupils, at a level appropriate to their individual needs, how to recognise inappropriate or unsafe online behaviour and how to seek help.
- Encourage pupils to report online concerns, including where they have witnessed harm involving another child.
- Provide staff with online safety training as part of safeguarding induction and subsequent safeguarding updates.
- Ensure staff understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.
- Provide parents and carers with appropriate information and guidance about online safety and how concerns can be raised with the school.

- Maintain appropriate acceptable-use arrangements for pupils, staff and other users of school IT systems.
- Respond appropriately where technology is used to facilitate bullying, abuse, exploitation, harassment or other harmful behaviour.
- Maintain appropriate filtering and monitoring arrangements on school networks and school-owned devices.
- Regularly review the effectiveness of online safety arrangements and consider the particular risks relevant to each school and its pupil cohort.

Given the additional needs and communication profiles of pupils attending the school, online safety education will be appropriately differentiated and made accessible.

Staff should recognise that some pupils may have additional vulnerabilities online because of their SEND, communication needs, social understanding, cognitive ability or difficulties recognising risk, manipulation or exploitation.

**Mobile phones, cameras and personal devices**

The school will maintain clear arrangements governing the use of mobile phones, cameras, smart watches and other personal devices.

Staff may bring personal mobile phones onto school premises but must comply with Seva Education's policies and local school arrangements concerning their use.

In particular:

- Personal devices must not be used inappropriately during contact time with pupils.
- Staff must not use personal mobile phones, cameras or other personal devices to photograph, video or make audio recordings of pupils.
- Images or recordings of pupils must only be created using authorised equipment and systems and for an appropriate educational, safeguarding or operational purpose.
- Staff must not store pupil images, recordings or confidential pupil information on personal devices.
- Staff must comply with Seva Education's data protection, online safety, acceptable-use and mobile-device requirements.
- Any concern about the inappropriate use of a device by a pupil, member of staff or other individual must be reported in accordance with the relevant safeguarding procedures.

Where it is necessary and lawful to search or confiscate a pupil's device, this will be undertaken in accordance with applicable Department for Education guidance, Seva Education policy and the individual circumstances of the pupil.

Particular consideration will be given to the pupil's SEND, communication needs and understanding when managing such situations.

**Filtering and monitoring**

The school will maintain appropriate filtering and monitoring arrangements across its schools to help protect pupils from harmful and inappropriate online content.

The Governing Board and senior leadership will ensure that:

- Roles and responsibilities for filtering and monitoring are clearly understood.

- Appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place.
- DSLs understand the filtering and monitoring arrangements relevant to their school(s).
- Staff receive appropriate information and training regarding their responsibilities.
- Filtering and monitoring arrangements are reviewed regularly and in response to significant changes in technology, systems or identified risks. The Head of School receives regular reports, reviews and implements actions as appropriate.
- Safeguarding concerns identified through monitoring arrangements are acted upon and recorded appropriately.

Filtering and monitoring arrangements may vary between sites according to the technology and infrastructure in place, but all schools must meet Seva Education's safeguarding expectations and applicable statutory guidance.

### 9.1 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The school recognises that artificial intelligence, including generative AI, is increasingly used within education and wider society and can provide benefits for teaching, learning and organisational activity.

However, AI can also create or increase safeguarding risks.

These may include:

- Creation or manipulation of inappropriate or abusive images, audio or video, including deepfakes.
- Bullying, harassment or impersonation.
- Creation or sharing of sexualised or explicit content.
- Grooming or exploitation.
- Exposure to inaccurate, inappropriate or harmful information.
- Disclosure of personal, confidential or sensitive information.
- Circumvention of filtering or monitoring arrangements.

Any use of AI that gives rise to a safeguarding concern will be managed in accordance with this policy and other relevant Seva Education policies.

Staff must use only AI tools and systems that are permitted for use by Seva Education and must comply with applicable data protection, confidentiality, safeguarding and information-security requirements.

Staff must not enter identifiable, confidential or sensitive pupil information into an AI system unless its use for that purpose has been expressly authorised by the school and appropriate data protection and safeguarding controls are in place.

Where a school proposes to introduce a new AI tool or application for use with or in relation to pupils, appropriate consideration will be given to:

- Safeguarding risks.
- Data protection and privacy.
- Age appropriateness.
- Accessibility and the needs of pupils with SEND.

- Filtering and monitoring implications.
- The reliability and limitations of the technology.
- Appropriate staff and pupil oversight.

Where AI is used by a pupil to bully, harass, exploit, impersonate or otherwise harm another child, the matter will be considered under this safeguarding policy and relevant Behaviour and Relationships, Anti-Bullying and Online Safety policies.

Where AI-generated or AI-manipulated sexual imagery involving children is identified or suspected, staff must not view, copy, download, forward or further distribute the imagery and must report the matter immediately to the DSL in accordance with Section 7.

## 10. Notifying parents or carers

The school recognises the importance of working openly and collaboratively with parents and carers in safeguarding children.

Where appropriate, concerns about a child will normally be discussed with their parents or carers. The relevant DSL will usually lead or coordinate this communication where the matter involves a safeguarding concern or disclosure.

Other staff should not discuss safeguarding concerns with parents or carers without first consulting the DSL, unless there is an immediate safeguarding reason requiring action.

Parents or carers will **not** be informed before a referral or other safeguarding action where doing so may:

- Place the child or another person at increased risk of harm.
- Place a member of staff or another person at risk.
- Lead to evidence being lost or compromised.
- Prejudice a police, children's social care or other safeguarding investigation.
- Otherwise be contrary to advice from a safeguarding agency.

Where there is uncertainty about whether parents or carers should be informed, the DSL will seek advice from the relevant local authority children's social care service, police or other appropriate safeguarding agency.

In cases involving alleged child-on-child abuse, parents or carers of the children involved will normally be informed at an appropriate stage, subject to safeguarding considerations and advice from relevant agencies.

Care will be taken regarding the information shared about another child. Confidential or identifying information will not be disclosed unless there is a lawful and appropriate reason to do so.

The DSL will work with relevant agencies, where appropriate, to ensure that:

- Parents/carers of a child who has experienced alleged abuse understand the safeguarding measures and support being put in place.
- The child's wishes and feelings are appropriately considered.
- Parents/carers of a child alleged to have caused harm understand the support and safeguarding arrangements relevant to their child.
- Information is shared in a way that protects the rights, safety and confidentiality of all children involved.

Where a pupil has communication difficulties or additional needs, consideration will be given to how the child can be appropriately supported to understand and participate in discussions concerning their safety and wellbeing.

## 11. Pupils with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues

The school provides specialist education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils attending our schools will therefore have identified additional needs and, in most cases, an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

We recognise that children with SEND or certain health conditions can face **additional safeguarding challenges** and may experience additional barriers to recognising, communicating or reporting abuse, neglect or exploitation.

These barriers may include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse, such as changes in behaviour, mood, presentation or injury, relate to the child's disability, diagnosis or additional needs without further exploration.
- Communication difficulties which may affect a child's ability to describe or disclose what has happened.
- Reliance on adults for personal care, communication, mobility or other aspects of daily life.
- Difficulties recognising inappropriate behaviour, relationships, boundaries or risk.
- Increased vulnerability to manipulation, grooming or exploitation.
- Being more prone to peer isolation or bullying, including prejudice-based bullying.
- Being disproportionately affected by bullying or other harmful behaviour without outwardly showing signs that staff might ordinarily expect.
- Difficulties understanding the difference between fact and fiction in online content or understanding the consequences of repeating online content or behaviours.
- Behaviours that communicate distress being incorrectly attributed solely to the child's SEND or diagnosis.

Staff must therefore maintain **professional curiosity** and must not assume that a change in a pupil's behaviour, communication, emotional presentation or physical wellbeing is necessarily a consequence of their disability or additional needs.

The school will provide appropriate pastoral and safeguarding support according to the needs of its pupil cohort.

This may include:

- Appropriate staffing and supervision based upon assessed pupil needs.
- Small and appropriately structured teaching groups.
- Consistent staffing and trusted relationships wherever practicable.
- Access to appropriate pastoral, therapeutic and specialist support.
- Individual communication strategies.
- Visual, symbolic or other accessible safeguarding information.
- Appropriate quiet, regulation or sensory spaces.
- Individual risk assessments and safeguarding plans where required.

Staff will consider each pupil's preferred and most effective method of communication when seeking their views or responding to safeguarding concerns.

Where necessary, communication aids, visual supports, symbols or other appropriate methods will be used to enable pupils to express their wishes, feelings and concerns.

A child's inability to communicate verbally must never be interpreted as an inability to communicate a safeguarding concern.

### 12. Pupils with a social worker

The school recognises that children may need a social worker because they are experiencing, or are at risk of experiencing, abuse, neglect, exploitation or other significant adversity.

Children with a social worker may experience barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, wellbeing and educational attainment.

Where a pupil has a social worker, the relevant school will work collaboratively with the social worker and other professionals involved with the child.

The DSL will normally hold and maintain appropriate information regarding pupils who have a social worker and will ensure that relevant information is shared with staff on a need-to-know basis where this is necessary to support the child's safety, welfare or education.

When making decisions about safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, educational provision or pastoral support, the school will take account of the fact that a pupil has a social worker and any relevant information about the child's circumstances.

The DSL will work with relevant senior leaders, SENCOs, pastoral staff and other professionals to promote educational outcomes and ensure that appropriate support is available.

Where a pupil is placed at the school by a local authority other than the authority in which the school is located, the school will maintain appropriate liaison with the responsible social worker and relevant local authority.

Information relating to social care involvement will be recorded and shared securely in accordance with this policy.

## 13. Looked-after and previously looked-after children

The school recognises that looked-after children and previously looked-after children may have particular safeguarding, educational and emotional needs.

Each school will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep looked-after and previously looked-after children safe and appropriately supported.

The relevant DSL will have access to appropriate information concerning a looked-after child's:

- Legal status.
- Care arrangements.
- Contact arrangements with parents or those with parental responsibility, where relevant.
- Social worker.
- Responsible local authority.
- Virtual School Head and other relevant professionals.

Information will be shared with staff only where there is a legitimate professional or safeguarding need.

Each school will identify an appropriately qualified and experienced member of staff to fulfil the statutory role of Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

The Designated Teacher will be trained to understands looked after children and will work with the DSL, SENCO, relevant Executive Headteacher/Head of School, social worker, Virtual School Head and other professionals to support the pupil's safeguarding, education, attendance, progress and wellbeing.

Particular consideration will be given to:

- The impact of trauma, loss, disrupted attachments or previous adverse experiences.
- Changes in placement or care arrangements.
- Participation in PEP processes and appropriate record keeping.
- Attendance and engagement with education.
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health.
- Relationships with peers and adults.
- Online safety and vulnerability to exploitation.
- Any additional SEND or communication needs.

Where a looked-after child attends the school and is outside the area of their responsible local authority, the school will maintain appropriate communication with the placing/responsible authority, as well as relevant local safeguarding agencies where required.

The DSL and Designated Teacher will ensure that relevant safeguarding and educational information is shared appropriately when a looked-after or previously looked-after child joins, leaves or transfers between Seva Education schools.

The school will work collaboratively with the relevant Virtual School Head and other professionals to promote the educational achievement and welfare of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

## 14. Supporting pupils who are questioning their gender

We are aware of the potential vulnerabilities of children who are questioning their gender, including the possibility of complex mental health and psychosocial needs, such as relating to relationships with family, peers or their broader social environment.

We will take a strong, proactive stance on all forms of bullying based on gender. See our behaviour policy for more detail. The  school will ensure that children and their families are aware that, whilst the school will appropriately address any cases of bullying of harassment and take a strong stand against bullying, it must also be conscious of the rights of pupils and staff in relation to their religion or believe.

When supporting a pupil questioning their gender, we will take into account the principle of taking a careful approach.

The DSL will lead in these cases.

### 14.1 Involving parents/carers in cases of pupils questioning their gender

Where a child who is questioning their gender asks for support from the school, we will engage parents/carers as a matter of priority.

However, in the rare circumstances where involving parents/carers might put a pupil at greater risk than not involving them, the DSL will determine a course of action needed to safeguard the child before contacting parents/carers or any decisions are taken.

Where a child confides in a member of staff about their feelings but does not ask the school to make changes to how they are treated, the school will only break any confidence if there is a related safeguarding risk.

### 14.2 Considering requests for support with social transition

The school will not initiate any action regarding social transition. However, when a pupil or their parent/carer requests that the school makes changes or puts support in place to facilitate the pupil presenting as the opposite biological sex ("social transition"), we will work together with parents/carers to determine what is in the best interests of the child and other children.

Members of staff will not adopt any changes relating to social transition unless a decision has been made by the school and a child's parents/carers have been involved (as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)).

In making decisions about supporting social transition, the school will ensure compliance with its obligations in respect of safeguarding legislation and equality and human rights law, ensuring that any assessment of discrimination is informed by the school's evaluation of the welfare and best interests of the child and other children. The schools will make decisions in line with the following principles:

The school has statutory duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children: the first step when considering a child's request for support with social transition will be to consider what is in the best interests of the child and other children, and a decision relating to social transition may not be the same as a child's wishes

Parents and carers should be actively involved and their views treated with importance: (except in the rare circumstances where involving parents or carers would constitute a greater risk to the child than not involving them) where a child who is questioning their gender asks for support from the school parents/carers will be engaged as a matter of priority and their views will carry great weight and be properly considered

Accommodating social transition is an active intervention so the school will take a very careful approach: social transition is an active intervention that may have significant effects on the child in terms of their psychological functioning and longer-term outcomes

The school will comply with obligations under the Equality Act and Human Rights Act when considering requests for support with social transition

The school will ensure that the decision-making process is documented and records are kept.

The circumstances or needs of a child may change over time, and the school may need to review its original decision and will involve the DSL in doing so.

### 14.3 Rules on single-sex spaces

Pupils are not allowed into toilets, changing rooms, showers where gender is designated for the opposite biological sex.

## 15. Complaints and concerns about safeguarding practice

The school is committed to maintaining an open safeguarding culture in which concerns about safeguarding practice can be raised and appropriately addressed.

No member of staff should feel unable to raise a safeguarding concern because of the position or seniority of the person involved.

### 15.1 Concerns or allegations about staff

Any concern or allegation that a member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor may have:

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

will be managed under Seva Education's procedures for dealing with allegations against adults working with children.

Staff must follow the reporting arrangements set out in Section 7.7 and the relevant appendix/procedure.

Where appropriate, advice will be sought from the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

### 15.2 Low-level concerns

Concerns about the conduct of an adult that do not meet the harm threshold may constitute a low-level concern.

Low-level concerns must not be ignored simply because they do not appear sufficiently serious to constitute an allegation.

Staff should report low-level concerns in accordance with Seva Education's Low-Level Concerns and/or Staff Code of Conduct procedures.

Concerns will be recorded, reviewed and considered for patterns of behaviour or wider safeguarding implications.

Where there is uncertainty as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold, advice may be sought from the relevant LADO.

### 15.3 Other complaints

Complaints concerning safeguarding practice that do not constitute an allegation against a member of staff will normally be considered under Seva Education's **Complaints Policy**, where appropriate.

However, the complaints process must **never delay immediate safeguarding action**.

Where information received through a complaint indicates that a child may be at risk of harm, the safeguarding procedures contained within this policy will take precedence and the relevant DSL must be informed immediately.

### 15.4 Whistleblowing

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practice and potential failures within Seva Education's safeguarding arrangements.

Whistleblowing concerns will be managed in accordance with Seva Education's Whistleblowing Policy.

Where a member of staff feels unable to raise a concern internally, or believes that a safeguarding concern has not been appropriately addressed, they may use appropriate external whistleblowing or safeguarding routes.

Staff will not be subjected to detrimental treatment for raising a genuine safeguarding concern in good faith.

### 15.5 Concerns about safeguarding practice at another Seva Education school

Where a member of staff becomes aware of a safeguarding concern relating to practice at another Seva Education school or site, the concern must not be treated solely as an internal management matter.

The concern should be reported through the appropriate safeguarding route, taking account of the nature of the concern and the individuals involved.

Relevant DSLs and senior leaders may liaise across schools where appropriate, but safeguarding information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

Where the concern relates to a senior leader or DSL, it must be escalated through the appropriate alternative safeguarding route and must not be referred solely to the individual who is the subject of the concern.

## 16. Record-keeping

Seva Education recognises that accurate, timely and secure safeguarding records are essential to protecting children and ensuring continuity of safeguarding information across its schools.

Safeguarding records will be maintained in accordance with applicable legislation, statutory guidance, school's records retention arrangements and this policy.

### 16.1 Recording safeguarding concerns

All safeguarding concerns, disclosures, discussions, decisions and actions must be recorded accurately and as soon as practicable.

Records should include, where applicable:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern.
- The date and time the concern arose or was reported.
- The name of the person raising or reporting the concern.
- The child's own words wherever possible.

- Relevant observations or information.
- Details of discussions with the DSL or other professionals.
- Details of how the concern was followed up.
- Any action taken.
- Decisions reached and the reasons for those decisions.
- Details of referrals made to children's social care, police, Prevent/Channel or other agencies.
- The outcome of referrals or other safeguarding action where known.
- Where a decision was made **not** to make a referral, the rationale for that decision.

Staff must distinguish, as far as possible, between fact, observation, allegation and professional opinion when making safeguarding records.

Records should be factual, clear, accurate and sufficiently detailed to enable another safeguarding professional to understand the concern and the action taken.

If a member of staff is uncertain whether something should be recorded, they should discuss this with the relevant DSL. However, uncertainty must not result in significant safeguarding information being omitted or action being delayed.

### 16.2 Electronic safeguarding records

The school's primary internal safeguarding records are maintained electronically using its approved safeguarding recording system, CPOMs.

Access to electronic safeguarding records will be restricted according to role and professional need.

Staff must:

- Use their own authorised account when accessing safeguarding systems.
- Keep passwords and login details secure.
- Not permit another person to use their account.
- Record safeguarding concerns promptly.
- Ensure information entered is accurate and professional.
- Not download, copy or transfer safeguarding information to unauthorised devices, accounts or systems.
- Follow Seva Education's data protection, information-security and safeguarding requirements.

The relevant DSL will maintain appropriate oversight of safeguarding records for the school(s) within their area of responsibility.

### 16.3 Paper safeguarding records

Where paper safeguarding or child protection records are received or need to be retained, they must be:

- Clearly identified as confidential.
- Stored securely at the relevant school or other authorised Seva Education location.
- Kept separately from the pupil's general educational record where appropriate.

- Accessible only to individuals with an authorised professional need to access them.

Paper safeguarding records must **not** be left in general administrative areas, classrooms or other locations accessible to unauthorised individuals.

The relevant Head of School and DSL are responsible for ensuring appropriate secure storage arrangements are maintained locally.

Where information contained within a paper record is relevant to ongoing safeguarding management, consideration should be given to ensuring that the relevant information is also appropriately reflected within the approved electronic safeguarding system.

### 16.4 Confidentiality and access

Safeguarding information will be treated as confidential and shared only with individuals who have a legitimate safeguarding, legal or professional need to receive it.

Access to safeguarding records will not automatically be provided solely because an individual holds a senior position within the school or Seva Education.

Access will be determined by the individual's role, safeguarding responsibility and professional need to know.

The DSL will ensure that relevant information is available to staff where necessary to safeguard or support a pupil, while maintaining appropriate confidentiality.

Requests for access to safeguarding records by pupils, parents/carers or other individuals will be managed in accordance with applicable data protection legislation and Seva Education's information-governance procedures.

### 16.5 Multi-site safeguarding records

Where a pupil attends, transfers between or receives provision from more than one Seva Education school or site, safeguarding information will be shared internally where this is necessary to safeguard the pupil or ensure continuity of support.

The relevant DSLs will ensure that:

- Responsibility for ongoing safeguarding oversight is clear.
- Relevant safeguarding information is available to the school or site supporting the pupil.
- Information is not unnecessarily duplicated or shared more widely than required.
- Significant safeguarding actions and decisions are appropriately recorded.
- Any transfer of information is undertaken securely.

The fact that schools form part of the same organisation does **not** mean that all staff across Seva Education are entitled to access safeguarding information about all pupils.

Information will continue to be shared strictly according to safeguarding need and professional responsibility.

### 16.6 Transfer of safeguarding records

When a pupil leaves the school and transfers to another school or college, the DSL will ensure that relevant child protection and safeguarding records are transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file.

Safeguarding records should be transferred as soon as possible to enable the receiving school or college to have appropriate support in place.

In accordance with statutory guidance, this should normally be:

- Within 5 days for an in-year transfer; or
- Within the first 5 days of the start of a new term where the pupil transfers at the beginning of a term.

Where safeguarding concerns are significant or complex, or children's social care or other agencies are involved, the DSL should consider speaking directly with the DSL at the receiving school before or at the point of transfer so that appropriate safeguarding arrangements can be made.

Where a pupil transfers between Seva Education schools, the same safeguarding principles apply. The relevant DSLs will communicate directly and ensure that responsibility for the pupil's safeguarding record and any ongoing actions is clearly transferred.

The transfer of records will be documented and, where appropriate, confirmation of receipt obtained.

### 16.7 Retention of safeguarding records

Safeguarding and child protection records will be retained in accordance with Seva Education's approved records retention schedule and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

Records must not be destroyed solely because a pupil has left the school.

Where responsibility for safeguarding records transfers to another school or education provider, the school will maintain an appropriate record of the transfer in accordance with its retention arrangements.

Records relating to allegations or concerns about adults working with children will be maintained separately from pupil safeguarding records and retained in accordance with the applicable statutory guidance and Seva Education's HR and safeguarding procedures.

### 16.8 Quality and oversight of safeguarding records

Head of School / DSLs will maintain appropriate oversight of safeguarding recording within their areas of responsibility.

This will include, as appropriate:

- Reviewing safeguarding records for completeness and quality.
- Ensuring concerns have been appropriately followed up.
- Identifying recurring concerns, patterns or emerging safeguarding risks.
- Ensuring actions and outcomes are recorded.
- Checking that open safeguarding matters remain under appropriate review.
- Ensuring records are appropriately transferred when pupils move.
- Supporting staff to improve the quality of safeguarding recording where required.

Regional and organisational safeguarding oversight may also be undertaken to provide assurance that safeguarding recording arrangements are being implemented consistently across Seva Education schools.

Any such oversight will respect the confidentiality of individual safeguarding records and access will be limited to individuals with an appropriate safeguarding responsibility.

## 17. Training

The school is committed to ensuring that all staff, governors, volunteers and other relevant individuals have the safeguarding knowledge and skills appropriate to their role.

Safeguarding training will reflect current statutory guidance, the school's safeguarding arrangements and, where appropriate, the procedures and priorities of the relevant local safeguarding partners.

Training arrangements will be applied consistently across school while recognising that additional training may be required according to an individual's role, school, pupil cohort or local safeguarding context.

### 17.1 All staff

All staff, including temporary and agency staff where appropriate, will receive safeguarding and child protection information and training as part of their induction.

This will include, as appropriate:

- The School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- The safeguarding arrangements applicable to the school or site at which they are working.
- The identity and contact arrangements of the relevant DSL and Deputy DSL(s).
- How to recognise and report signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- How to respond to a disclosure from a child.
- Child-on-child abuse.
- Online safety.
- Filtering and monitoring responsibilities relevant to their role.
- Children who are missing or absent from education.
- Whistleblowing arrangements.
- The Staff Code of Conduct and expectations concerning professional boundaries.
- Low-level concerns and allegations concerning adults working with children.
- The additional safeguarding vulnerabilities and communication needs of pupils with SEND.
- The Prevent duty and indicators that a child may be susceptible to radicalisation or involvement in terrorism.

Staff will read the relevant parts of Keeping Children Safe in Education required for their role and confirm that they have read and understood them.

Safeguarding and child protection training will be regularly updated and will:

- Form part of whole-school and whole-organisation approach to safeguarding.
- Reflect current statutory guidance.
- Take account of relevant local safeguarding arrangements and emerging safeguarding risks.
- Include online safety and staff responsibilities relating to filtering and monitoring.
- Be appropriate to the needs and safeguarding risks of the pupils supported within the school.

- Have regard to the Teachers' Standards where applicable.

All staff will receive safeguarding and child protection updates at least annually and more frequently where required. Updates may be provided through training sessions, briefings, staff meetings, electronic communications or other appropriate methods.

Additional training or briefings will be provided where:

- Safeguarding legislation or statutory guidance changes.
- A new or emerging safeguarding risk is identified.
- Learning from a safeguarding incident, review or audit identifies a need.
- A member of staff's role or responsibilities change.
- A school identifies a particular local or pupil-specific safeguarding need.

The school will maintain appropriate records demonstrating staff attendance at, or completion of, required safeguarding training.

### 17.2 DSLs and Deputy DSLs

All DSLs and Deputy DSLs will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training to enable them to fulfil the responsibilities of their role.

Formal DSL training will be updated at least every two years.

In addition, DSLs and Deputy DSLs will update their safeguarding knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually through appropriate professional development, safeguarding briefings, networking, reading and other relevant activities.

Training and professional development will include, as appropriate:

- Current statutory safeguarding requirements.
- Local safeguarding thresholds and referral arrangements.
- Working with children's social care, police and other safeguarding agencies.
- Child-on-child abuse.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Online safety.
- Filtering and monitoring.
- Prevent and Channel arrangements.
- Harmful sexual behaviour.
- Safeguarding children with SEND and communication difficulties.
- Information sharing and record-keeping.
- Managing complex safeguarding cases.
- Relevant local and national safeguarding developments.

DSLs, Deputy DSLs and any other designated Prevent leads will receive appropriate Prevent awareness training relevant to their responsibilities.

Where DSLs have responsibility across more than one Seva Education school or site, they will maintain sufficient knowledge of the local safeguarding arrangements applicable to each school within their area of responsibility.

### 17.3 Executive Headteachers, Heads of School and senior leaders

Executive Headteachers, Heads of School and other senior leaders will receive safeguarding training appropriate to their responsibilities.

This will include an understanding of:

- Their responsibilities for implementing safeguarding arrangements within their school(s).
- The role and responsibilities of the DSL and Deputy DSL(s).
- Managing and escalating safeguarding concerns.
- Allegations and low-level concerns involving staff.
- Safer working practices.
- Online safety, filtering and monitoring.
- Their responsibilities for ensuring appropriate safeguarding training, induction and supervision of staff.
- Relevant local safeguarding arrangements.

Senior leaders with responsibility for managing allegations against adults will receive appropriate training or guidance for that role.

### 17.4 Governors

All governors will receive safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, as part of their induction.

This training will be regularly updated to enable governors to:

- Understand their statutory and governance responsibilities for safeguarding.
- Provide appropriate strategic challenge and oversight.
- Understand the role of DSLs and senior leaders.
- Evaluate whether safeguarding policies, procedures and systems are effective.
- Understand the safeguarding implications of online safety and filtering and monitoring.
- Recognise the particular safeguarding needs of pupils with SEND.
- Understand procedures for allegations and low-level concerns involving adults working with children.

The governor with designated safeguarding oversight will receive appropriate additional safeguarding knowledge and development to enable them to fulfil that responsibility effectively.

The Chair of Governors, and any other individual who may be required to act as a case manager in relation to allegations against a senior leader, will receive appropriate information, training or professional advice to enable them to undertake that role.

### 17.5 Safer recruitment

At least one person involved in conducting an interview for a post involving work with children will have undertaken appropriate safer recruitment training.

Safer recruitment training will reflect the requirements of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and Seva Education's recruitment procedures.

Individuals involved in recruitment will understand, as appropriate:

- Pre-employment safeguarding checks.
- The Single Central Record.
- Disclosure and Barring Service requirements.
- Prohibition and other relevant checks.
- Employment history and references.
- Online searches where applicable.
- Identifying and exploring safeguarding concerns arising during recruitment.
- Appropriate recording of recruitment decisions.

Further requirements are contained within Seva Education's safer recruitment procedures and relevant recruitment policies.

### 17.6 Agency staff, contractors and volunteers

The school will ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place for agency staff, contractors and volunteers according to the nature of their role and contact with pupils.

This may include:

- Safeguarding induction.
- Information about the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Details of the relevant DSL and Deputy DSL(s).
- Expectations concerning professional conduct and boundaries.
- Information about how to report a safeguarding concern.
- Appropriate safeguarding training according to the nature and duration of their role.

Where an individual is supplied by an external organisation, the will seek appropriate assurance that required safeguarding checks and training have been completed.

However, all individuals working within the school must still be made aware of the local safeguarding reporting arrangements applicable to that school or site.

### 17.7 Monitoring training compliance

Safeguarding training compliance will be monitored at school and organisational level.

Heads of School, DSLs and relevant central functions will ensure that:

- Required safeguarding training is completed within appropriate timescales.

- Training records are maintained.
- Refresher training and updates are provided when required.
- Gaps in training compliance are identified and addressed.
- Staff do not undertake responsibilities for which required safeguarding training or competency has not been completed.

Safeguarding training requirements will be reviewed as part of Seva Education's wider safeguarding quality-assurance arrangements.

## 18. Monitoring arrangements

The school and Seva Education will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy across the school.

Safeguarding practice will be monitored through appropriate organisational and school-level quality-assurance arrangements. These may include:

- Safeguarding audits and reviews.
- Review of safeguarding records and recording practice.
- Monitoring of staff safeguarding training and compliance.
- Review of referrals, concerns and safeguarding outcomes.
- Monitoring of allegations and low-level concerns, where appropriate.
- Review of attendance and children missing or absent from education.
- Review of online safety, filtering and monitoring arrangements.
- Monitoring of safer recruitment and Single Central Record compliance.
- Consideration of safeguarding themes, patterns or emerging risks.
- Feedback from pupils, parents/carers, staff and professionals where appropriate.
- Oversight by DSLs, senior leaders and the Governing Board.

Heads of School and relevant DSLs are responsible for monitoring the effective implementation of safeguarding arrangements within their respective schools and areas of responsibility.

Executive Headteachers will provide appropriate oversight and assurance across the schools within their areas of responsibility.

Organisational safeguarding oversight will be maintained to promote consistency of safeguarding standards across Seva Education while recognising the local safeguarding arrangements applicable to individual schools.

Significant safeguarding concerns, themes, risks or areas requiring improvement will be escalated through the appropriate leadership and governance arrangements.

### Policy review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and earlier where required.

An earlier review may be undertaken where:

- There is a significant change to legislation or statutory safeguarding guidance.
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education* or other relevant statutory guidance is updated.

- Seva Education opens, registers or significantly changes the operation of a school or education provision.
- There is a significant change to Seva Education's safeguarding leadership or organisational structure.
- Learning from a safeguarding incident, review, complaint or audit indicates that the policy should be amended.
- Local safeguarding arrangements change in a way that materially affects one or more Seva Education schools.

The policy will be reviewed through Seva Education's safeguarding and senior leadership arrangements and submitted to the Governing Board for approval.

Changes to operational information contained within the Important Contacts section, including named DSLs, Deputy DSLs, telephone numbers, email addresses or local authority contact information, may be updated as required to ensure that safeguarding information remains accurate and current.

Such operational updates do not need to await the annual policy review.

The current approved version of this policy will be made available to staff and other relevant stakeholders.

Each school will ensure staff are made aware of significant changes to the policy or local safeguarding arrangements.

**19. Links with other policies and procedures**

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy forms part of Seva Education's wider framework for safeguarding children.

It should be read alongside other relevant Seva Education policies and procedures, including, as applicable:

- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Staff Handbook / Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Children Missing or Absent from Education procedures
- Online Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use / IT procedures
- Mobile Phone and Personal Device Policy
- Equality Policy
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Safeguarding Adult Learners Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions / Medication Policy
- SEND Policy

- Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children arrangements
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices
- Records Retention Policy/Schedule
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safer Recruitment procedures
- Low-Level Concerns procedures
- Allegations Against Staff procedures
- Physical Intervention / Positive Behaviour Support arrangements
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Educational Visits procedures
- Prevent / Prevent Risk Assessment arrangements
- Emergency and Business Continuity arrangements, where relevant.

Not every document listed above will necessarily be a standalone policy. Some requirements may form part of wider Seva Education policies, procedure, handbook or operational framework.

Where there is any apparent conflict between another Seva Education policy or procedure and the safeguarding requirements contained within this policy, the safety and welfare of the child will remain the paramount consideration and safeguarding action must not be delayed.

The appendices to this policy provide additional safeguarding information and procedures and should be read as part of the policy.

## Appendix 1 – Types of Abuse

### Introduction

Abuse, neglect and exploitation can take many forms and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by a single definition or label. In many cases, different types of abuse or safeguarding concerns may overlap.

All staff across Seva Education must remain alert to indicators that a child may be experiencing abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff must be particularly mindful that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities may communicate distress or harm differently and that indicators of abuse must not automatically be attributed to a pupil's disability, diagnosis, communication needs or behaviour.

### Physical abuse

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve:

- Hitting.
- Shaking.
- Throwing.
- Poisoning.
- Burning or scalding.

- Drowning.
- Suffocating.
- Otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of illness in a child or deliberately induces illness.

Staff should remain alert to injuries, changes in presentation or behaviour, or explanations that appear inconsistent with the injury or the child's developmental abilities.

**Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

Some level of emotional abuse may be involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may also occur independently.

Emotional abuse may involve:

- Conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate.
- Conveying that a child is valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- Not giving a child opportunities to express their views.
- Deliberately silencing a child.
- Making fun of what a child says or how they communicate.
- Imposing expectations that are inappropriate for the child's age or developmental capability.
- Overprotection or limitation of exploration and learning.
- Preventing a child from participating in normal social interaction.
- Causing a child to see or hear the ill-treatment of another person.
- Serious bullying, including cyberbullying.
- Causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger.
- Exploiting or corrupting children.

For pupils with communication difficulties, staff should be particularly alert to changes in behaviour, emotional presentation, communication, engagement or regulation that may indicate distress.

**Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact or may take place without physical contact, and the child may not always understand that what is happening is abusive.

Sexual abuse may include physical contact such as:

- Rape or assault by penetration.
- Oral sex.
- Masturbation.
- Kissing.
- Rubbing.

- Touching inside or outside clothing.
- Causing or encouraging a child to engage in sexual activity.

Non-contact sexual abuse may include:

- Involving children in looking at sexual images or activities.
- Involving children in the production of sexual images.
- Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- Sexual communication with a child.
- Grooming a child in preparation for abuse.
- Online sexual abuse or exploitation.
- Creating, manipulating, requesting or sharing sexual imagery involving a child.

Sexual abuse may take place **in person or online**.

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

A child may not recognise that they are being sexually abused or exploited and apparent compliance or participation does not necessarily indicate consent.

**Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example as a result of substance misuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment.
- Protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision, including the use of appropriate caregivers.
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- Respond appropriately to a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect may also include failing to meet a child's additional needs where this places their health, development, safety or wellbeing at risk.

**Recognising abuse in pupils with SEND**

Seva Education recognises that identifying abuse, neglect or exploitation can be particularly challenging where a child has significant SEND or communication needs.

Staff must avoid assuming that:

- Injuries are necessarily related to a pupil's disability or behaviour.
- Changes in behaviour are simply part of the pupil's diagnosis.
- Distress is solely a consequence of SEND.
- A non-verbal or minimally verbal pupil is unable to disclose abuse.
- Behaviour that challenges cannot constitute communication of distress or harm.
- A child's dependency upon an adult means that the relationship is necessarily safe.

A pupil may communicate a safeguarding concern through speech, behaviour, gesture, signs, symbols, communication aids, drawings, changes in presentation or other forms of communication.

Any concern that a child may have experienced abuse, neglect or exploitation must be reported in accordance with Section 7 of this policy, regardless of how the concern becomes known.

## Appendix 2 – Specific Safeguarding Issues

The following section provides additional information about specific safeguarding issues that staff in school may encounter.

This appendix should be read alongside the main body of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. It does not replace the requirement for staff to report safeguarding concerns promptly to the relevant DSL or Deputy DSL and to take immediate action where a child is at risk of harm.

Staff should recognise that safeguarding issues frequently overlap and that a child may be affected by more than one form of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Given the needs of pupils attending Seva Education schools, staff must also consider whether SEND, communication difficulties, cognitive ability or reliance on adults may increase a child's vulnerability or affect the way in which they communicate a safeguarding concern.

### Adult-involved nude and semi-nude sharing and sextortion

Staff should be alert to incidents where an adult coerces, threatens, manipulates or blackmails a child into sharing sexual or nude imagery.

This may include financially motivated sexual extortion, sometimes referred to as sextortion, where an offender threatens to release sexual or intimate images unless the child pays money or meets another demand.

Such incidents may involve:

- An adult pretending to be another child or young person.
- Grooming through social media, messaging platforms, gaming or other online services.
- Pressure or manipulation to create or share nude or sexual imagery.
- Threats to share images with family, friends, schools or publicly.
- Demands for money or further imagery.
- Attempts to move communication onto private or encrypted platforms.
- Impersonation or the use of manipulated or AI-generated images.

Children may experience significant fear, shame or distress and may believe that they are responsible for what has happened.

Staff must respond in a supportive and non-judgemental manner and reassure the child that they have done the right thing by seeking help.

Staff must not:

- Ask the child to send or forward the imagery.
- Intentionally view, copy, print, download or distribute the imagery.
- Investigate the matter themselves.
- Contact or confront the suspected offender.

The matter must be reported immediately to the relevant DSL.

Where there is an immediate risk to the child or another person, the police and/or children's social care should be contacted without delay.

Any concern that a child may be at risk of self-harm or suicide as a consequence of sextortion or another form of online exploitation must be treated as an urgent safeguarding concern.

Incidents involving children sharing nude or semi-nude imagery with other children are addressed separately within this policy.

**Children absent from education**

Children being absent from education, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, can be an important warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns.

These may include:

- Abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Child sexual exploitation.
- Child criminal exploitation.
- County lines involvement.
- Mental health difficulties.
- Bullying.
- Domestic abuse.
- Radicalisation.
- Forced marriage.
- Female genital mutilation.
- Modern slavery or trafficking.
- A child being taken or kept abroad.
- Wider family difficulties or unmet needs.

Staff must follow the relevant school's attendance procedures and report safeguarding concerns arising from absence to the DSL.

Staff should be particularly alert where:

- Absence is unexplained.

- Patterns of absence change suddenly.
- A pupil is repeatedly absent on particular days or at particular times.
- Attempts to contact parents/carers are unsuccessful.
- Information provided to explain the absence is inconsistent or raises concerns.
- A child is known to children's social care or other safeguarding agencies.
- A pupil's circumstances create additional vulnerability.

Given the specialist nature of the school's provision, staff should also consider whether transport difficulties, health needs, anxiety, communication needs or changes to care arrangements may contribute to absence. These factors should be explored appropriately but must not prevent consideration of possible safeguarding concerns.

Where concerns exist, the relevant DSL will consider whether further safeguarding action, early help or referral to the appropriate local authority is required.

The school will follow applicable statutory guidance and the relevant local authority arrangements concerning children missing or absent from education.

**Child criminal exploitation (CCE)**

Child criminal exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity.

This may occur:

- In exchange for something the child needs or wants.
- For the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator.
- Through violence or threats of violence.
- Through grooming, coercion, intimidation, manipulation or deception.

The child may have been criminally exploited even where the activity appears consensual.

CCE does not always involve physical contact and may occur through the use of technology.

Examples include children being:

- Forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money.
- Involved in shoplifting or other theft.
- Forced to work in cannabis cultivation.
- Used to carry or conceal weapons.
- Involved in robbery or other criminal activity.
- Pressured into threatening or committing violence.
- Used to recruit or exploit other children.
- Exploited through online criminal activity.

A child who is being criminally exploited should be considered first and foremost as a child who may be experiencing abuse and exploitation, even where they have committed offences.

**County lines**

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation in which organised criminal networks or gangs use children and vulnerable adults to move, store or sell drugs and money.

Children may be exploited through:

- Coercion.
- Intimidation.
- Violence or threats.
- Debt bondage.
- Grooming.
- Sexual violence.
- Use of accommodation belonging to vulnerable individuals, sometimes referred to as cuckooing.

Possible indicators of CCE or county lines involvement may include:

- Unexplained money, clothing, phones or other possessions.
- Relationships with older individuals or groups.
- Frequent or unexplained absence from school.
- Going missing from home or care.
- Travelling to unfamiliar locations.
- Receiving excessive calls or messages.
- Carrying multiple phones.
- Changes in behaviour or friendship groups.
- Unexplained injuries.
- Decline in engagement with education.
- Signs of fear, coercion or intimidation.
- Carrying weapons.
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional wellbeing.

Staff must report concerns about possible criminal exploitation to the DSL.

The DSL will consider referral to children's social care, police and other appropriate agencies in accordance with the child's circumstances and relevant local safeguarding arrangements.

**Child sexual exploitation (CSE)**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse.

It may involve an individual or group taking advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity.

This may occur:

- In exchange for something the child needs or wants.
- For the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.
- Through grooming, coercion, manipulation, intimidation or violence.

The child may have been sexually exploited even where the sexual activity appears consensual.

CSE does not always involve physical contact and may occur through the use of technology.

Children may be sexually exploited by adults or by other children.

CSE may occur over time or as an isolated incident and may be opportunistic or organised.

Possible indicators may include:

- Unexplained gifts, money or new possessions.
- Relationships with significantly older individuals.
- Associations with groups involved in exploitation.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour.
- Sexualised behaviour that appears inappropriate for the child's age or developmental level.
- Sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy.
- Going missing from home, care or education.
- Regularly returning home late.
- Unexplained travel.
- Increased secrecy concerning online activity or relationships.
- Evidence of coercion, control or manipulation.
- Substance misuse.
- Emotional distress, self-harm or changes in mental health.
- Reduced engagement with education.
- Unexplained injuries.

Staff must be mindful that a child cannot consent to their own abuse or exploitation.

Children with SEND may be particularly vulnerable where they have difficulties understanding relationships, recognising exploitation, communicating concerns or identifying inappropriate behaviour.

Any concern that a child may be experiencing or at risk of CSE must be reported to the relevant DSL.

The DSL will consider appropriate safeguarding action, including referral to children's social care, police and other relevant agencies.

**Child-on-child abuse**

Seva Education recognises that children can abuse other children and that this can occur inside or outside school and online.

All staff must understand that child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and must never be dismissed as “banter”, “having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or similar behaviour.

Child-on-child abuse may include:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.
- Physical abuse, including hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Sexual violence, including rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault.

- Sexual harassment, including sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment.
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos.
- Upskirting.
- Abuse within intimate personal relationships between children.
- Initiation or hazing-type violence and rituals.
- Online abuse, including threatening, intimidating, coercive or abusive behaviour.
- Causing another child to engage in sexual activity without consent.
- Other harmful or exploitative behaviour between children.

Child-on-child abuse may occur between two children or within a group and may affect children of any age, sex or background.

Staff should recognise that the absence of a reported incident does not necessarily mean that child-on-child abuse is not occurring. Children may be reluctant to report abuse because of embarrassment, fear, communication difficulties, concerns about not being believed or because they do not recognise the behaviour as abusive.

Children with SEND may face additional vulnerabilities. They may experience difficulties recognising inappropriate behaviour, understanding boundaries, communicating what has happened or distinguishing between appropriate and abusive relationships.

Where behaviour between pupils causes concern, staff must consider the individual needs and safeguarding circumstances of all children involved. A child who displays harmful behaviour may themselves have experienced abuse, trauma, exploitation or other safeguarding difficulties.

All concerns about child-on-child abuse must be reported to the relevant DSL and managed in accordance with Section 7.8 of this policy.

**Domestic abuse**

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents.

Domestic abuse may include:

- Physical abuse.
- Sexual abuse.
- Emotional or psychological abuse.
- Controlling or coercive behaviour.
- Economic or financial abuse.
- Threatening or intimidating behaviour.
- Technology-facilitated abuse.
- Domestic abuse can occur between individuals aged 16 or over who are personally connected to each other.

Children can be affected by domestic abuse in many ways. They may see, hear or experience the effects of abuse within their home or family environment or may experience abuse within their own intimate relationships.

Children who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse are recognised as victims in their own right.

Possible indicators may include:

- Changes in behaviour, mood or emotional wellbeing.
- Anxiety, fear or distress.
- Aggressive or withdrawn behaviour.
- Changes in attendance or engagement with education.
- Sleep difficulties or tiredness.
- Changes in relationships with adults or peers.
- Unexplained injuries.
- Concern about leaving a parent, carer or family member.
- Increased caring responsibilities.
- Changes in communication or behaviour that may indicate distress.

Staff must remain particularly alert to changes in presentation among pupils who may have difficulty verbally explaining what is happening at home.

Any safeguarding concern relating to domestic abuse must be reported to the DSL.

The DSL will consider the appropriate response, including referral to children's social care or other agencies and any support required for the child.

**Homelessness**

Being homeless or at risk of becoming homeless can place a child's welfare and education at risk.

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness may include:

- Household debt.
- Rent or mortgage arrears.
- Financial difficulties.
- Domestic abuse.
- Being asked to leave accommodation.
- Temporary or insecure accommodation.
- Frequent changes of address.
- Accommodation that appears unsuitable for the child or family's needs.

Staff should report concerns about homelessness or housing instability to the DSL where these circumstances may affect the child's welfare or indicate wider safeguarding needs.

The DSL will consider appropriate support and liaison with the relevant local authority and other agencies.

Where there is reason to believe that a child may be at risk of harm or that their needs are not being met, normal safeguarding and referral procedures will apply.

**Honour-based abuse**

So-called “honour”-based abuse encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the perceived honour of a family and/or community.

The term may include:

- Female genital mutilation (FGM).
- Forced marriage.
- Abuse linked to perceived breaches of family or community expectations.
- Physical, emotional or sexual abuse.
- Threats or intimidation.
- Coercive or controlling behaviour.
- Restriction of freedom.
- Abduction or threats of abduction.
- Murder.

Abuse committed in the name of so-called “honour” is a safeguarding concern and must not be treated as a cultural or private family matter.

Where staff have concerns that a child may be at risk of honour-based abuse, they must report the concern to the DSL immediately.

Staff must not approach family or community members themselves where doing so could increase the risk to the child.

The DSL will consider referral to children's social care, police and/or other specialist agencies.

**Female genital mutilation (FGM)**

FGM comprises procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

FGM is illegal in the UK and is a form of child abuse.

Possible indicators that a girl may be at risk of FGM include:

- A family history of FGM.
- Discussion about a special procedure or ceremony.
- Plans for an extended holiday to a country or area where FGM is prevalent.
- A girl talking about being taken abroad for a special event.
- A family placing particular importance on FGM for cultural or other reasons.

Possible indicators that FGM may already have taken place can include:

- Difficulty walking, sitting or standing.
- Spending longer than usual in the bathroom or toilet.
- Bladder or menstrual difficulties.
- Frequent urinary or pelvic infections.
- Reluctance to undergo medical examinations.
- Changes in behaviour, emotional wellbeing or engagement with education.
- Disclosure by the child.

Staff should recognise that individual indicators do not necessarily establish that FGM has occurred, but concerns must be taken seriously.

Where any member of staff suspects that a child may be at risk of FGM, they must report the concern to the DSL.

There is also a specific mandatory reporting duty for teachers where, in the course of their professional duties, they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18.

In those circumstances, the teacher must personally report the matter to the police in accordance with the statutory duty.

The procedures in Section 7.3 of this policy must be followed.

**Forced marriage**

A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both people do not consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used to force them to marry.

A forced marriage is different from an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, families may play a role in identifying potential partners, but both individuals freely consent to the marriage.

Forcing a person into marriage is a criminal offence.

It is also an offence to carry out conduct for the purpose of causing a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even where coercion is not used.

Possible indicators of forced marriage may include:

- A child talking about an upcoming marriage or engagement that causes concern.
- Family discussions about marriage that appear inappropriate for the child's age or circumstances.
- Sudden announcement of an engagement.
- Extended absence or plans for travel abroad.
- A child expressing fear or anxiety about a forthcoming holiday.
- Surveillance or restriction by family members.
- Withdrawal from education or declining attendance.
- Reduced contact with friends.
- Restrictions on communication, movement or independence.
- Running away from home.
- Self-harm, depression or significant emotional distress.

Where forced marriage is suspected, staff must report the concern to the DSL immediately.

Staff must not contact or attempt to mediate with the family where forced marriage is suspected, as this may increase the risk to the child.

The DSL will seek appropriate safeguarding advice and consider referral to children's social care, police and/or specialist agencies.

Where there is an immediate risk of a child being taken abroad or otherwise placed in danger, urgent safeguarding action must be taken.

**Preventing radicalisation**

Children may be susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation.

**Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

**Extremism** is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance that aims to negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others, undermine or overturn the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights, or intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve those aims.

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

The school recognises its duty to have due regard to the need to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism.

The school will consider the risks relevant to:

- Its geographical location and local community.
- The age and needs of its pupils.
- Pupils' use of the internet and social media.
- Identified local and national risks.
- Information provided by safeguarding partners, police, local authorities or other relevant agencies.

Staff will receive appropriate Prevent awareness training and should be alert to changes in behaviour, relationships, attitudes or online activity that may indicate that a child is susceptible to radicalisation.

There is **no single profile or indicator** of a child who may be susceptible to radicalisation. Concerns must be considered in the context of the individual child and their circumstances.

Staff must also recognise that pupils with SEND may have additional vulnerabilities, including difficulties recognising manipulation, understanding online material or assessing the intentions of others.

Where a member of staff has a concern, they must report it to the relevant DSL.

The DSL will consider the appropriate response, which may include:

- Further assessment and support within school.
- Early help.
- Consultation with the relevant local Prevent team.
- Referral to the Channel programme.
- Referral to children's social care.
- Contact with the police.

Where there is an immediate risk of harm or suspected terrorist activity presenting an immediate danger, the police must be contacted.

Relevant local Prevent and Channel contact information is contained within Appendix 3.

**Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between children of any age and sex.

They may occur:

- Between two children.
- Within groups of children.
- In person.
- Online.
- Through technology.
- Inside or outside school.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable and will not be tolerated by the school.

Staff must not dismiss sexually abusive or harassing behaviour as:

- Banter.
- Having a laugh.
- Part of growing up.
- Boys being boys.
- Normal experimentation.

Sexual harassment may include:

- Sexual comments, stories, jokes or remarks.
- Sexualised name-calling.
- Sexual gestures.
- Sexualised online behaviour.
- Displaying or sharing sexual material.
- Unwanted sexual messages.
- Sexualised bullying.
- Upskirting.
- Unwanted physical behaviour of a sexual nature.

Sexual violence includes sexual offences such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault.

Staff should recognise that sexual harassment may create an environment that is intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive and may form part of a wider pattern of abuse.

A child may not always recognise or describe their experience as abuse.

This is particularly important where pupils have SEND, communication difficulties or difficulties understanding relationships, boundaries and consent.

Where sexual violence or sexual harassment is reported or suspected:

- The concern must be reported immediately to the DSL.
- The child must be taken seriously and appropriately supported.
- Staff must not undertake their own investigation.
- The DSL will consider the wishes and feelings of the child.
- The immediate safety of all children involved will be considered.
- Appropriate risk and needs assessments will be undertaken.
- Referral to children's social care and/or police will be considered where appropriate.
- The safeguarding and support needs of the child alleged to have caused harm will also be considered.
- Appropriate measures will be put in place to enable children to continue accessing education safely.

The school will follow the procedures within Sections 7.8 and 7.9 of this policy, current statutory guidance and relevant local safeguarding arrangements.

**Serious violence**

All staff should be aware of indicators that may suggest a child is at risk of, or involved in, serious violent crime.

Indicators may include:

- Increased or unexplained absence from school.
- Changes in friendship groups or relationships.
- Relationships with older individuals or groups.
- Significant changes in behaviour.
- Decline in educational engagement or performance.
- Unexplained injuries.
- Self-harm or significant deterioration in emotional wellbeing.
- Unexplained gifts, money or possessions.
- Carrying weapons.
- Evidence of coercion, intimidation or exploitation.
- Association with gangs or organised criminal networks.
- Drug-related activity.

Staff should be aware of factors that may increase vulnerability, including:

- Previous offending.
- Previous experiences of abuse or neglect.
- Exposure to domestic abuse.
- Substance misuse.
- Persistent absence or exclusion from education.
- Involvement with criminally exploited peers or adults.

Staff must not assume that a child involved in violence or criminal behaviour is simply an offender. The child may themselves be experiencing abuse, coercion, criminal exploitation or other safeguarding harm.

Concerns must be reported to the DSL, who will consider appropriate safeguarding action and liaison with children's social care, police or other agencies.

**Visitors to the school**

The school will maintain appropriate arrangements for managing visitors and ensuring that individuals on school premises do not present an unacceptable safeguarding risk to pupils.

Visitors must follow the signing-in and identification procedures in place at the relevant school.

Arrangements will include, as appropriate:

- Verification of the visitor's identity and purpose for attending.
- Signing in and out.
- Issuing appropriate visitor identification or badges.
- Appropriate supervision or escort arrangements.
- Confirmation of safeguarding checks where required.
- Information about relevant safeguarding and emergency procedures.
- Restrictions on access to areas of the school where appropriate.

Staff must remain appropriately vigilant even where a visitor is wearing identification.

Any concern about the behaviour, identity or presence of a visitor must be reported immediately to the relevant senior leader and/or DSL.

Visitors must not be permitted unsupervised access to pupils unless the school is satisfied that appropriate safeguarding arrangements and checks are in place.

Where contractors, professionals or other individuals regularly work across more than one Seva Education site, they must still comply with the visitor and safeguarding arrangements applicable at each school.

Further requirements may be contained within Seva Education's visitor, contractor, safer recruitment or site-security procedures.

**Non-collection of children**

The school will maintain arrangements for responding where a child is not collected at the expected time.

- Where a child is not collected, staff will:
- Maintain appropriate supervision of the child.
- Attempt to contact parents/carers and other authorised contacts using the information held by the school.
- Consider whether transport arrangements, including commissioned or school transport, may have contributed to the delay.
- Inform an appropriate senior member of staff where the situation is not promptly resolved.
- Consider any relevant safeguarding information known about the child or family.

A child will not be left unsupervised or released to an unauthorised person.

Where contact cannot be established, the delay becomes significant or there are safeguarding concerns, the relevant DSL or senior leader will consider advice or referral to children's social care and/or police in accordance with local procedures.

All significant actions and safeguarding decisions will be appropriately recorded.

School-specific arrangements may provide additional operational detail, including expected collection arrangements, authorised adults and escalation procedures.

**Missing pupils**

The school recognises that a child going missing from school or an educational activity may indicate a safeguarding concern and requires an immediate and proportionate response.

Where a pupil is identified as missing from the school premises or from an activity for which the school is responsible, staff must act promptly.

The response will take account of:

- The child's age and developmental level.
- SEND and communication needs.
- Known risks and vulnerabilities.
- Mobility and road-safety awareness.
- Medical needs.
- Emotional or behavioural presentation.
- Previous incidents of going missing.
- Risk of exploitation or harm.
- The circumstances in which the child became missing.

Staff will immediately:

- Notify the appropriate senior member of staff and DSL.
- Confirm when and where the child was last seen.
- Undertake an appropriate search of the school/site and immediate relevant areas in accordance with local procedures.
- Maintain appropriate supervision and safety of other pupils.
- Contact parents/carers as appropriate.
- Contact the police without delay where the circumstances or assessed risk require this.

For some pupils with significant SEND, becoming missing from supervision may create an immediate high risk, particularly where the pupil has limited awareness of danger, road safety, strangers or environmental hazards. Staff must take these individual risks into account when determining the urgency of the response.

Where a pupil is missing during an educational visit or off-site activity, the relevant educational visit/emergency procedures will also be followed.

When the child is located, consideration will be given to:

- The child's immediate physical and emotional wellbeing.
- Why the child went missing.
- Whether the incident indicates a safeguarding concern.
- Whether medical attention is required.
- Information provided by the child.
- Whether children's social care, police or another agency should be informed.
- Whether existing risk assessments, behaviour/support plans or safeguarding arrangements require review.

The incident and actions taken will be appropriately recorded.

Repeated incidents of a pupil going missing must be reviewed to identify patterns, triggers, safeguarding concerns and any additional preventative measures required.

**Closing principle**

The safeguarding issues described within this appendix are not exhaustive.

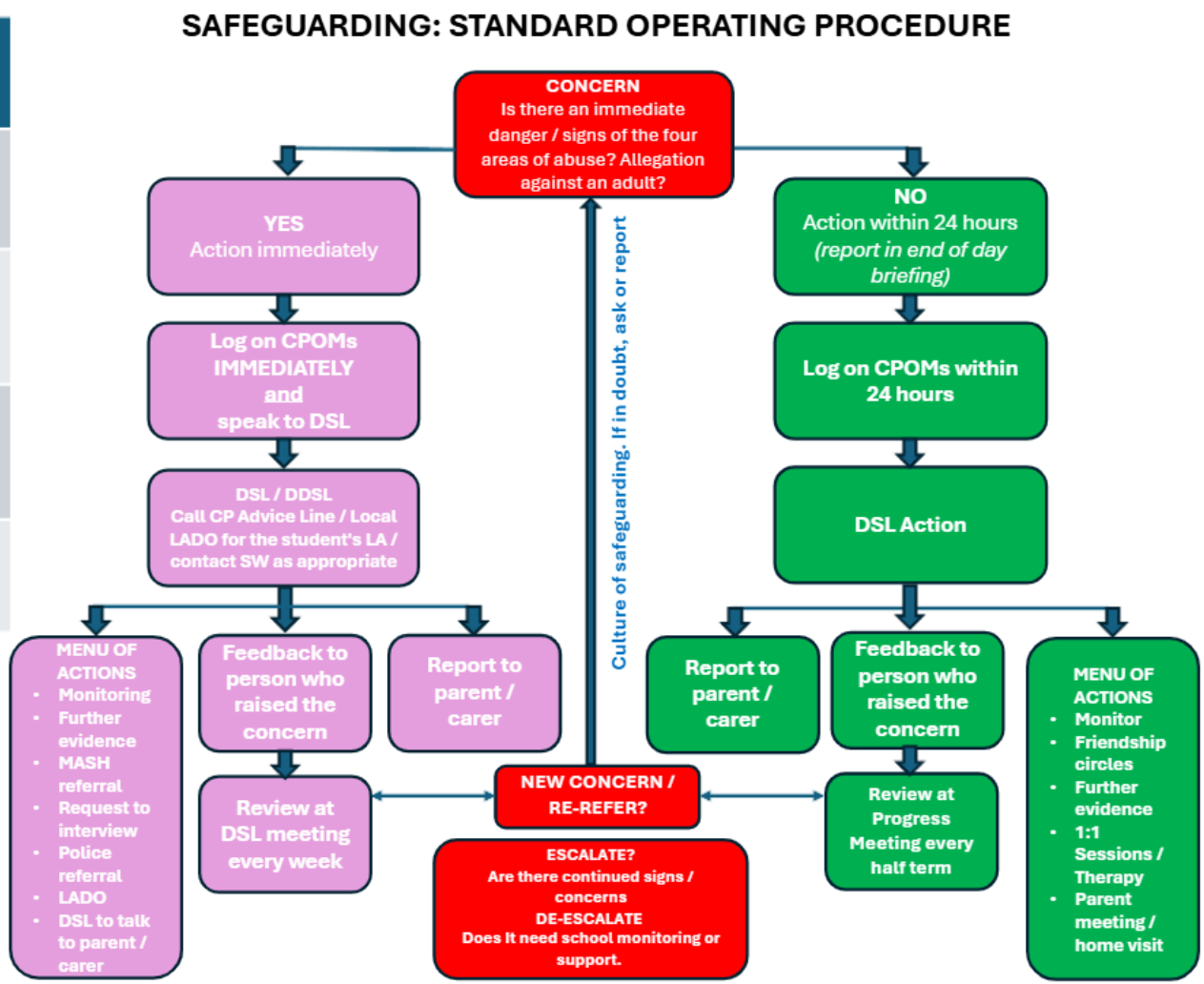
Staff must remain alert to new and emerging safeguarding risks and recognise that children may experience multiple forms of abuse, neglect or exploitation simultaneously.

Where staff are uncertain whether something constitutes a safeguarding concern, they should seek advice from the relevant DSL.

**Concern or uncertainty must never be a reason for failing to report information that may be relevant to a child's safety or welfare**

## Appendix 3

| SAFEGUARDING TEAM | |
|---|---|
| Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) | Executive Headteacher Gary Hawkins |
| Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) | Head of School Naila Khan |
| Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) | SENCO Aisha Shezide |
| SEVA Education Safeguarding Lead | Andre Bailey |




| SAFEGUARDING CATEGORIES | |
|---|---|
| 'At Risk' | Children who were once on the register or a concern in the past |
| TAC / TAF Team Around the Child | Professionals discuss the case and create a plan |
| CIN Child in Need | LA and other professionals agree Plan. Targets and support |
| CP Child Protection | LA and other professionals agree Plan. Targets and support. Plan carries legal weighting |

Seva Education

Ambition for All
Belonging Independence Achievement